

St. Anthony Indian Mission

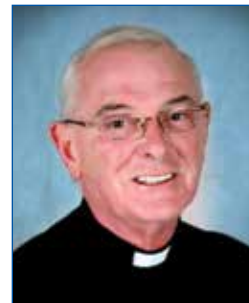
P.O. Box 486

Zuni, New Mexico 87327-0486

Toll Free Phone: (866) 832-8816

Website: www.stanthonyzuni.org

March 2025



From the desk of Fr. Patrick McGuire

Greetings once more from the High Desert and all of us at St. Anthony's. Happily, the spring sun shines upon us although the winter winds still whip down from the mountains of Colorado. Hail, rain or snow -- our young students find time for learning and fun.

In the midst of all of our academic activities, we are preparing for the spring break. Public schools are already celebrating the break while we soldier on until Easter. But it is all to the good since we must first undergo the season of Lent.

Following the fun and games from Catholic Schools Week and the "Miracle Fair" (when students prepared presentations on the lives of favorite saints), I was struck with the seriousness of our students in taking up the Lenten observances. I thought interest would wane as Lent came suddenly upon us. Once again, the students surprised me.

On Ash Wednesday at the All School Mass, the students with great dignity came forward and received their ashes. Previously they had written down their Lenten promises on cards, put them into unmarked envelopes and presented them at the altar during the offertory. At the end of Mass, they collected their envelopes and in silence processed outside. There they placed their envelopes into an open fire and prayed again as their promises ascended in smoke to the heavens. How beautifully they acknowledged the need to help others while they themselves draw closer to the Lord. It was Ashes Day in a real and meaningful way!



The School took up the Lenten theme of forgiveness -- how to forgive others and how best to seek forgiveness. This is a lesson much needed in our world today. The students spent much time considering the subject, and class by class they expressed their thoughts in artwork. This they brought to church during the second week of Lent and again made a presentation of their thoughts at the altar. One class produced a phrase that lingers with me each day: "There is no forgiveness without love and no love without forgiveness". I am amazed at the depth of their thoughts. The young can have much to teach the world.



Schoolwork continues unabated. Quarterly test results have been completed and I have been very encouraged! I trust that parents will appreciate the efforts that their children have

been making -- both in academics and in personal maturity. (Parent/teacher conferences are taking place as I write to you.)

In the absence of a school principal, I have had to oversee the conferences this semester. This has been a new experience for me, but one which has enriched my knowledge of St. Anthony's. I see parents who want the best for the children and teachers who want to work with the parents to see that goals are achieved. I notice that the teachers are conscious of Sr. Marsha's wise advice: in every case begin with the positive attributes of the student and build from that base. It works! I see it in the faces of the kids.

We of course still miss Sr. Marsha's presence and expertise. Happily, she is not totally absent from us: she is always available for guidance and advice, and I call upon her regularly. Sister is also helping in the search for a new principal. This is not an easy task. Not only are good principals a scarce commodity, but one suited to our unique Zuni culture and the Catholic identity of the School is even more rare. Our search continues, and I am happy to report that there are good prospects for the beginning of the next school year. Meanwhile, we continue to serve our students, and I am more grateful than ever for the unity and dedication of our teachers. I also remind people that I am only an "interim".



An "interim" should not change anything, but using what I have learned from Sr. Marsha I have created a new advisory group. Discipline at St. Anthony's is not called for very often, but when it is, it becomes my responsibility. I follow the group's advice and aim for remedy rather than punishment. I begin the process with: "I see a good person that is being led astray, let's find a way back to the straight path." First, I meet with the student concerned and have them reflect on their actions -- both causes and effects. Next, I discuss the issue with them, have them draw conclusions for future actions, and write an essay on the subject. Their efforts in this direction are often punishment enough. This approach is unconventional perhaps, but I already I see positive effects and I pray for continued good outcomes.

I see healthy discipline as just one aspect of the holistic development of the student. Our students are with us to learn, most certainly, but more importantly to become good people and great citizens. In my interim position, I understand better than before the privilege it is to be entrusted with these young lives by parents and guardians and indeed to be charged with helping these children build a better and more wonderful future for themselves and those around them.

Onwards and upwards! Our Bishop is coming for Confirmations in three weeks: time now to prepare our young ones to take their place as good citizens in tribe, community, Church and nation.

I pray you will have a joyous and blessed Easter. I am always thankful to you for making this School so wonderfully possible.

Sincerely,

Fr. Patrick McGuire