

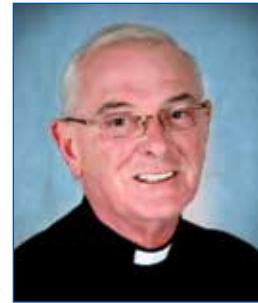
# St. Anthony Indian Mission

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From the desk of Fr. Patrick McGuire

I give thanks to the Lord and to you that we have concluded yet another successful year at St. Anthony's School. I really need to share with you some of the "goings-on" of these last few weeks.

Although Covid protocols have been relaxed elsewhere in New Mexico, the Zuni Pueblo still has a mask mandate in force, and so we have rigidly adhered to our Covid protocols here at St. Anthony's as well. I am grateful to our school board and Sr. Marsha, our principal, for this wise decision which has added a sense of confidence among people despite the additional work for teachers and staff. We look forward to setting the protocols aside in the coming school year. Our hope is to restore all sports and school activities in what will be our centenary year.

The last weeks of the school year were of course marked with celebrations among individual classes and for the whole school. Good Sr. Marsha reminded the faculty that along with the parties there had to be teaching time. I think that in its own way added to the joy of the celebrations.

We ended with the awards ceremony in the school cafeteria, in which, for the first time in two years, the whole school could be present together. The buzz among the students, which I enjoy so much, was definitely present. There were many A and B honors certificates to be distributed to the credit of all our students. Sr. Marsha remarked that for the first time in her long career there were no students with perfect attendance. It was a sharp reminder of the effects of the virus. I pray we will do even better next year

Always a delight, the Pre-K transition ceremony took place, during which the little ones sang and danced. Although the class was small this year, it was a fitting tribute to Ms. Phyllis who is embarking on a well-deserved retirement.

The highlight of the month was, of course, our graduation ceremony during which I had the honor of presenting diplomas to all sixteen of our 8th grade students. This was my 8th graduation ceremony, beautifully executed by the students who demonstrated an amazing dignity. Our little church was packed for the occasion! Most of the graduates had opted for traditional Zuni dress which made the occasion all the more significant. I never cease to marvel at the time and effort that accompanies the dressing in traditional apparel -- especially with the leggings that the ladies wear. It is quite time consuming to complete the ensemble.



A particular delight for me was the number of younger students who volunteered to form a choir for the occasion. They sang their hearts out! This was another "first" for us and a tribute to the students and Sr. Marsha (the guitarist) who had been forming choirs for our "All School Masses." For the graduation

ceremony, Sr. Marsha had to be within the body of the church and was a little concerned, but the students rose to the occasion. The graduation service is still available to watch on our livestream website <http://stanthonyzunichurch.dyndns.org>.

The graduation was preceded by the 8th Grade Breakfast, during which the 7th graders (decked out in immaculate white shirts) served the graduating class (and me of course) at table. It was quite a spectacle, equaled only by the amount of celebratory pancakes consumed. (I confess to taking a major part in the indulgence.)

Although the school year has ended, summer school has begun and lasts for two weeks. It is an indicator of the success of this year that only a limited number of students need to participate in the summer school. Following summer school, we have a one week's break after which we begin our four day Art and Sports Camp with over 50 students already enrolled. (This has been a dream of mine for several years.) And that in turn is followed by a Bible Camp run by our friends from Daphne, Alabama. While all of these camps are taking place, I will be driving the staff crazy as we push forward with maintenance work on our fifteen buildings. (How they put up with me I will never understand!) So we still have busy weeks ahead. . . .

I mentioned in my last letter that the students have been engaged in pottery making during their Zuni Language and Culture classes. (I am still proud that we have our own kiln bought at public auction for just \$10!) I can't resist showing you an example or two of their work. I am overawed by what seems to be a natural gift of artistry among the Zuni. I was present with the fourth grade when Ms. Cordie told them they could take their work home that day. The cheers that went up were deafening. I could not resist showing the students a gift of a bear carved from translucent stone which I received from one of the parishioners when I was inducted as pastor in 2015. Eyes opened wide and one of the students immediately said, "I am going to try that!" I just wonder where that will lead.



Yes, wondering where the future will lead is something I ponder often. How our graduates (some of whom I have known for seven years) will fare as they enter high school and perhaps venture on to college is not so much a concern since I know that they have been given a strong educational and moral foundation. But I hope and pray that they will have the opportunity to use their gifts and talents to build fruitful lives for themselves and families. With ten of our alumni recognized in this year's National Honors List much confidence is generated.

For today we can rejoice that another year has ended successfully with peace, growth and happiness. As the Irish would say -- "a thousand thanks" for making it all possible.



Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Fr. Patrick McGuire.

Fr. Patrick McGuire