

St. Anthony Indian Mission

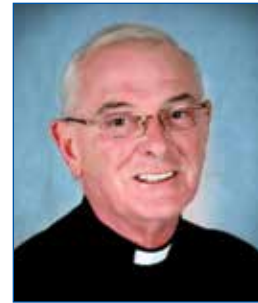
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From the desk of Fr. Patrick McGuire

Greetings once more from all of us here at St. Anthony's! I hope that the old adage about March entering like a lion and leaving like a lamb holds true. The cold, snow and icy winds have certainly taken their toll on Pueblo life, with folks huddling for warmth while others are cutting and collecting firewood. We continually pray for the homeless in nearby Gallup who need to find shelter wherever they can. In the midst of all this, the indomitable spirit of the young shines through and brings joy to the most chilled of hearts.

The students demonstrated their spirit of joy and inventiveness for Valentine's Day. The student council initiated a competition for the best decorated door on classrooms. (Where do they get these ideas?) Needless to say, the student body took up the competition with gusto! There was a run on colored paper and ribbons and they were soon in short supply. The council members made up "candy grams" (bags of sweets) and sold them at a small profit. The student council provided the judges who carefully examined every room. There may have been a little sentimental bias when Kindergarten got its extra special prize.

Valentine's Day festivities quickly gave way to Ash Wednesday's more sober atmosphere. At the distribution of ashes, I continued a practice from Covid days and used a cotton bud for each person to be signed. It worked well except that in the cafeteria afterwards it was the artistic quality of the forehead ashes that filled the conversation, rather than the "he got you good!" of previous years. With no personal artistic talent, I appreciate the beauty created by the students as they make posters to illustrate the lessons they have learned.

This year I resurrected another pre-Covid practice I had devised for Lent. Every student received a card and an envelope. They were asked to write what they were doing for Lent, and then seal it in the envelope on which they were to write their name and return it to me. Each week of Lent I return them to the students, and it serves as a reminder of what they promised to do. After all, 40 days is a long time! (I would love to read some of the cards but I am only the angels' postman.) I

must mention that Ms. Trinnie in the cafeteria supplied the most delicious tomato and vegetable soup (slightly spiced) that day. Every plate was returned empty and clean, including my own. Trinnie has ways of getting kids to eat vegetables!

The somber atmosphere was short lived. We have deemed it safe to once again hold our St. Anthony's Native American Day on March 10th. Limited numbers of family will



attend the gym as each class performs a traditional Zuni dance. Practicing has begun and the beat of the drums echoes around the campus. (Ever since I ministered in Africa my feet will not stand still when the drums come into earshot!) The kids love the dances, the music, and the thrill of taking part in their own ancient traditions. Needless to say, the families are equally proud as their children rejoice in their own native heritage. We will be live-streaming the event from the gym and it can be viewed on <http://stanthonyzunicurch.dyndns.org> The recording will remain on the site for several weeks. It will be well worth watching. Look out for my Scottish kilt brought out of storage for the occasion. . . .

The preparations are not left solely to the students. Everyone gets involved! I was excited when I saw our custodian finally bringing out the special dance costumes from the basement storage where they had lain unused for three years. For several evenings, Sr. Marsha, along with parents and teachers, gathered to fabricate headdresses and costumes for the students. Every year new things are added to the performance which means the parents' artistic skills are again put to the test. Even our maintenance people are involved as we install cameras and projectors in the gym so that it can be viewed by the wider community. It's all hands on deck!

Another restored activity is this year's Science Fair. Although we continued to hold the Fair during Covid restrictions, this year we can once again have it open to all the families to browse the exhibitions.

These events, although small in themselves, contribute to the purpose of the School. Parents, teachers, students and staff work together to make learning enjoyable and relevant to the students' future as part of the larger community.

It is also difficult to believe that we are almost at the end of the School's third academic quarter. The year will soon be over and already we have plans in place for summer school and different "camps" with groups coming to Zuni to help our students stay busy. But, more of that in future letters.

The winter brought with it many illnesses causing students to be off school. At the last student recognition day, for the first time there was no student with perfect attendance. Despite that, most seem to be doing well academically. After-school tutoring and Ms. Angel's remedial classes are ensuring that those who need help are receiving it and are catching up with their classmates. Another parent/teacher conference day is scheduled for later this month; these conferences focus on the needs of each individual student and how best to meet them. Once more, the combined effort of school and family ensures that each student receives the very best that St. Anthony's has to offer.

In many ways, this month has been a time of preparation -- be it academically, socially, spiritually -- or just for fun. I look forward to reporting to you in April on all the events and achievements to be celebrated. Meanwhile, we move forward with joy and hope. As always, I thank you for making it all so wonderfully possible.



Sincerely,

Fr. Patrick McGuire