

1963 Pope John XXIII put out a call for the Church of North America to assist the Church of Latin America with human and economic resources; meanwhile, during the Second Vatican Council St. Cloud Bishop Peter Bartholome met Bishop Feliciano Gonzalez of Maracay, who also asked for personnel for his young diocese; through the influence and help of Maryknoll, who was also pushing to “go south,” the two entered into a new “mission” in Venezuela.

December 1967 Franciscan Sisters Rita Barthel and Ruth Nistler arrive in Venezuela, just in time for Christmas.

Dec. 15, 2000 Fr. Rich Walz, the last St. Cloud priest, returns from Maracay.

2000 Bishop Reinaldo Del Prette and Bishop John Kinney redefined the relationship as one of mutual collaboration and sharing of gifts. A guiding committee, known as the Liaison Committee/*Comite de Enlace* are formed in each diocese to oversee the partnership.

2003 Fr. Minette returned to Maracay to celebrate his 50th anniversary to the priesthood, along with three other delegates from the St. Cloud Diocese; subsequent travels both to-and-from Maracay have taken place on an alternating cycle since that time, allowing for person-to-person relationship building and global understanding.

2014+ Due to the country situation in Venezuela, the 2014 trip to Maracay was cancelled, and delegations are temporarily on hold. But we pray for an end to the hold soon; and with God, the skies the limit for what may be yet to come as we continue to walk with our global brothers and sisters!

St. Cloud-Maracay Partnership Timeline

“We’re not just two separate dioceses working towards the same goal; our history is so intertwined, we’re really one diocese spread out over two countries.”

August 1964 Fr. James Minette and Fr. Mark Willenbring leave for language school in Mexico as the first priests of St. Cloud Diocese to respond to the call; January 1965 they arrive in Venezuela.

2000 Parishioners from St. Ann’s in Brandon, MN traveled to Maracay, beginning the first “Sister Parish” relationship.

By 2000 Approximately 17 priests, 11 Sisters, and 9 laity of St. Cloud Diocese had ministered in Venezuela, helping physically and spiritually build-up the Church of Maracay.

2002 Fr. David Trujillo becomes the first Venezuelan missionary to St. Cloud, serving in our diocese for three years.

2009 Omar Guanchez, a native of Maracay, was ordained a priest for the St. Cloud Diocese.

To-date St. Cloud is being served by its fourth Venezuelan priest, Fr. Oswaldo Roche; we have two parishes/clusters involved in a Sister Parish relationship; we have sent four official Diocesan delegations and received four from Maracay, in addition to other cross-visits; we have supported Maracay Seminarians, and programs for youth, elders, music, and community development; priests, seminarians and laity from St. Cloud have been assisted in language studies by Maracay; and countless faithful of both dioceses have grown in faith through the partnership!

The Beginning

Re-Defining

Now & the Future

Maracay, Venezuela – Saint Cloud, Minnesota Partnership Mission Statement

The foundation of the partnership between the local churches of Saint Cloud, Minnesota and Maracay, Venezuela, rests primarily on our unity in Christ as manifested in the Gospel, in the Eucharist and in our communion with the universal Church.

We live and celebrate our communion and deepen our bonds of solidarity by sharing our gifts, both spiritual and material, and by promoting social justice among our peoples. This relationship commits us to transform our dioceses and our world into the Reign of love, justice and peace of Christ.



Hermandad Saint Cloud, Minnesota – Maracay, Venezuela Propósito

La hermandad entre las iglesias locales de Saint Cloud, Minnesota y Maracay, Venezuela, se basa fundamentalmente en nuestra unidad en Cristo manifestada en el Evangelio, en la Eucaristía y en nuestra comunión con la Iglesia universal.

Vivimos y celebramos nuestra comunión y profundizamos nuestros lazos de solidaridad compartiendo nuestros dones, tanto materiales como espirituales y promoviendo la justicia social entre nuestros pueblos. Esta relación fraterna nos compromete a transformar nuestras diócesis y el mundo, en el Reino de amor, justicia y paz en Cristo.

Prayer for the Partnership

*“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone”
(1 Corinthians 12:4-6)*

Heavenly Father, we praise You and thank You for the gift of our partner diocese. We thank You for all the blessings that You are bestowing upon the members of our diocese, because of the many prayers that our brothers and sisters are offering on our behalf. Please hear our prayer and help our brothers and sisters, in all of their spiritual and earthly needs. Bless us all and help us to love You; and to love to serve one another as Jesus taught us. May Your love fill the hearts and homes of all of our families, so that the whole world may enjoy the peace and happiness promised by Your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (prayer written by St. Ann’s Sister Parish in Brandon)

