

# The Spanish Community at Blessed Trinity

The Hispanic community at B.T. had its earliest beginnings in 1987 when Hispanic members of B.T. (at that time part of the Anglo community) went to the Bishop's office in Orlando requesting Masses in Spanish for Marion County. At first Fr. Jose L. Meza and Fr. Domingo Gonzalez alternated



celebrating Mass, then different other priests once a month in several churches all over the county. These included St. Theresa in Belleview, Immaculate Heart of Mary at Silver Springs Shores, the Community Center in Marion Oaks, St John the Baptist in Dunnellon and BT. Masses later changed to every other Sunday, and then every Sunday, most often at St. Theresa.

In 1989 Fr. Adrian Torres was assigned to minister to the growing Hispanic community of Marion County, and would celebrate weekly at St. Theresa's in Belleview while residing at Blessed Trinity. Fr Torres had a terrible automobile accident, which put him in long-term rehab. Fr. Pat Sheedy suggested

he permanently celebrate at B.T. every Sunday. That was the real birth of the Hispanic community at B.T. Fr. Torres started various ministries, beginning with the Hispanic Cursillo, then many others. He brought in a vibrant charismatic movement. During his stay we built the shrine to Our Lady in front of the Parish Hall.

In 1993 we welcomed Fr. Hugo Londoño, who was replaced in 1997 by Fr. Luis Barrera, who was involved in building La Guadalupana Mission.

In 2001 came Fr. Pedro Zapata, followed in 2003 by Fr. Alfonso Cely.

Fr. Alfonso dreamed of bringing nuns from Colombia to assist in the evangelization of a constantly growing



Fr. Pedro Zapata



Hispanic (mainly Mexican) presence surrounding the Guadalupeana mission and to help him with the growing number of ministries here at B.T. In 2004 the main building was finished and the convent completed in 2006. In January 2007 our much anticipated nuns came! At first three nuns; two have remained.

In 2012 came Fr. Jesús Arroyave, followed in 2013 by our current Hispanic pastor, Fr. Raul Valdez. Fr. Franklin Salazar was later brought in to assist Fr. Raul, mainly with the Christ the King Mission until 2016.

Fr. Raul has formed a Hispanic Parish Council to help manage a now large community. We call it WESTY for Worship, Education, Service, Treasure and Youth ministries. In 2016 we welcomed Fr. Zbigniew Stradomski, a Polish priest well-versed in Spanish to help with the CTK Masses and ministries. He alternates with Fr. Raul at the B.T. Sunday Masses.



The Hispanic community now includes B.T., La Guadalupeana and CTK.

At B.T. we celebrate Mass on Thursdays at 6:30pm and on Sundays at 1pm. (On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month we have adoration of the Blessed Sacrament after Mass).

At La Guadalupeana, Mass is celebrated on Tuesdays and Sundays at 7pm.

At CTK, Mass is celebrated on Wednesdays at 7pm and the Vigil Mass on Saturdays at 7pm.

We have two deacons, Rev. Heriberto Berríos and Rev. Tony Torres.

We currently have 14 ministries, 2 apostolic groups – Legion of Mary and Disciples of Emmaus - and 3 Movements - Cursillo, John XXIII and Marriage Renewal.

