

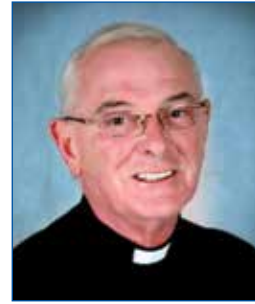
# St. Anthony Indian Mission

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May 2020



From the desk of Fr. Patrick McGuire

"Staying Safe" is a phrase that in these last few weeks has taken on a whole new significance, so allow me to extend my sincere wish that you and your family are safe and well. We are very grateful that the vast majority of the Zuni Pueblo members are staying healthy and doing their best to keep the pandemic out of our close-knit community.

Meanwhile, life must go on as they say. At St. Anthony's we continue to keep students supplied with materials for learning, and as far as it is possible to help them progress in their education. I continue to be amazed at the enthusiasm and energy of our teachers. Clearly, it takes an enormous effort to prepare study packages geared to individual students as opposed to being present in the classroom and observing how well a lesson has been received. Yet our teachers are doing just that.

I am happy to report that our experiment in teleconferencing is proving to be a success despite its limitations. Each teacher has devised their own method of using the available technology. Ms. Trudy and Sr. Raje (with smaller classes) are making individual telephone calls to their students and their parents. Other teachers employ several conference calls during the week, while junior high students have daily audio/visual conferences with Mr. Jon, Ms. Laura and Sr. Ansi.



Our latest innovation involved Ms. Chimoni and the kindergarteners. She needed greater flexibility with visual demonstrations for the little ones, so by using a small camcorder, "Miss C" acted out her class in front of empty desks, each with a student's homework bag on top. I had to chuckle as Ms. Chimoni pointed to a homework bag and said, "this is yours -- make sure you send it back to me with lots of work done." Cheap DVD's were quickly made for insertion into the next study packages. There are packages even for Pre-K: no one is left out.

Sadly, I have to report the sudden death of our former PE teacher, the much loved Miss Cece. She left in October last year when her military husband was assigned to Texas. There was a problem with her medication and despite her husband's efforts to revive her she died on the way to the hospital. We were all stunned and shocked at the loss. With current restrictions we could not even attend her funeral. However, the Sisters and I offered Mass for her and for her young family. An extra prayer for the family would be much appreciated.

Given our current "skeletal staff," I have the daily duty of collecting and processing the incoming mail. Priscilla prepares our acknowledgment letters and then drops them off again for signature and dispatch. Perhaps I am simply being sentimental, but opening the letters and processing the donations makes me feel even closer to you -- our friends and donors -- than ever before. I confess that the number of "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys" I say in thanksgiving as I sign the letters might slow the process, but I am sure they let the good Lord know



how thankful I am to be part of this great "St. Anthony's Family."

Normally in May I would be telling you of our plans for graduation. I cannot do that this year since, for the time being at least, no gatherings can be planned. We are currently looking toward early August as a time to reschedule graduation. The consensus of opinion seems to be that "social distancing" will still be in place as schools reopen in the fall. How on earth can you keep young people apart from each other? Nevertheless, the safety of staff and students must be our priority and we need to prepare. Some of our classrooms are just too small for students to be kept at a safe distance from each other.

Sr. Marsha, maintenance Mike and I swapped hats recently and became temporary architects and engineers. Finally we came up with a scheme to significantly enlarge classrooms: knock down this wall or that wall; move the library; shift offices; move computers, fire alarms and intercoms. We also consulted the faculty and got their opinions -- after all, it will be their working environment! Finally we settled on a "modus operandi" as scholars would say and gathered in the faculty room to take a breath. It was then that Mike noticed an old plan of St. Anthony's tacked to the wall that no one had paid attention to in years. It is dated from the 1960's. With a couple of notable exceptions, our new innovative plan will actually restore the buildings to the configuration of their original design! It may well have been a humbling discovery, but honestly we laughed like little kids. Truly, what is new under Heaven?

The two notable differences between plans ancient and new are the location of the library (which will be more accessible to the whole School on the ground floor), and the building of additional restrooms for the relocated junior high. The costs, though significant, will be limited primarily to labor.

I would like to mention two new friends of St. Anthony's, John and his wife Joni. They have been feverishly working on our website making it more "user friendly" and attractive. They have taken a great worry and burden from my shoulders, but of course I still need to play a small part. Please take a moment to visit the site [www.stanthonyzuni.org](http://www.stanthonyzuni.org) as it is developing.

Despite the lockdown, we are optimistic at St. Anthony's. Teachers wave happily to each other from different sides of the quadrangle dutifully masked and "social distanced;" there are big smiles from students and parents as they pick up study packs; everyone enjoys the teleconferencing and all of us celebrate that joyful spirit that is never far from our School.

I am unsure if I write to you as pastor, maintenance assistant, clerk or gardener, but I do write to sincerely thank you for making St. Anthony Mission School possible. May God bless you and your family abundantly -- and please stay safe.



Sincerely,

Fr. Patrick McGuire

P.S. I have included some rather stark pictures of our empty campus. May we soon be able to return to "safe and normal" and may our little School come alive once again with the laughter of children!