

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CHURCH PARISH

PASTORAL AND FINANCE COUNCIL JOINT MEETING MINUTES

December 4, 2024 – Parish Rectory

I. ROLL CALL

Attendees: Deacon Bob Brady, Laura Campbell, Richard Clark, Timothy Conniff, William Conway, Dominique Galloway, Matthew Gavinelli, Monsignor Joseph Gentili, John Graham, Mike Herron, Kimberly Hirsch, Philip Junker, Raymond Kalouche, Barbara Kieffer, Lisa Kopertowski, Don Kraft, Anthony Mantellino, Tony Martin, Juan Navia, Ellen Roehm, Michele Savage, David Serrano, Bob Silberg, Father Herbert Sperger, Ryan (Jon) Visniski, Robert Weikel, Linda Wilbourne, Edward Zupanc

Excused: Karen Brody, Paul Crovo, Peter Hawley, Jonathan Martin

Recording Secretary: Alicia Augustine

II. OPENING PRAYER/REFLECTION

“In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert.”

Msgr. Gentili shared the gospel reading for Sunday 12/8/2024, from Luke 3:1-6, reflecting on the fact that God chose a specific time and place for our Lord to appear on this earth and enter ministry. During this time of advent, it is important to prepare our heart for the coming of our Lord and never underestimate the importance of God being present in our own circumstances. Each member of our parish, and our council members in particular, should realize that our contributions today can have a valuable, lasting impact on others and the life of our parish.

Msgr. Gentili led everyone in praying a Hail Mary, with special intention for the happy repose of the departed souls whose hearts were on fire for the mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, as well as the loved ones of those present at the meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS JOINT COUNCIL MEETING

Matt Gavinelli asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on June 12, 2024. The members of the committee unanimously approved the minutes, which will be posted on the website.

IV. PASTORAL COUNCIL UPDATES/NEWS

A. Lenten Fish Fry

Matt Gavinelli and Ed Zupanc confirmed that the Knights of Columbus host a fish fry on March 7th and April 11th. One of the Knights has extensive hospitality experience and will help to coordinate and lead the effort. Patrons will have the option to dine in or take out and all money will be used to support Knights of Columbus efforts. Monsignor emphasized that these efforts are important ways to live our mission of building a vibrant community and the corporal works of mercy.

B. Our Lady of Guadalupe 25-Year Anniversary

Monsignor Gentili reflected on how OLG has grown as a parish, both in numbers and physical space, over the past twenty-five years. He gratefully remarked on how the parish has been blessed by the effort and commitment of all those who helped align efforts towards a common mission that

serves both our local community and over-arching efforts of the archdiocese. Matt Gavinelli followed that in honor of this legacy, efforts should be made to incorporate this milestone into administrative and ministry efforts. Juan Navia is currently working to compile a chronological, comprehensive history of OLG. Bob Silberg announced that the Social Affairs committee is working to identify and reserve a space where parishioners can come together to celebrate this milestone (at cost to the individuals).

C. Serving Persons with Disabilities

Monsignor Gentili relayed that Karen Babick met with AccessAble's Services to identify more ways in which we can serve the community of those with disabilities. Monsignor Gentili also reflected on how OLG has been able to make these accommodations with relative ease because of the intentional incorporation of special access resources and spaces during planning and building of the church campus, as well as the continued commitment of financial resources to strategic efforts that serve a wide spectrum of parishioners.

D. Evangelization Initiatives

1. Youth/Young Adult Ministry

Lisa Kopertowski reported on the efforts, accomplishments, and expanding presence of youth/young adult groups at OLG for the benefit of our parish, our community, and the archdiocese. Additionally, the Walking with Purpose Bible Study for women has grown in numbers and they hope to offer an evening time slot next year. This ministry currently comprises ten groups who participate in social, service, and spiritual enrichment activities. Fall has been busy and successful, and they are looking forward to a busy, enriching spring, which includes several planned youth trips (Kairos Retreat, Steubenville Youth Conference, Catholic Underground in the Bronx, the Padre Pio Shrine in Barto PA, and World Youth Day in Rome). Lisa is grateful for the Council's support in hiring an assistant. Monsignor thanked Lisa for her tireless efforts to grow and support these programs, which are crucial to engage our youth and their families in parish life and serving as a model to other parishes across the archdiocese.

2. Parish Religious Education Program (PREP)

Matt Gavinelli provided the PREP update prepared by Karen Brody. The dedicated efforts to engage PREP children and families in attending Mass have been well attended (exceeding attendance of the other two masses that weekend) and the next Mass will be in January. Fall Fest was also successful, and 98 pumpkins were given away to the kids that attended. PREP students learned about the Works of Mercy and prepared the ornaments for the Narthex Christmas tree, featuring the corporal works of mercy. The entire parish is invited to the PREP Christmas Play on December 16 at 6:15pm. Confirmation students will be given the opportunity to sign up as Parish Greeters to earn service hours for Confirmation; if successful, this will be opened up to 7th grade students. Finally, Central Bucks School District is not charging for classroom use this year (a savings of \$4,200/year) because OLG now qualifies as an educational, religious group.

3. Hispanic Ministry

David Serrano presented highlights from recent Hispanic Ministry initiatives to make creative spaces for Spanish-speaking parishioners. Café Guadalupano is designed as a relaxed, coffee shop-like meet-up for adults to find and offer support with minor and major life struggles. Attendance has been variable but those who meet draw immediate benefit. Efforts will continue to be made to support attendees and grow the group. Additionally, various OLG members and ministry efforts directly supported families in need this past Thanksgiving through donation of turkeys and/or meals.

