



# Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish: The Blessed Dedication

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“We are hoping this image of our Blessed Mother has the same impact in modern times as when the original image first appeared.”

– David Prada, Senior Director of the Archdiocesan Building and Property Office

This weekend, on Saturday, December 12th, 2015, marks the dedication of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, the youngest parish in the archdiocese of Miami. The soon-to-be-dedicated new church and its religious artwork will focus on the element of an Italian-made, 26-foot-tall mosaic of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Humbly beginning 15 years ago as a mission of Blessed Trinity Parish in Miami Springs,



Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish will be located at the corner of N.W. 25th Street and 117th Avenue, on the southwest side of Our Lady of Mercy Cemetery. Our Lady of Guadalupe's dedication ceremony will be presided over by Archbishop Thomas Wenski on the morning of her feast day, Dec. 12.

On hand will be Father Israel Mago , the pastor who has spearheaded much of the building project, alongside thousands of parishioners, guests, benefactors, design and construction staff, and local dignitaries.

As an expedited project under MCM Construction, Our Lady of Guadalupe started with its groundbreaking in January of this year, designed by Murguido of Zyscovich Architects. After its construction, it will represent the first Catholic parish situated in Doral, which is both a regional hub for business and a highly-diverse community of Latin American emigres.

In early November, every facet of the building was erected at once, rather than in prolonged stages over the years, with steps such as construction, interior build-out, and installation of art works continuing at the seven-acre site where the new church, chapel, and multipurpose building would stand.

Handmade in the traditional Italian style, the artwork is constructed from the finest Venetian glass “smalti” mosaic tiles which will be installed in irregular pieces. When completed, this mosaic will be the largest image of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the southeastern U.S. Designed and created by the U.S.-based Paul Pickel of Conrad Pickel Studio, the Marian mosaic will be set against white wall pre-cast concrete walls, with the towering image of Our Lady creating the first visual impression for visitors.

The colorful mosaic depicting the patroness of Mexico — and of all the Americas — is set against a clean, white exterior church with a modern design. The mosaic and other Marian design elements facing the Turnpike will be a visible sign of welcome from the 5,000 families of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish to the wider community passing through South Florida. Finally, the church will feature two large stained glass windows depicting key moments in the life of St. Juan Diego.

“The original image on Juan Diego’s ‘tilma’ served in the conversion of thousands, and in modern times we hope people will be drawn to the new church to see and learn about who is inside,” said Prada.

In addition, South Florida artist Nilda Comas, Puerto Rican native and Fort Lauderdale resident who studied marble design in Italy, designed and sculpted an 8-foot-tall, two-ton marble sculpture of Our Lady, which was produced in Pietrasanta, Italy. This sculpture is meant to grace the plaza area outside the church, on the northeast corner of the site.

Leading up to the church entrance is procession of the 14 Stations of the Cross, greeting visitors at each station with a marble sculpture-relief. These reliefs have been recovered and recycled from a now-closed Catholic church in Pennsylvania. Each of the stations will also be flanked by porcelain images of the various national virgins or patronesses of the Americas, created by another local artist, Colombian-American Beatriz Ramirez.

Also designed by Comas is the 10-foot high bronze corpus of Christ situated on a 20-foot high wooden cross in the main sanctuary. The corpus was first sculpted in a high density Styrofoam to be later locally cast in bronze by Art and Sculpture Unlimited, a foundry in Hialeah. Thanks to the expansive Hispanic population of the community and its following with the patroness will allow a larger center of communal gathering and prayer to gather in the area.

Parishioners and residents of the neighborhood alike are excited to see the church finally come to fruition.

“I am excited,” said parishioner Carmencita Romanach. “I have been waiting for this a long time and it will be a special moment for all of us. Our Lady has been with us all these years and we are looking for a new temple. It is a dream come true for all the parishioners.”

All are welcome to come to the December 12th Dedication Ceremony.



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