



Church of St. Patrick | 6820 St. Patrick's Lane | Edina, MN 55439 | 952.941.3164 | www.stpatrick-edina.org

Guatemala Pilgrimage Reflection

We joined the parish in late 2008, with the desire to get involved in the community and find a parish that we could call home. Through St. Patrick's many programs, we have been able to achieve that goal not only in our local community here in the Twin Cities, but internationally as well.

We first learned about St. Patrick's Cobán Connection from Tom Lynch at Evening for Brighter Tomorrow's. We were excited to learn about the on-going mission and the opportunity to travel to Guatemala in mid-April 2009 seeing that we were fortunate enough to have participated in similar mission trips while in college.

With the help of Br. Paul Friedman (of Blue Cloud Abbey) as our translator, Maria del Carmen gave us a wonderful guided tour of Guatemala City and the countryside on our trip to Cobán. Upon arriving at the Monestario Benedictino, we were greeted by the monks. From here, the week was just beginning. It is hard to explain in words, but the opportunity to live as the monks do for an entire week, embracing their culture, and praying together was truly priceless.

Only highlighting a few experiences does not provide enough justice for all that we enjoyed in Guatemala; however, here are a few of our favorites:

1) Celebrating mass with Fr. Pedro and the people of Aldea San Tomas was beautiful. Even though the entire service was performed in Q'eqchi', a native language we did not understand, the essence and core of the mass was alive and well. To faithfully celebrate with our brothers and sisters in Christ, to witness their faith and passion for the Lord, and to receive such gracious warmth and welcome was beyond our wildest dreams. In addition, during the service we witnessed a young couple's wedding. For us, this was an ever apparent reminder that a wedding, at its core, is about Christ and the love you share together, and not necessarily having to worry about flowers, gowns, decorations, etc.



2) Delivering 110 water filters between two different aldeas proved to be a very humbling yet rewarding experience. There are not enough words to describe the emotions that one experiences when given the opportunity to bring clean water and hope to people truly in need. Each of us was given the chance to personally hand out filters to those families selected to receive one. To see the joy and gratitude in their faces was priceless.



Our pilgrimage to Cobán, Guatemala was an amazing opportunity. We took a leap of faith to go on the pilgrimage together, not only as an opportunity to grow and experience a new culture and deepen our faith, but also as a means to conclude our first year of marriage. Upon our return, we realized that this trip provided all these things and **so** much more. Thank you for your support and prayers during our pilgrimage and for your continued prayers for the on-going efforts in Cobán.

Peace and God bless,
Matt and Julie Fisher

