

Venezuela to Minnesota: Heart to Heart

This past fall the St. Cloud Diocese was blessed to welcome six individuals from our partner diocese of Maracay, Venezuela. Below are several reflections from the delegates and from those in our diocese involved in hosting them.



Alexis, delegate from Maracay, at a Twins game at Target field; Alexis is a baseball fan in Venezuela

Thoughts from Alexis Mergolla, delegate from Maracay:

[The partnership] is a solid brotherhood between our diocese regardless of distance or language. Where the love of God gave me joy to share with very good people and a great opportunity to experience another culture in the grace of God. God bless your diocese to continue.

Thoughts from Susan Meyer, host:

Hosting the farewell for the delegation was such a

wonderful thing! The delegation from St. Cloud to Venezuela back in the winter of 2011 included our daughter Kate and we are so thankful that she was able to be a part of that. Her experiences in Venezuela were amazing and we were so grateful to get to know some of the people that made them all feel so welcome in that country. The Venezuelan people that were here this Fall demonstrated their infectious joy for God in their thankfulness, their joyful faces, and in their prayer and song. The singing and dancing and prayer that we all shared was an example of our daughter's most profound statement of the Venezuelan people: "While we fit God into our daily lives, their daily life IS God, and everything just has to fit into that."



Delegates Begnigno, Saul and Ivan share song and dance from Maracay

Thoughts from Trina Aguilar, delegate from Maracay:

Let us pray for the Spirit to be always among us all, guiding us all with His eternal Love and unique Wisdom.

Thoughts from Fr. Julius Beckermann, OSB, host:

I had the privilege of hosting a delegate from Maracay. Yes, it was an honor and a privilege and one I will always be grateful for. It was good to have her see where I live and minister. It was also special to have someone from Venezuela speaking personally in my parish on World Mission Sunday. She did a very nice presentation. We also spent time on the Red Lake Indian Reservation where I spent twenty years. I think Trina enjoyed meeting the Native American People. One thing that I could not help but notice, was Trina's desire to learn everything she could while visiting here. She was extremely observant and had a very high energy level. She has a capacity to enjoy life to the fullest. Let me simply say, I saw someone whose heart and mind were full of joy and happiness, because of their deep love for God. It was my privilege to witness this first hand and I am grateful to have been a part of the delegation.

Thoughts from Beth Neville, Mission Office director:

Being this was my first delegation I worked with in this position at the Mission Office, it was a true joy to finally meet these wonderful people whom we have had a connection with for so long. I truly treasured the one-on-one time in conversation and reflection that we had in a number of opportunities. This definitely builds and solidifies relationships when we can get into the 'real person' and learn from one another's soul.

Thank you to everyone involved in making Maracay's visit to St. Cloud such a successful one! To learn more about the Maracay Diocese or our global solidarity partnership with them, visit the Mission Office website:

www.stcdio.org/mission



Delegates Bishop Rafael Conde (center) and Trina Aguilar (right of Bishop) at a gathering with members of the Hispanic Community of St. Joseph, Waite Park