

# St. Anthony Indian Mission

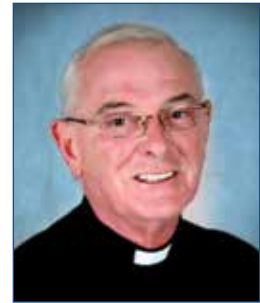
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From the desk of Fr. Patrick McGuire

I find it hard to believe that there are only a few days left of the school year! Our graduation ceremony will take place this week, and next week our students will depart for the long summer vacation. I am both sad and happy at the same time. I know that as the students leave a dull cloud will descend on the campus, but happy that we will have completed another successful year at St. Anthony's! I feel that the measure of our success has come to light in a series of non-academic ways over these last few busy weeks through the day-to-day life of the School.

Before Easter, we had the pleasure of our Bishop visiting to celebrate Confirmation. In fact, the Bishop had asked me to schedule the celebration a little early so that he could be with us. So for the first time we had both First Holy Communions and Confirmations on the same day. On the appointed day, we were joined by youngsters from our sister parish of St. Patrick's. It was a great celebration with 24



young people being Confirmed. A touching moment occurred when a mother and her daughter were Confirmed together by our Bishop. St. Anthony's students proved to be gracious hosts to our visitors and together they charmed the Bishop. We are forming some wonderful young people into great citizens.



Immediately following the excitement of Confirmation, we had another "first" for St. Anthony's. Our graduating class headed to Indiana for a visit to Notre Dame University. The American Indian Catholic Schools Network arranged the trip and covered almost all the expenses. The students and parents spent much time fund-raising for the trip as well. An ever-popular raffle was held for donated prizes which was followed by a Sunday "cake walk". There were only six families involved, and they raised over \$2,000 that more than covered our expenses. (Needless to say, our students excel at selling raffle tickets!)

The trip was fun, of course, but also successful in its more serious purpose. The object was not sightseeing but to encourage Native American students to think about college education, explore opportunities, and to actually meet up with students at the University. Successful? Since returning, all of the students have been rethinking the possibilities open to them, and at least one has already set in motion applications which I pray

will lead to a university degree in a few years. When I asked one of the students what impressed him most, the answer was: "the football field!" (Apparently, they were allowed to pass through the players' tunnel onto the field. Whatever stimulates their ambition can only be a positive!)

I had the task of driving them to the airport, buying them lunch and setting them on their way. I must say I was delighted at their good manners and respect for others. We raise ladies and gentlemen at St. Anthony's.

When the students returned from Notre Dame, our 8th graders led our May service of crowning the statue of Our Lady. From start to finish this beautiful devotion was conducted by the students wearing traditional Zuni apparel. Afterwards they posed for photographs, some of which were in the rectory "front room". It is a unique setting filled with century-old murals and a collection of Zuni pottery. It was the first time some of the students had been in the room, and they gasped as they viewed their heritage immortalized at their School. At least one student is a descendant of the artist who painted the murals. The "May Crowning" is a moment of affirming their identity as Zuni Christians moving on to serve their people and build a better world.

Amidst these other momentous events, Easter of course was welcomed and duly celebrated, complete with various Easter egg hunts. Yet another treasured moment in Easter week was when the Missionary Sisters from Gallup had a rare outing and chose to visit Zuni for lunch. It was a bit daunting to be inundated by so many nuns, but their girlish giggles had us all in tears of laughter.



As the school year winds down, it is time for the students to demonstrate their academic achievements. Three years ago we introduced the practice of students preparing their portfolios and presenting themselves before a panel of judges. The content of the portfolio, their manner of presentation, and their confidence as young people were all scrutinized by the panel. It is a good preparation for their life in High School. St. Anthony's students made us all proud.

My focus this month is naturally on our graduating class, some of whom I have known since kindergarten. Although my own interactions with them have been slight, I am nevertheless very proud of their achievements. I pray that as they receive their graduating certificates and leave the serenity and security of these hallowed halls, they will hold fast to the lessons and values that they have learned and taken to heart. Meanwhile, our young students continue to astound, amuse and delight us all.

Now we must prepare for yet another year of service to this delightful community. But first: a well overdue time of relaxation, short though it may be. Thank you for making it all so wonderfully possible!

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Fr. Patrick McGuire.

Fr. Patrick McGuire