

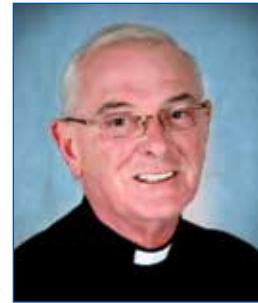
# St. Anthony Indian Mission

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July 2022

From the desk of Fr. Patrick McGuire

Greetings once again from the high desert and all of us at St. Anthony's. I write "all," but essentially I am the only resident on campus. The students are still on vacation, our two sisters from India are still enjoying their well-earned time in India (the first in four years), and Sr. Marsha is with her congregation in California. Even the church choir is on vacation, leaving me to regale the congregation with my singing. With just the dog and me watching over the Mission, it can be very quiet here of an evening, although not so during the working day.

June and July are traditionally our maintenance months with repairs and general clean-up. However this year June became a month with students on campus almost every day. After school officially closed, the summer school got underway. I may have mentioned previously that there were reduced numbers attending this year with just four teachers on duty. This was actually a very positive development since there were far fewer students in need of "catch up classes" this time around. It is a good reflection on both our faculty and the students that the School ended the academic year with such positive results.

A few days after the end of summer school, twelve ladies from Kansas arrived to lead an "Art Camp." Several of the senior parishioners had told me that during the summer the Mission used to always host games and other fun activities for the students. Our conversations have inspired me to restore some of these summer activities so as to occupy the students and provide parents with some relief time.

It was three years ago that we originally planned the Art Camp. And then Covid intervened and we had to cancel. The cancellation was repeated the following year. As a result, 2022 was a small triumph for us as both art and sports teachers arrived on campus. The teachers were amazed at how quickly all the students learned new skills and produced fine work. The Art Camp ended with the ladies inviting parents and guardians to join the students for lunch during which our young people danced, sang, and proudly showed off their art. I am deeply grateful to those twelve ladies who have promised to come again next year if it is possible.



A few hours after the Saturday departure of the Kansas group, some 21 young people (with chaperones) arrived from Daphne, Alabama to lead the Vacation Bible School. It was 10:30pm before they arrived after a 13 hour journey. It is the miracle of youth that they immediately tried out the playground equipment and organized their sleeping arrangements. My Sunday circuit of churches necessitates

my leaving Zuni at 7:00am and by the time I returned for 10:00am Mass they had the cafeteria organized and were "spruced up" for Sunday Mass.

The Zuni Youth Program had arranged a sports program that week which meant that our attendance was reduced to about 20 students. While a little disappointing for me, it did not deter the young people. (I took consolation in recognizing that other events in the town pointed to a return to a normal way of life in Zuni.) Our kids had "a ball" and soon told their friends who turned up to join in the fun each day. Plays, songs, games and sports were all interspersed with prayer and spiritual thoughts shared by the young people. I could hardly believe my eyes when kids well known to me appeared dressed as saints and angels! Whoever said religion was not joyful?

The young Alabamans all took turns in working around the campus. Several prepared breakfast and lunch for everyone. Then they divided into groups working in 45 minute sessions in the sun pulling weeds; some were involved with the students while others helped with painting and some of the boys helped dig out an underground water leak discovered on campus. They even hosted a teen evening for high school students. Overall, they were very impressive, with joyful spirits that simply flowed out into our Zuni kids.



It was not all work, of course, since time was allotted for hiking in our hills, exploring El Morrow National Monument, and even taking part in line dancing in Gallup. Each day began with Mass in the church and ended with night prayer together. Their visit was inspirational for all us, and as Vacation Bible School came to an end there were many tears shed by young and old as goodbyes were said. Hearts and spirits were truly touched.

Meanwhile, the tyrannical Fr. Pat was "encouraging" our maintenance people with "let's get this job finished and move on." The annual stripping and re-waxing of classroom floors is always a major task; until it is completed little else can be done in the main part of the School. Thankfully, as we entered July that task was almost completed, and we are back to other necessary repairs. (I give thanks for July 4th holiday in more ways than one!)

For the few of us still around, these last few weeks have flown by. But there is no time to slacken since a great deal lies ahead of us in the new school year. We have our accreditation visit and inspection in October; a full program of events including the return of monthly bingo; Christmas Pageant and Native American Day and beyond all this -- an eye firmly fixed on our centenary celebrations in October 2023. There is never a quiet moment at St. Anthony's!

I am so looking forward to the return of the students shortly. Their presence and vitality re-energize all of us, and make what little we can do so very worthwhile. Thank you again for making it all possible!

Sincerely,

Fr. Patrick McGuire