

# La Guadalupana & Christ the King

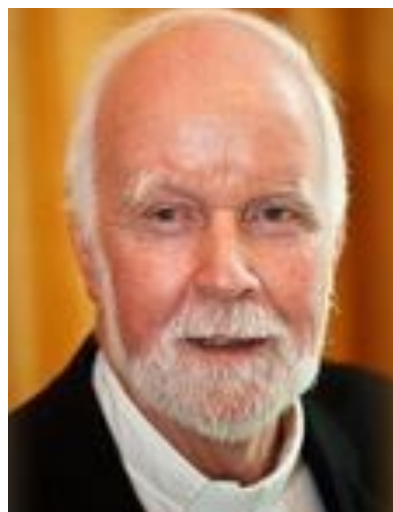


It all started in 1996 when some mainly Mexican families in the Ocala Estates area (known as Little Mexico) would gather weekly to pray the Rosary. After about a year and a half these families headed by Estela Martinez and Hector Ramos (now deceased) requested from Father Pat Sheedy the possibility of celebrating Mass in this area. With Fr. Pat's authorization and support from deacon Heriberto Berrios, celebrations started in 1997 every Saturday at 7pm at the Aguirre-Martinez home. They put up a tent and everyone would bring a chair. The response was very positive, but this annoyed the neighbors due to the noise and cars parking and they would complain to the police. A BT parishioner who owned a ranch nearby heard about this. Mrs. Cortine Shanbally, owner of Shanbally Acres offered the use of some horse stables for Eucharistic celebrations there. They were known as "the stable Masses" and were changed to 7pm on Tuesdays.

One of Mrs. Cortine's workers donated a painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe (currently at the Mission), and because the painting was always present during the celebrations, the people began calling them "the Guadalupana Masses".

The ranch site became insufficient due to the number of people attending, and we should mention that we even used hay bales for seating when chairs were unavailable.

In 1998 Fr. Luis Barrera and Deacon Berrios, together with people from that area began to think of ideas for buying a piece of property to build a chapel with the capacity for the growing community. The project was presented to Fr. Pat and, after



Fr. Patrick O'Doherty



Fr. Cely with Colombian nuns after their arrival in 2007

authorization and approval, the parish bought a 3-acre plot on Highway 40 West, and many families committed to donations of \$1,000 each to begin construction. But even these donations and parish support was not enough to start building. It was then that the Pastor of Queen of Peace, Fr. Patrick O'Doherty initially donated \$50,000 and then an additional \$300,000!

We should mention that the building was designed by architect Nicolás Mansito and built by Miguel Ferrer, at no net profits, and during construction the community was very committed to the project, donating labor, clearing land, etc.

When it was completed in 2001, Fr. Pedro Zapata, then in charge of Hispanic Ministry, concelebrated the First Mass. In 2005, Fr. Alfonso Cely dreamt of bringing Hispanic nuns from Colombia. A convent was built to house the Hermanas Catequistas Misioneras (Missionary Catechist Sisters) who arrived in January 2007.



Fr. Pat blesses the St. Anthony Convent in 2007

We celebrate Holy Mass on Tuesdays at 7pm with around 140 people and on Sundays at 7pm with around 200 people. We have catechesis for Baptisms, Confirmations, First Communion and celebrate weddings and many retreats and other activities.

### **Hispanic Ministry at Christ The King**

The Hispanic ministry at CTK is much smaller. Even though it started some years ago with one Mass per month, Fr. Zbigniew Stradomski now holds two Masses per week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 7pm. Deacon Tony Torres is working there to organize the community.

We frequently utilize CTK as a venue for retreats and conferences, as the Hispanic Ministry has possibilities of growing in population and faith education. We are working hard to develop quality leaders there.