

# Merry Christmas!

## From the students of St. Anthony's



The 100th Graduation Class of St. Anthony's Zuni Mission School



Now that we have completed our centenary celebrations of the St. Anthony Mission and School, our hearts can turn to the celebration of Christmas. But a casual remark by our bishop at the centenary Mass of thanksgiving lingers in my thoughts and seems so very appropriate as a reflection on that first Christmas day.

The bishop spoke of the arrival of the first missionaries in Zuni and the celebration of Mass, arguably one of the first on American soil. He remarked that since around 1538, Christ's Eucharistic presence has been with us in this remote pueblo, and continues to be so to this day.

The Christ child came among us in a remote corner of our world, in an obscure town once described as a "rest stop" on travelers' journeys. Yet at that moment humanity and divinity were united, and though very few noticed, the result was the transformation of the world, impacting the lives of generations spanning the globe.

The shepherds, the Magi, Joseph and Mary encountered the divine presence in a lonely place, through a silent child, born into poverty, homelessness and rejection. Their response to the child evoked awe, devotion and love as they took to heart the heavenly message of "Peace on Earth, Goodwill towards all."

Few would have known about the first mission to Zuni. Yet even when the missionaries had departed, Christ's presence remained until the Franciscans re-established their mission in 1923. The seed was sown. Since then the lives of hundreds of children have been touched and indeed transformed as they have encountered Christ in their education, their spiritual lives and by the witness of the Mission. The Christmas story continues to unfold. . . .

In a world that tries to ignore the Gospel message, it continues to spread as our young people learn to embrace their heritage, respect each person, and grow strong in spirit and faith to transform themselves and the world around them. They embrace Peace and Goodwill towards all people and spread the Good News by the witness of their lives.

As we prepare to continue our Mission for a second century here in the Zuni Pueblo, we all pray that the Peace, which the Christ child offered to the world, will rest firmly in your hearts and in your family. May the seed of Christ continue to grow within you as it is nourished here. And may you be richly blessed this Christmas season and always.

Sincerely,  
Fr. Pat