Monthly Mass and Holy Hour have been offered on the 2nd Thursday for the months of September, October, and November. Attendance was high at the first and third Masses and is

attributed to active communication efforts to inform and remind members of the Hispanic community to attend. These efforts will be continued, but David will also survey for preferred dates/times. December's Mass will be held for the Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day on December 12 and will incorporate the OLG Choir (who will sing in Spanish) and the Knights of Columbus (who will process the image of Our Lady).

This year, five candidates are enrolled in the OCIA program in Spanish on Monday nights. Finally, the OLG Knights of Columbus is making accommodations to ensure that communication with Spanish-speaking members is sufficient to help them feel fully informed and incorporated into event operations. Juan Navia reflected that it is good that these efforts are diversified to meet the needs of families, as well as those without families. Monsignor thanked David for his continued efforts to welcome the Spanish-speaking community into the OLG parish community.

4. Adult Faith Formation

Don Kraft provided an overview of Adult Faith Formation efforts, which center around growing disciples and encouraging evangelization via three strategic pillars: 1) strengthen the faith of parishioners, 2) building skills in evangelization, and 3) expanding engagement within the parish and the community. At the heart of this ministry is a central desire to help all adults truly internalize their faith so that they move from 'cultural Catholic' to a deep, personal relationship with Christ. Recent programs include Walking with Purpose, Christ-Life, 33 Days to Eucharistic Glory, and formal engagement efforts via other Ministries (Youth/Young Adult, Hispanic Ministry, and PREP). Mike Herron has jumped right into his role, bringing steady presence and leadership to these efforts. Monsignor thanked Don, Mike, and Deacon Brady for their continued efforts that directly support the OLG mission to "...[grow] disciples and make church matter" and the diocesan desire to see a growth in "missionary disciples". He emphasized that the priests and deacons have also tried to support these efforts by building continuity and thematic concepts into their homilies. Further, Monsignor related that increased attendance (up to around 80% of pre-pandemic levels) may likely reflect our efforts to encourage participation and increased accountability of current parishioners, and that increased collections may be a result of increased attendance, increased engagement, and financial transparency. These tangible results are encouraging evidence that parishioners are engaged and want to see the parish efforts succeed.

V. FINANCE COUNCIL UPDATES/NEWS

A. Ministry Budgets

Bob Weikel relayed that Anthony Mantellino accomplished the plan to have clearer budgets for each ministry and that the Finance Council continues to look for ways to ensure responsibility and savings where possible. The most recent efforts achieved a 21% and 30% reduction in electricity and gas usage, respectively. Monsignor expressed his continued support for ministry and outreach initiatives, and is grateful to Dick, Bob, and the Finance Council members for their continued efforts to ensure responsibility, as well as empower ministries to take ownership of their efforts.

In September 2024, Buckingham Police Department conducted a safety audit of the OLG campus and returned a comprehensive report. To date, the Safety Committee has completed more than half of those items deemed financially and logistically feasible and generated new standard operating procedures where appropriate.

B. Planned Giving

Dick Clark relayed a group effort to educate and guide parishioners through the process of Planned Giving. The proposal was approved by the Finance Council and will leverage resources from the Catholic Foundation of Greater Philadelphia. A soft launch is planned for 2025Q1, followed by provision of workshops, literature, and tools to assist parishioners in implementing such a decision.

VI. PASTOR'S REPORT

The Archdiocesan Fourth Way and OLG Strategic Planning

Monsignor conveyed the concept of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's new framework around pastoral planning, known as the "Fourth Way". This concept aims to realign resources considering geographical shifts in population and reduced priest availability. As OLG begins to contemplate the next cycle of strategic planning, committee leadership will be asked to engage with planning and responding to Archdiocesan needs.

OLG is currently on its third iteration of the 5-year strategic plan, which is set to expire in 2026. Monsignor is grateful that thanks to the focused efforts of our Pastoral and Finance Councils, we are on track or ahead of schedule to complete nearly all the objectives set out in 2021. All members of these councils should be familiar with 1) [the current version of the Strategic Plan and Guiding Principles for 2021 – 2026](#) and 2) [Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Strategic Plan Amendment: Growing Disciples Plan 2023 – 2027](#). Both of these documents are available on the OLG website. Each of the Evangelization sub-committees (Outreach/Evangelization Committee, Organization/Institution Review Committee, and Fiscal Responsibility/Stewardship Committee) are now tasked with forming smaller working groups who will assist in obtaining and leveraging necessary resources from which to make informed decisions (eg: Dick Clark proposed providing a 5-year financial forecast to assist with planning) and who will give council on how to incorporate the Fourth Way into the next strategic plan.

VII. QUESTIONS/CONCERNS/NEW BUSINESS

No new business or questions were brought before the Joint Council.

VIII. NEXT MEETING

Combined Meeting of the Parish Councils: June 11, 2025, and December 3, 2025

IX. CLOSING PRAYER

Monsignor reflected that Advent is a time for hope and listening, reiterating the concept of our ability to make a positive difference today that has ripple effects on the future. Keeping this in mind, the group paused for a moment of silence before Monsignor led everyone in praying the Hail Mary.