

St. Anthony Indian Mission

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Greetings once more from St. Anthony 101.

No, we haven't changed our name. We just wanted to share with you our excitement that, as school resumed a couple of weeks ago, we entered into the one hundred and first year of classes at St Anthony Indian Mission!

The use of that idiom "101" usually denotes some basic principal on which to build something larger or greater. With a century of experience behind us, we have a firm foundation and strong commitment to serving the young people of Zuni in an even greater way.

In 1923, the Franciscan Friars and Sisters opened one small school building here in the Zuni Pueblo, and over the years they slowly added to it -- eventually creating the beautiful campus that we enjoy today. We, the staff and faculty of 2023, give thanks for our inheritance and promise "through prayer and preparation . . . to fulfill this awesome call to ministry



. . . through word and example, to those entrusted to our care." These words were part of the promise made by our faculty on August 15th in front of the entire school assembled for our "All School Mass." As they made this commitment, every student stretched out their hands in blessing over their teachers.

The "101" of St. Anthony's is that we have a ministry, under the Lord, to faithfully serve the students entrusted to us. It is a firm foundation on which to build with God's grace.

I breathed a great sigh of relief as the students assembled in the cafeteria for breakfast on August 7th. Some looked tired and some looked a little apprehensive as they arrived for the first day of classes. Nearly all had a smile, and the buzz of excitement was tangible. For me it was a beautiful experience to witness these students: the younger ones just emerging from Pre-K, and the older ones whom I have known for years, beginning their 8th grade classes. I sincerely pray for them and their futures!



Another "101" at St. Anthony's is the hectic preparation at the School during the long summer vacation. I missed much of the work in June since I visited my family in Scotland. Consequently, July found me cramming weeks of duties into a very short span of time. The staff had completed many repair, cleaning, technology and renovation tasks. (We are blessed with such good workers!) Three of our graduates were employed to help, and as one of them said to me later -- he never realized how much work had to be done just to get the School ready for the students!

Not the least of these tasks was getting the school bus ready for its daily rounds of pick-ups and drop-offs. This may sound like a routine matter, but in fact it was an extraordinary achievement. The bus route was canceled when Covid entered our lives and has never been resumed. I have been searching for a new driver for two years after the faithful Ms. Virginia retired from thirty-plus years of driving. (There is a national shortage of school bus drivers.) One might say that our buses are past their prime. One dates from 1998 and the other from 2008. Our maintenance men worked long and hard to make a respectable bus from the two ("101" -- Safety first!). Also, Mike from our maintenance staff bravely took the tests to become an official school bus driver (no small endeavor), and he was ready to go on the first day of school. Eleven students arrived on the bus that morning and forty-nine took the bus home. We are still looking for a permanent driver, but in the meantime Mike has stepped into the breach and will be our backup driver.

Little by little, I have been putting pennies aside to buy a new bus. Recently, with some very generous help from two outside groups, I was in a position to place the order for a new bus. I was nervous about doing so, but I put my faith in the most fundamental "101": the good Lord will provide. I hope the new bus will be here in time for our centenary celebration in November as I plan to have our Bishop bless the new bus during the festivities!



I must confess that I have been more than a little anxious as the new school year started. As I have mentioned previously, two of our "backbone staff" retired at the end of the last school year. Ms. Lulita, our Administration Secretary, finally retired after 51 years (she had twice delayed her retirement). Thankfully, Ms. Valerie has joined us, and with Lulita still mentoring her, she is settling in nicely. Ms. Priscilla from the finance department also finally retired after 55 years at St. Anthony's. Her departure was sudden in that she was hospitalized and underwent major surgery. Thankfully, she is making a steady recovery. Therefore, I have had to take up most of her tasks until we find a suitable replacement. It is not easy to replace such a dedicated servant of the School.

One of her tasks, which she skillfully carried out, was supervising our monthly mailings. It's a fairly complex task. However, I am picking up on the "do's and don'ts" little by little. This is why I could not send out our July letter and am sending out a general mailing this time around. I apologize if you are receiving this letter at an unexpected time. I will get it all back on track eventually. Please be patient with me.

Despite all my worries and anxieties, St. Anthony's reopened on schedule with a full faculty. The campus is in good condition. The faculty and staff are filled with enthusiasm. The school schedule for the year is in place and peace-filled joy permeates the classes. One day I will learn that the Lord is in charge -- not me. (Another "101": He is much better at it than I am; learn to trust!). Thank you for making it all so wonderfully possible.

Sincerely,

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

Fr. Patrick McGuire