



From Deacon Mark Miller's Desk

On a Sunday evening in the fall of 2002, Fr. John Zahn offered the first regularly scheduled Mass in Spanish at OLG to a congregation of about 30. Initially offered monthly, the positive response ignited a Hispanic ministry that now serves some 330 families. The community members come from every Spanish-speaking country in the world.

Fr. Zahn arrived at OLG in July 2002 with the language skills needed to begin the ministry. Fr. Tom Metzger's functional skills [proof that high school Spanish **CAN** come in handy!] made it possible for him to also say Mass.

Monthly Mass expanded to weekly Mass in the summer of 2011 when two new priests with advanced Spanish skills, Frs. Josh Janko and Chris Shocklee, were assigned to OLG. OLG's pastor, Fr. Tom, recognized he needed to deepen his own skills to broaden his ministry, so he enrolled in a five-week immersion program in Mexico. He combined that formation with on-going personal tutoring from community volunteers to master the skills he needed, especially as a confessor and counselor.

Spanish-language confessions were soon added as were religious education, Sacramental preparation, and the Rite of Christian Initiation. The traditional 15th-birthday celebration – the quinceañera – was soon part of OLGs celebrations too.

Hispanic Ministry is now an integral part of the parish faith life. Volunteers, guided by a paid staff member, keep up regular communications, translate documents, assist with liturgies, and advise the pastor on important issues.

One doesn't need to speak Spanish Mass to attend a Spanish Mass. One of the many beauties of our Mass is its universal nature. Even without understanding all the words, you know exactly what's happening; you can worship, and pray, and receive communion. You'll discover vibrant music that leads you into the community. The Spanish Mass takes place ever Sunday at 1:30; when you go, you'll find a warm welcome and a uniquely invigorating Spiritual experience.

It's important to remember that the Hispanic community is not a separate ministry of OLG; it's just one community among others. The OLG parish is

made of many different communities; among them: young adults, religious education, Life Teen, adult formation, and many others. Together, each of these communities – including the Hispanic community – create the family we have at Our Lady of Grace.

This weekend is the first World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. Pope Francis instituted this Church-wide celebration earlier this year. How are you planning to recognize the grandparents and elderly in your life? If time or distance makes it impossible to recognize these VIPs, please remember them in your prayers [you can pray for them even if they live next door 😊].

Quick quiz: who were Jesus' grandparents?

Pope Francis' prayer intention for August is "for families". He invites us to add his intention to our own as we pray this month. Here's the full text of his intention:

What kind of world do we want to leave for the future?

Let us leave a world with families.

Let us care for our families, because they are true schools for the future, spaces of freedom, and centers of humanity.

And let us reserve a special place in our families for individual and communal prayer.

Let us pray that families, through their life of prayer and love, become ever more clearly "schools of true human development".