

Ms. Louniza P. Napay 「第 8 回フィリピン姉妹校来校引率者より」

My St. Paul - Sendai Shirayuri Exchange Program Experience Japan is one of the countries that I have wanted to visit since I was in Grade School. What I read about Japan then really fascinated me so much that I attended Nihongo class when I was in college and learned the language in a week's time. Unfortunately, I have had no chance to use it through the years, so I lost the skill. So I was so happy when I learned last April that I was one of the teachers assigned to accompany 23 students for the exchange program. The moment I stepped inside ANA Flight NH820, I already felt Japan's hospitality. Then the warm smiles of Ms. Shibata and Ms. Hiraoka welcomed us in Narita Airport. Everything I read, heard, and knew about Japan was now in front of my very eyes, and I basked in it. Disneyland brought back the laughter of my youth. I feasted my eyes on the scenery from Tokyo to Sendai, Sendai to Matsushima and back. Even the travel to and from the home of my hosts, Mr. Yoshihiko and Mrs. Midori Hirai, calmed me. The different school activities showcased the talents and social skills of the students. The Nihongo class, tea ceremony, and visit to the temples deepened my understanding of Japanese culture. The food prepared by my host family were all so delicious and lovingly prepared that remembering them now still makes my mouth water. The teachers and students were so open and pure that interacting with them was so lovely. The Mass that we attended and the peacefulness of Japan enriched my spirituality. The people I met, the activities we participated in, and the places we visited all made an impact and left joy in my heart, and I will remember them for the rest of my life. I want to say this to my Japanese friends: even if I did not see the sakura in bloom, just your description of it and its significance to your people made our goodbyes easy: it taught me how to leave you gently. Truly, I am so secure that I have a home and family in the "land of the morning sun."

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日本は小学校の頃からずっと訪れたいと思っていた国の一つです。本で読んだ日本は私を大変魅了し、大学では日本語の授業を受けていました。昨年4月、23名の生徒を引率して日本を訪れると知った時には大変うれしかったです。ANAに搭乗した時、私は既に日本のおもてなしの精神を感じました。そして、成田空港に到着した時、思い描いていた日本が目の前に広がりました。日本語の授業、茶道体験、松島の瑞巖寺訪問などを通して、日本文化に対する理解を更に深めました。ホストファミリーの平井先生ご夫妻にもお世話になり、お宅でご馳走になった食事の美味しさも忘れることができません。とても開かれたところで純真な仙台白百合学園の先生方、生徒の皆さんとの交流は素晴らしいものでした。参加したミサや日本の静けさは私の霊性を深めました。皆さんと過ごした時間はこれからも私の心の中にずっと大切なものとして残ります。日本に私の家族が出来たことをとても嬉しく思います。