

# St. Joseph's Mission Trip – 2014

## Trip to the Dominican Republic



March 16 and March 17, 2014

Day 1















Ola nuestros amigos,

We made it! Our day started with a sacred and beautiful commissioning by our 7:45am congregation on behalf of all of you! Big thanks to our trusty and generous drivers to Ft. Lauderdale Airport: Gary & Loretta Matthews, Jean Champion, Jim Wrona, and Bridget Langford with the Gulfstream School bus. Thank you all! Our flight was smooth and after we breezed through customs we were greeted enthusiastically by Fr. Sandino and our liaison for The Episcopal Church, Karen Carroll. Our ride from the airport to the hotel, however was fine but a bit nerve wracking. Our driver Mario first got mixed up and headed toward the town center of Santo Domingo instead of up the coast to Boca Chica. Once we could finally(!) turn around we were very impressed with Mario's amazing skills in navigating through the beyond-New-York-at-rush-hour traffic. We were in this huge bus

pulling a very full trailer through extremely narrow streets. All twenty of us and all sixty of our bags made it to the hotel safe and sound. We are more than settled, tired but safe, well fed, and excited about our work with these beautiful people. Thank you, St. Joseph's, family, and friends, for being here with us in our hearts and minds. Thank you for your continued prayers!

In Lenten peace,

Rev. Wendy

## 2 THOUGHTS ON "DAY 1 - MARCH 16"

1.  **John**

MARCH 18, 2014 AT 3:10 AM

Terrific photos. Will be thinking of you all on your journey!

2.  **Dawna**

MARCH 19, 2014 AT 12:52 AM

Making a difference in the lives of others is the best! Encouraging them encourages us! That's what love is all about! Yay!!!! Happy you are all sharing the love!!!

March 17, 2014

## Day 2 – Fiesta De San Patricio!



Tiffany Cheung with Gautier children at photo project.



Sign on wall outside Santo Tomas.



Students with uniforms!



Carrie and Jess painting Santo Tomas.



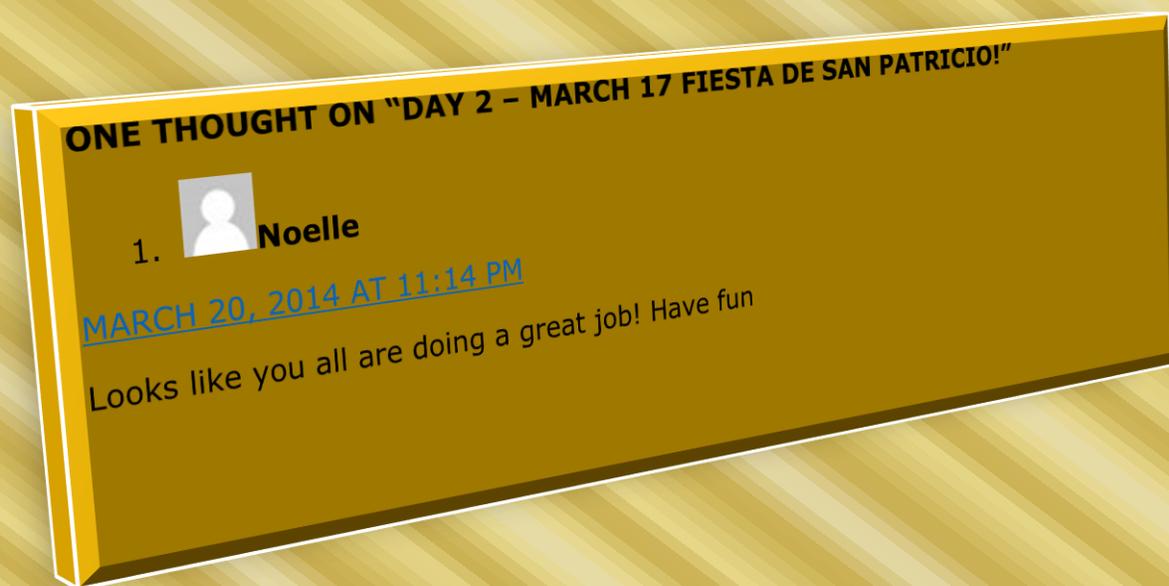
Matt on rooftop scraping!

