

# St. Anthony Indian Mission

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April 2022

From the desk of Fr. Patrick McGuire

Greetings once again from springtime in Zuni! (Sounds like a good title for a song. . .)

As I write to you, school is on break for Easter. While I am thankful for some quiet time, the campus seems unnaturally still with the absence of the students. At the School Mass on the last day of classes, I asked how many wanted to come to school instead of taking vacation. About half of the hands went up; needless to say they were all in the lower grades. But it was a lovely feeling to know how much the kids enjoy St. Anthony's.

Perhaps the early Easter celebrations may have had something to do with the sense of excitement. Lenten observances were interrupted with an Easter egg hunt. In fact, we had several of them. Rather than have all the students searching at one time, covid protocols dictated hunting in smaller groups. It also gave the littlest ones the best chance of finding eggs. I was startled to feel my eyes misting up as two 2nd graders came over and gave me their largest eggs. Innocent hearts are so full of generosity!



The academics of St. Anthony's are proceeding with a good balance of study and fun. Our first graders are soaking up their lessons at an amazing rate with reading skills becoming noticeably better. I also observed their teacher, the quiet and reserved Sr. Satya, being chased around the playground by her students in a game of tag. I am not sure who was laughing more heartily!

A feature of this last month was a poster competition among the students with a winner selected from each grade. This was an unusual event in that the theme of the posters was Peace. Following class exercises on "Care for the Earth" and Lenten meditations, there were some surprising artistic renderings. The students presented their masterpieces at the beginning of Mass and I had the joy of presenting medals to the winners -- which they wore all the way home from school. The variety of themes enabled me to speak on different types of peace: the absence of war, economic prosperity and serenity of heart. I think the message took root even among the youngest.



With the absence of Ms. Edwina on maternity leave (she gave birth to a beautiful little girl who was baptized on Easter Sunday) Mr. Bobelu, the brother of Ms. Bobelu our seventh grade teacher, has been faithfully filling in. He had retired from middle school teaching and was a little unsure about handling younger students. However, he proved to be a wonderful addition to the faculty and we see the results of his excellent skills. As his time ended and we separated for the break, he was quick to let me know that he would be happy to come to St. Anthony's at any time. I had the feeling that he simply

enjoyed his time with our delightful students. St. Anthony's clearly worked its magic once again.

This break may well be a small "time-out," but for those of us whom I like to call the support staff there is no letup in work. Although I did insist that maintenance and custodial staff have a few days off during the Easter break. Ms. Cordelia and Mr. Isiah have both been sanitizing the School yet again. The cafeteria is used on Sunday for coffee after Mass. Of course on Easter Sunday there was yet another egg hunt organized by Ms. B, a member of the school board. This was the first "potluck" breakfast that we have had in two years. The parishioners were just as excited as the children. In less than thirty minutes there was not an egg left to be found. Once again there were heartwarming moments as I noticed the older children share their finds with the younger little people.



Next year in 2023, we will celebrate the centenary of St. Anthony's and the current Mission's foundation. I will of course bring you up to date on our schedule of celebrations, which most likely will be held at the end of September or early October 2023.

Meanwhile, some of our buildings are showing their age just a little. The main school buildings are in good general repair thanks to the work carried out two years ago. But of course they will need a little more "spit and polish" plus some better audio-visual equipment. Our largest task will be dealing with the gymnasium. Despite the gusty spring winds we are enduring at the moment, Mike and Matt the maintenance men, are working on the gym roof. It has a tunnel shaped center within the rectangular frame of the building which makes it especially prone to leaks. We managed to touch up the internal paintwork last summer, but it will need further redecoration. It is a major task since internally the gym is 30 by 60 feet and 30 feet high!

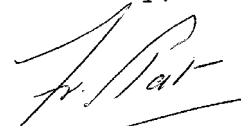
During the break we have had six volunteer veterinary staff staying with us on campus. There is no veterinary staff in our locality, the nearest being forty miles from here. The Earth Ship organization has been building a clinic for several years (as funds become available to them), and they too have been hosted at St. Anthony's. We see this as another small contribution to the local community.

It's hard to believe that we are entering into the final portion of the school year. There is, of course, much excitement amongst the 8th grade students who are now thinking of themselves as high schoolers. We keep reminding them that they still have to earn their graduation certificates. (I am certain all will do so with flying colors!)

Recently, we welcomed a group of visitors from the Catholic Extension Society which helps support many rural parishes. Despite the absence of students during Easter break, I gave them the grand tour of the campus and spoke of the school history and the joy amongst our pupils. I believe they were suitably impressed. But of course they should be since St. Anthony's is a wonderful gift to individuals and community alike.

As always, I thank you for your many generous donations and for making it all possible.

Sincerely,



Fr. Patrick McGuire