

# St. Anthony Indian Mission

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October 2022

From the desk of Fr. Patrick McGuire

Warm greetings from the chilly High Desert, as we near the end of the first quarter of our school year. While I am putting away my lightweight summer clothes and digging out my long-sleeved shirts, I realize that winter is almost upon us. But although temperatures might be falling, it doesn't bring down the enthusiasm and joy of our young students. The infectious enthusiasm of the young is always an inspiration for me, especially when my old bones are slowing me down.

As I mentioned in my last letter, we have at last been able to take part in cross country running. Four evenings each week, the students are diligently training under the guidance of Ms. Deeann (teacher) and Mr. Matt (a stalwart member of our maintenance crew who is an ex-marine and well loved by the students). Such is the excitement that at times I have had to step out of the way of the stampede! This fall, our runners have taken part in several races and have acquitted themselves in a most excellent fashion. We are hosting the final event of the season, and thankfully the weather has so far been favorable as the kids run the demanding courses. It may be the end of the cross country season, but we are consoled by the fact that basketball season is right around the corner! How can we ever keep pace with youthful vigor?

We also recently completed the election of our student council. The election process truly rivaled any major political campaign! Posters went up all over St. Anthony's. All of the candidates gave five-minute-long speeches to the entire School to elicit votes. Many of the speeches were excellent



and carefully crafted; obviously, there are quite a few budding politicians among our student body. (Hopefully, we will have instilled a strong moral compass within them for the future.) The council was inaugurated during the "All School Mass" with each member taking a light from the school candle and promising to serve to the best of their abilities.

On an outreach front, our 2nd graders, on their own initiative, have begun a "socks drive." Last time we did this I had the pleasure of delivering bundles of new socks to the homeless in Gallup. My own experience with people who spend their days walking the streets tells me how vital it is that they

keep their feet warm and in good shape. So our kids are addressing a real human need in the small way that they can.



As much as I enjoy reflecting on the social life at St. Anthony's, I need to remind myself that we are primarily an academic institution. And on that front, reports from all of our teachers are very encouraging. We have another parent/teacher conference day in October, and I am sure that everyone will be pleased with the results. One evening I answered the school door after hours, and a parent was there to collect her daughter. Unbeknown to me, Ms. Laura was providing math tutoring to some of her students who were struggling. When I told the student her ride was there

she said: "please just a few more minutes 'till I finish this problem." A moment like that truly warms the heart when I witness the enthusiasm of a student to learn and the dedication of a teacher to help them progress. How blessed are we at St. Anthony's?

I have been manning our finance office of late while Ms. Priscilla has been looking after her sick husband, George. I am sorry to report that unexpectedly George went to the Lord in his sleep one night. He was a good friend of St. Anthony's. Although retired, he would come into the School during the summer to paint throughout the campus. He and I had many a laughter-filled conversation as he gave me good advice on how to maintain some of our century-old buildings. Many of our faculty attended our prayer vigil for George and shared the deep sense of grief experienced by Priscilla and her family. I and our maintenance staff will miss George and his good natured approach to any task. It was a joy to know him, and we are deeply grateful to have Priscilla back to look after our finance office.

October will see us hosting visitors from WCEA, our accreditation foundation. As previously mentioned, we have been preparing for this visit for more than a year. Sr. Marsha, our school principal, has been guiding the faculty in a self-study program which delved into every aspect of our school life. They have produced a study report for the accreditation team which runs to one hundred pages, all carefully crafted. I took part in the finance study and our group report went to the faculty redaction group. (Between my British grammar and hurried writing there were several corrections to be made to final text, but I have faith that it was all made presentable for the accreditation team!)

Although it was a massive effort in reflection and articulation of our own findings, it has been beneficial to the whole School as teachers discussed approaches to teaching, aids for students, further aims and goals to be achieved. I am deeply grateful to Sr. Marsha for her expertise and to all the staff, school board and parents who took part. I will fill you in on the outcome of the visit over the next few newsletters.

With the approach of winter, St. Anthony's proceeds with diligent study, joy and laughter, as our young people grow to maturity in mind, heart and spirit. As always I sincerely thank you for making it all possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Pat".

Fr. Patrick McGuire