Hola nuestros compadres en Cristo!

What a very full day we've had on this feast day of St. Patrick. We began with a beautiful outdoor morning prayer led by Mike Mahady, Cheryl Laski, Carrie Guthrie, and Becca Russell. Mike told us of his childhood spent mostly in Ireland and taught us new insights into the life of Patrick. He said that growing up there St. Patrick's Day was really more like Thanksgiving and a day set aside for deepening our spiritual lives and pilgrimage with Christ. Perfecto, eh? After a great breakfast we set out for the village of Gautier. While several of us began painting Fr. Sandino's mission church, Santo Tomas, others

went next door to the public school to deliver the shoes and uniforms that we had brought for those children who would not be able to attend or continue school without them. The children were so eager to receive and so very grateful. We spent a hectic, heart wrenching morning there sorting and then sizing them for their new shirts, pants, and shoes. Hectic because there were so many children to find properly sized uniforms. Heart wrenching because there were so many for whom we could not supply uniforms. Even so they gave us thanks.

At the same time at Santo Tomas' parish hall we began our photo project back by popular demand. Children line up to have their photos taken (some for the first time ever). Once their pictures print out on the portable printers we brought, they then paste them on to the frames and decorate them. They are so excited to have photos of themselves and their families to hang in their humble homes. In our closing circle at evening prayer we all gave great thanks for a day well spent, exhausted and invigorated in the service of our Lord.



**March 18, 2014**

## **Day 3**

### **Brightest blessings from Boca Chica, nuestros amigos y familia,**

Again we awoke to a beautiful sunrise, perfect weather and a sacred prayer circle. Our worship team today was led by Donna Pulda, Charlotte and Bob Lees, and Barbara MacKenzie. We arrived in Gautier with all of the collected school supplies.



We sorted them, set up for day 2 of our photo project and then all proceeded to Gautier School for a cultural exchange fantastico. Thanks to the leadership and translation skills of 'professor' Miguel Mahady we engaged with two different classes in descriptions of ourselves (kind of like a MadLib) in Spanish and English. We learned as they did without a doubt.





After lunch we continued our joy-filled photo project. The faces on the children, teens, and even the elderly who came and received photographs of themselves and their loved ones revealed such gratitude that it touched us all deeply.

Meanwhile, several of us were outside finishing up our painting of Santo Tomas church. The part we all spoke about in our reflections during our evening prayer circle was the eager participation and hunger for inclusion of the children who gathered while we worked. The Holy Spirit was alive and well in the love we felt for one another as we worked side by side in Christian fellowship.



What a privilege for us to serve in this sacred way.

Buenas noches. Duerme con los angeles,

Rev. Wendy & the most wonderful mission team in the universe

## 2 THOUGHTS ON "DAY 3 - MARCH 18, 2014"

1.  **jerry guthrie**

[MARCH 20, 2014 AT 1:59 AM](#)

I saw you Carrie, love you. Have a great time.

2.  **Anna**

[MARCH 20, 2014 AT 11:16 PM](#)

So happy to see Grammy & Pop Pop Lees having fun and helping others. Miss you!

**March 20, 2014**

## **Day 4 – Feast Of San Jose!**

Happy Feast Day everyone,

Our prayer team today was Stephanie Ream, Debbie Cooke (her mom from up north, Shannon & Nick Zalewski. They reflected on Joseph being a man of love in action and challenged us all to notice the same in one another and in those we met today.

We joined with the students, staff, and parishioners of San Jose School for a brief ceremony in their town center



And then walked with them and their band in a parade through the town of Boca Chica in honor of their patron saint and ours! We wound up back at San Jose Episcopal School for a game of volleyball, duck-duck-goose, basketball and red light-green light with the students and a few of their teachers.



