

St. Anthony Indian Mission

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From the desk of Fr. Patrick McGuire

A Century of Service!

One school year has ended and I am busy preparing the campus for next year's crop of students. The work continues in an unending cycle of forming generations to build fruitful lives.

I have already written of the preliminary exercises as our 8th grade students, adorned in Zuni tradition, held the May Crowning service in the church. They posed for commemorative photos, completed their final exams, and held fun events for the younger students. They even visited their future high schools and generally caused a buzz of excitement that was infectious for all.

At the concluding service, the graduates conducted themselves with inspiring dignity, from their processing into the church, through their excellent participation in divine worship at Mass, and finishing with the presentation of roses to parents as a token of their thankfulness. (They even stayed awake as I droned on through an overly long sermon on the "vine and branches," concluding with the prayer that they might find their uniqueness, celebrate it and give glory to the God who created them.) Every graduate received a diploma, a personal copy of Sacred Scripture, and a prayer for their onward journey.



The last two weeks of school were filled with fun activities: Kindergarten transition, student recognition, and our traditional graduates' breakfast served by the 7th graders. Sr. Marsha did remind teachers to hold fast to the learning schedule, which the faculty faithfully did while introducing some more creative classes as well. For instance, Ms. Cordie has been teaching pottery with an emphasis on Zuni artistry. The students produced some beautiful pots and fridge magnets, all glazed and fired right here at St. Anthony's. And Ms. Edwina introduced students to the colorful "tie-dye" process, producing shirts of which our 2nd graders could be very proud.

The final day of school was marked with much excitement as Ms. Carrie and Ms. Trinnie (the cooks) produced a barbecue lunch, with every student returning home with a lunch pack and arms filled with handicrafts (and of course some study materials for the summer vacation). Sr. Marsha's monthly bulletin for parents had reminded everyone not to let young minds grow "rusty" over the summer.

At the end of each school year, we sometimes have to say goodbye to some members of our staff. This year was particularly difficult for us. Ms. Trudy (3rd grade) decided to retire after 14 years at St. Anthony's. She had considered this at the end of the previous year, but bravely (being an ex-marine) she

decided to carry on for one more year. So while she retired from full-time teaching, she is planning to volunteer with us for two or three days each week during the next year. Nevertheless, I will miss Trudy and her kindness and her devilish sense of humor.

After an incredible 50 years at St. Anthony's, Ms. Lulita, our administration secretary, has also decided to retire. She too has been thinking of this for several years but persevered until now in her loyal service. We will miss her particularly since she is what I call our "corporate memory." I think she remembers every student and his or her family who have attended St. Anthony's in the last half century. However, she too will be coming in to help her successor settle into the work. You might leave St. Anthony's, but it never leaves you! We wish them both a long and happy retirement.



Summer school got underway immediately after Memorial Day Holiday. Only 26 students needed to attend this year. (It is a tribute to both students and staff for their hard work during the year.) Summer school is under the guidance of Ms. Angel, our "Title One" teacher who has masterfully arranged the classes to benefit the students educationally and at the same time present the class work in novel and fun ways. One of the 4th graders said to me: "I love summer school -- it doesn't even feel like school."

When summer school is over, we will conduct a week-long art camp followed by Bible camp. Therefore, there will be much to keep students occupied over the long vacation. A group of students from Alabama is leading the Bible camp. Thirty-four young people are coming, so there will be plenty of activities to amuse and enlighten the students, and of course, the visitors will be helping with work around the campus.

For maintenance and custodial staff, there is no letup in work during the summer. Thankfully, the school buildings are all in fairly good condition considering that some are over 100 years old. Nevertheless, we have to smarten up the campus for our centenary celebration in October. I am planning a trip to visit my family while much of the work is taking place. So my task will be to organize and put plans in place for my absence.

Surveying our elegant stone-built campus, I am conscious of a sense of satisfaction as the 100th class of graduates leaves St. Anthony's well prepared for the next phase of their lives. Yet I recognize too that I am only one person in a long line of people who have built up our School to be at the service of so many young people over the last century. Without their foundation the buildings would not stand.

I am also acutely aware of the faithful generosity of our friends and donors, many of whom have long since gone to their eternal reward. Their kind hearts have produced living stones to be the foundation of the lives of hundreds of young Zuni children and their community. I have a sense of awe in knowing I am but one more person in a communion of hearts offering a better future for young souls. Thank you for making this so wonderfully possible!

Sincerely,

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

Fr. Patrick McGuire