PARISH PROFILE

Our Lady of Guadalupe – where members ‘cherish and support each other’

SEATTLE
BY ARMANDO MACHADO

Members of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Seattle say theirs is a diverse Christian community in the Catholic faith tradition — with sacramental worship, stewardship, education and outreach that invite all to become Christ’s disciples.

The community embraces “the richness of our diversity as modeled by our patroness, Our Lady of Guadalupe — Our Lady of the Americas,” according to the parish value statement, which also notes the values of:

- Community — where Christian believers care for, cherish and support each other.
- Life-long learning — continued nurturing of our faith.
- Service — to those in need within our parish and the larger community.
- Worship — celebrating the Eucharist and other prayerful liturgies.
- Stewardship — the responsible care of the God-given resources entrusted to us.
- Hospitality — welcoming and including all parishioners and visitors.

And expansion is expected.

There are “plans for some expanded space for gathering in our church, and a new multipurpose structure that will house a gym and future stage and kitchen,” said Peg Borkowski, parish pastoral associate.

“This is just in the planning and visioning stage now,” Borkowski noted.

Founded in 1960, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish currently has 730 registered households. Our Lady of Guadalupe School has 205 students – (Preschool-8). The parish pastor is Father John “Jack” Walmesley. The ministries include the Youth Ministry, the Pastoral Council, and the Futures Committee.

The parish was created from a southern portion of Holy Rosary Parish and a northern section of Holy Family Parish. Father Richard Stohr was given the responsibility of creating the new parish.

The first months were challenging for the pastor and the parishioners; property was to be acquired and a parish rectory, school and church were to be built.

The hospitality of the Sisters at Mount St. Vincent provided a site for the rectory and the parish hall — giving shelter to clergy and a room for meetings and socializing. Sunday Mass was celebrated in the High Point Gym and in the auditorium of Chief Sealth High School.

As the parish school was being constructed, about 200 Guadalupe students were transported to Maryknoll School, now part of Providence Hospital. Nuns from the congregation of the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon staffed the school.

The school opened in 1962, and that year found a grateful and joyous congregation celebrating Christmas Mass in the new school building. For the next seven years the basement was used for the church and the parish hall.

Father James Deady was appointed to succeed Father Stohr in October 1964. It was Father Deady’s duty to find a suitable place for worship and to build a church. Plans for the church were designed so that in the future it could be converted into a multipurpose building after a more suitable church was constructed. After a tremendous amount of hard work, unending perseverance and a successful parish fund drive, the existing church was dedicated on April 12, 1970.

Over the many years of purchasing land, building a school, building a church, acquiring a rectory, and ministering to the faithful, Our Lady of Guadalupe has been blessed with many fine and devoted pastors and associates, the parish informational material notes.

Father Walmesly has been pastor since 2002, when he succeeded Father Bill Hallahan, who was pastor for seven years.