

St. Anthony Indian Mission

P.O. Box 486

Zuni, New Mexico 87327-0486

Toll Free Phone: (866) 832-8816

Website: www.stanthonyzuni.org

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From the desk of Fr. Patrick McGuire

Greetings once again from all of us at St. Anthony's!

First of all, I want to send my most heartfelt greetings and best wishes to you during this month of Thanksgiving. Many years ago in Scotland, a friend of mine who worked in a police call facility and was obligated to work on Christmas day and so would instead host a Thanksgiving party to which I was invited. I never dreamed at that time that I would be experiencing the real Thanksgiving on this side of the "Pond". I have grown to love this day when, rather than thinking of all the work we need to get done, we take time out for remembering all of our blessings for which to be grateful.

Of course there are major differences between my friend's party and the real thing. On a visit to one of the stores in Gallup, I found Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas decorations all on sale at the same time! No wonder there is confusion for everyone except the kids. The young are determined to enjoy each day, whatever comes. That could be a life lesson for us all and one for which we can be truly thankful. School-wise we have much to do before the Thanksgiving break. The Cross Country season has come to a very satisfactory conclusion, and new ways have to be found with which to channel that youthful energy.

I am grateful that Halloween came to the rescue recently, prompting fertile young minds to set to work designing their costumes. Even the cooks produced favorite dishes for the students. Once again, I am pleased to say that I managed to sidestep being called upon to judge the costumes -- a no-win situation. I think the staff enjoyed dressing up more than the students did. You don't see many school bus drivers decked out like St. Anthony's! I contented myself with supplying



bags of candy for every student, carefully packed for me by McKenzie in the finance office. The winners of the costume contest received a voucher donated by our local store for a two person chicken dinner. (Thankfully, someone had the good sense not to give out more candy!) Runners up received homework passes; I am not sure which prize was more popular!

I, of course, remind the students that it is a feast about saints. (Not that they remember that for too long with all the Halloween excitement.) I am heartened by the fact that the students will soon put on a display of handiwork depicting saints of their choice that will be open to parents for viewing. Skeletons and witches will give way to halos and wings.



Meanwhile, our academics continue unabated. Parent/teacher conferences took place at the end of October. Most years I hear a few complaints about students under-performing, but this year not a single negative report came my way. Parents, teachers, and students all left their meetings with smiles and a contented air. Now that is something for which I can be truly thankful, even though I play only a small part in that area of school life. Another thankful moment is in gratitude to Sr. Marsha, our JMJ Sisters and the other members of our wonderful faculty!

Last year at this time, I reported to you on the visit of the Accreditation team that came to St. Anthony's to assess our academic capabilities and Catholic identity. I am pleased to say that among all the schools visited, St. Anthony's was the only one to receive a faultless report and was given accreditation for the next six years. Believe me, I have been most thankful ever since our Certificate of Accreditation was received!

Recently, we have restarted our fundraising activities such as the monthly Mega Bingo. The parish has also been holding "less mega bingos" and other fundraising events. I do notice that more students have returned to voluntarily wearing masks. But overall, school days are returning to normal with that fine balance of fun, discipline and learning in which our young charges grow in mind, heart and spirit. More to be thankful for.



My own days are taken up with preparations for our Centenary Celebration which will take place on November 19th. The anniversary was September 23rd, but we delayed the festivities until November in the hope of more mild weather. Our Bishop will join us on the 19th, celebrate Mass and enjoy food, cultural dancing and fellowship among our guests. Fr. Dale Jamison, ofm (who was pastor here for 13 years) will join us for the day also. I am sure many will have fond memories of Fr. Dale.

Sadly, there are not too many other previous pastors who are still around, but we will be praying in thanksgiving for their dutiful service. We begin at 10.00am with Zuni cultural welcome followed by Mass in our little church. We plan to "live stream" the whole event on <http://stanthonyzunichurch.dyndns.org>. Whatever cannot take place outdoors will be held in the gym; what a blessing our campus facilities are! It will be January before I can give you a full report on all the festivities. (Even so, I will be thankful when the day is over, though I know that the Holy Spirit will be guiding us on that day.)

Thanksgiving will be followed by the great Zuni festival of Shalako, that will take up the next weekend. Those events cannot be photographed for cultural reasons; even so, the event has to be experienced to be fully appreciated. Needless to say, the students are already talking about what Shalako will bring.

My news this month is more of anticipation than a record of events. Yet anticipation also brings its own joy and a smile to the faces of our already delightful students. My own great joy lies in thanking you for making it all possible.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Fr. Patrick McGuire.

Fr. Patrick McGuire