Barbara MacKenzie and Shannon Zalewski visited with the staff at the nursing home to assess and prepare for their time with them tomorrow. Bob Lees scoped out the construction work to be done in their kitchen.

We were then treated to a delicious authentic lunch of local cuisine with the staff. What a joy filled time.

During our closing prayer circle tonight there were many tears and much laughter as we reflected upon the ways we saw love in action today. We are bonding deeply with the people of the Dominican and with one another. The presence of Christ is palpable.



## 2 THOUGHTS ON "DAY 4 - FEAST OF SAN JOSE!"

1.  **Mary Naughton**

[MARCH 20, 2014 AT 7:49 PM](#)

Sounds so wonderful. So Spirit-filled! Wish I was th here but with you in love and prayer. We remembered you all at Lenten prayer last night.

1.  **Mary Naughton**

[MARCH 20, 2014 AT 7:52 PM](#)

Cell phone strikes again - there and Lenten.

**March 20, 2014,**

## **Day 5 – Feast of St. Cuthbert**

Buenas Noches amigos y familia,

We are exhausted, a good exhausted, but definitely exhausted in the love of Christ expressed today. Our prayer team led by Joan Fox, Barbara MacKenzie, Matt Russell, and Gail Drane led us in understanding mission through the eyes of St. Cuthbert, known for his dedication to prayer and connection with Creation.

We arrived at San Jose Episcopal School, church, and nursing home and presented Fr. Sandino and their principal with a new router, and



Their preschool class with tons of requested teddy bears (they were so appreciative), books, puzzles, and games!



Along with Fr. Sandino, we presented the director of the nursing home with dresses and shirts made by Sassy Sewers and medical supplies which were part of those purchased with monies donated by the ECW.



By then it was recess and we had time to interact with the students in the courtyard of their school. They thought our Spanish pronunciation was hilarious.



After recess we experienced a cultural exchange in the classroom. We split into three different groups. Some of us were with the high schoolers, who were more proficient in English. At the end of our class time with them they presented us with a banner made especially for us by several of the classes in their school. You'll see it this Sunday in church!



After lunch, work continued with the painting of the school's picnic tables which were in dire need of a fresh coat.



Meanwhile Bob Lees, Nick Zalewski, and Mike Mahady replaced hinges and knobs and repaired the cabinets in the kitchen of the nursing home across the street from the school.



Another part of our team was busy working with the elderly there... work that was painful because there just aren't enough staff to meet the needs of the residents.



Even still, by the end of the day, certificates were presented and there were smiles all around.



Indicative of our special bonding as a team during this week was the fact that after our evening prayer circle tonight we lingered for quite awhile reflecting on our Spirit filled day.

With Brightest Blessings,

Rev. Wendy

**ONE THOUGHT ON "DAY 5 - MARCH 20, 2014, FEAST OF ST. CUTHBERT"**

1.  **The Wrona Family**

MARCH 21, 2014 AT 1:41 PM

What a Fantastic week you have captured and been able to share with all of us back home through your daily updates. We look forward to your safe return and the photo montage that is sure to follow...God Bless You All!

**March 21, 2014**

## **Day 6**

Dear wonderful family and friends,

Today's prayer leaders aka Team Awesome (Tiffany Cheung, Jessica Hyland, Joann Pariso, and Debra Tittkemeier) led us in our opening prayer circle today by starting out down on the beach with Sunrise Salutations. The stretch in the early morning light was invigorating. They then passed a hat with everyone's names in it and we each picked out one name of someone on our team with the instructions that we would be commenting on them in our closing prayer circle this evening.

After breakfast we set out for Gautier to paint the home of an elderly woman named Petromina.



The family was overwhelmed with gratitude for their new paint job and we were overwhelmed with humility and joy in service to our Lord.

We returned to the hotel, took a welcome shower, and then sorted our bags for our return trip home. Our evening dinner was a special celebration of gratitude and we were so pleased that Fr. Sandino and Ysabel could join us. He gave a moving expression of gratitude for the work and joy we brought the people with whom we worked. We thanked him for his help and servant heart. We are indeed the ones who received such joy as well. Praise God!

