

# St. Anthony Indian Mission

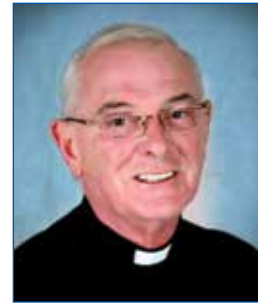
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July 2025



From the desk of Fr. