

St. Joseph's Mission Trip – 2016

Trip to the Dominican Republic





March 6, 2016

Mission Trip Eve

Thanks, St. Joe's and beyond, for all of your support in helping us. We make this adventure in Christ a reality. Thanks to Jim Johnson, James Peterson, Katherine Metzger, Charlotte Lees, Loretta & Gary Matthews, and Calvin Paris for being willing to transport us to the Ft. Lauderdale airport! We are One Body in Christ.



Please follow us on this blog and pray for us daily. Our team of twenty-two sacred, willing, and open souls appreciates you and sends our gratitude and love. Excited! God is so good.

March 7, 2016

We're here!

Hi, wonderful St. Joe's family and friends! What an honor to be sharing this adventure with twenty-one companions on the Way of Christ. Everyone is doing whatever needs to be done and getting along so joyfully. I failed to mention Brad Poirier among our drivers this morning who was our much needed back up. We love you Brad!

We arrived safe and sound settled into our rooms, sorted all our supplies, prepared for our photo project, shared in fellowship, broke bread, laughed, and prayed together. We have a very full day tomorrow in Gautier and I promise to have figured out how to upload pictures by tomorrow night. Gay has caught some beautiful moments.

Thanks for keeping us all in your prayers this week!

Buenos noches!

Reverenda Wendy

March 7, 2016

And Now Some Pics To Start Our Day!

Dear friends,

Okay, so this is an early morning test to upload some photographs from yesterday for you. We're still trying to figure out how to upload Gay's so stay tuned for tonight's blog. (Sylvia to the rescue, I'm sure!)

I love these people! Here we are at



Ft. Lauderdale airport! All present and accounted for, praise God!



On the plane!



And here's our Prayer Team planning. They will lead us in prayer today. Every day we'll have a different group of 4 leading us in Morning Prayer, mealtime graces, and compline. Rev. Mary and I will lead our last day.

Barbara left the hotel at 6am when Fr. Sandino's son Victor came to pick her up for a surprise visit to the nursing home for the elderly indigent. We sponsor staffing and supplies for them and so they must meet protocol for care. DON Barbara on the job!

Roberto, Cristina, and Marta, our hosts, are as gracious and accommodating as ever. Pics of them coming too. God is so good.

We have a very full day ahead of us and we gratefully greet this day!

Joyfully,

Rev. Wendy

March 8, 2016

So Many Touched In Gautier – Our First Day..

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6:8

We gathered at our circle ready and fresh to meet the day. We were led in prayer by Shannon, LuAnn, Dawna, and Makenzie and even danced. Our driver and friend for the week, Juan, picked us up with Jerry who would help us paint and off we went to Gautier.



When I tell you that these twenty-two souls are willing servants of the Lord believe me. Fr. Sandino and Ysabel, his wife, and their little grandson Victory Freddy greeted us at Santo Tomas and we were off and running. Today is the day for our photo project. The children who come look forward to seeing their pictures all year. Joan and Debra did a great job of organizing us.





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Meanwhile, our paint crew painted the entire outside of the building next door to Santo Tomas which serves as a day care during the week and a space for special events of the church.



Makenzie helped with painting too. We took shifts going down the street to the school to sort, fit, and deliver our uniforms and shoes.



The children were so excited. You can see the street behind us here. The school is just down the street from Santo Tomas. Back to the hotel about 5:30 exhausted in a good way for a day well spent... then showers, a delicious dinner, and our closing prayer circle. Tomorrow we paint the inside of the building and a home in the village.

Thank you all.

March 9, 2016

Simeon's Song – Day Two

Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised; for these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, whom you have prepared for all the world to see: A Light to enlighten the nation, and the glory of your people Israel. – A Song of Simeon

We met a man named Simeon. Actually, we'd seen him several years ago hobbling around Gautier on two canes due



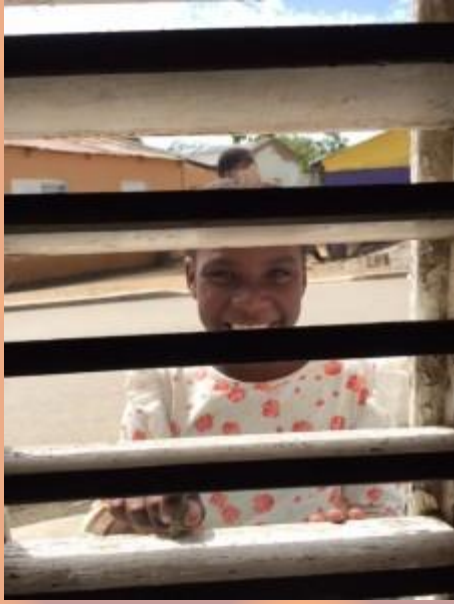
to an unknown deformity in his legs. He is a devout Christian and a member of Santo Tomas church.



The picture below is the way his house looked before we began our painting yesterday morning. He has no electricity though you'll see a picture below of LuAnn in front of the wiring that was hanging all over his house. He assured us that none were live so we just painted around them. He has no indoor plumbing but does have a little spigot out back that's piped in from a cistern. Simeon was so pleased we were there.



The little girl (below left) was helping to scrape loose paint from the window with a little rock and was thrilled to be helping as were any of the local children. And here's Shannon holding up the wall in Simeon's kitchen so Karen C, painting on the other side, wouldn't knock it down. The walls were particle board. Hard to believe they'll stay put.





The woman in the center in the picture to the right is also a member of Santo Tomas. We painted her house two years ago. She brought us coffee in gratitude for helping Simeon. "Uncle" Bob was a great foreman for us. Sorry for no after shot. Gay's pictures will be shown in church and you'll see how much better it looked when we finished.



Back at the church work continued. Our task is to paint the entire outside (finished now) and the entire inside (will finish Wed).



Five of us went to the nursing home for the day and in our closing circle we heard of beautiful encounters between the residents and our team. One of the important parts of any mission or pilgrimage is not only helping others but our own faith development in Christ and we are doing so in profound ways. We see Christ in the hearts and minds of these dear people and in one another.

March 10, 2016

Martine and Realizing What's Important – Day 3



And all around us... and the children are watching... always the children are watching.



Today we had the privilege of accepting an invitation to paint Martine's home.

Below is a picture of his bathroom sink. What we see in this village in some of the homes are sinks or toilets but no plumbing... no running water inside so they have buckets and bowls ... or not and most always a big bowl out back for washing.



We finished the painting of his home by 1pm. He was so happy he was hugging us all.



We went back to the building next to Santo Tomas church for lunch and then finished painting all but one room of the interior sometimes upside down (that's Joan Fox) and sometimes up really high.



Interspersed throughout our day the children come and in their eyes we see you, Lord.
We dance with them, laugh, play soccer and throw hacky sack.



they remind us to be joyful as they are even in their poverty. As we reflected on our day in our closing prayer time, the moments of connection with these people are what we know. Maybe that's all we know in life. We spoke of wishing we could do more, help more, give them better living conditions and finally it's that connecting in the name of God's love that matters... loving our neighbors as ourselves. What a privilege to serve here.



Planning prayer time for Thursday



Writing collects we'll share with you on Sunday

This is how we get around:



Our host, Roberto

Thank you, most heavenly God, for giving us heaven on earth... for teaching us about your realm, your love, your joy

March 11, 2016

Now Boca Chica – Day 4



Dawn on Thursday was magnificent. Terrance caught the sun.

We gathered for prayer, as we do each morning, giving thanks for another day to serve. We were given homework by our prayer team to notice how we were being asked to stretch... how we would expand our boundaries during the day, how we'd get out of our comfort zones.



Our two mother/daughter teams and ReeboB are ready to go.



The nursing home where we worked this day is right across the street from San Jose Church and San Jose Episcopal School so before we began our work we went over to the school and delivered the hair bows so lovingly hand made by Barbara Tkac (former teacher at our school SJS and now at Gulfstream School).



They loved them and were so proud. We delivered the router for the computer lab Fr. Sandino is setting up in Gautier (thank you, anonymous donor!) and then (oh, big surprise) we got to painting the iron gates that surround the nursing home and some of the interior walls. We alternated times with the residents... spending time, helping them exercise, doing crafts, and lots of singing.



Sally's Italian friend.



LuAnn prepping crafts



Uncle Bob the paint guy



Lunch at school. Ysabel is way at end of table standing...



Brandon, our bus driver's son with Grant.



All the kids looking at Grant's phone

Then back to the hotel to finish collects and have dinner and share how we were stretched ... what new insights we gleaned, new awarenesses of God's infinite love for ALL people.



We thank God for a beautiful day.

March 12, 2016

Day 5 – San Jose Day – Early!

Usually we are here in the DR for the appointed feast day of our patron saint, St. Joseph, which falls on March 19th. This year, since we had to come early, Fr. Sandino and the powers that be decided to hold the parade early and celebrate with us! Nice, huh?



After a great breakfast, we boarded the bus for downtown Boca Chica. We'd brought the shakers with us and were ready to march! The picture below on the right is the band coming down the street assembling before the pre-parade ceremony.



Children from San Pedro were also in the parade for the first time so there were two bands and excited children galore. This little girl wanted everyone to know that God is love:



And this little one wasn't quite sure what we were all doing marching through her neighborhood:



Festivities continued and then we went to San Jose school for lunch provided by Ysabel (Fr. Sandino's wife) and some of the teachers.



The guy to Rev. Wendy's right is Jerry who helped us with our painting all week and also drives the school bus for San Jose school.



The girls loved Sophia's hair and ...



Playing with Bob and Karen and Grant, Sophia, and Makenzie (below). We relaxed the rest of the afternoon after a very grueling week of work. We had a special dinner with Fr. Sandino and Ysabel back at the hotel. After dinner, we had a special "awards" ceremony created and led by Barbara, Gay, and Joann. Really funny. In our closing circle our prayer team led us in sharing a word or phrase of what this week has meant to us. Awareness, gratitude, joy, love, eyes-to-see, challenge, peace, hope, and what a ripple effect this week can have on our lives and the lives of those with whom we interact. Closing circle and Holy Eucharist in the morning and then we'll be back in the USA tomorrow afternoon! Our hearts are full of love and gratitude for our beautiful Dominican friends. We have been changed and formed by their love. Thank you, gracious and loving God. Hope to see you all this Sunday at either the 9:30 service or the 11:45 Unplugged when our Mission Team will be giving the "sermon".

Thanks again for all of your love, prayers, and support everyone!

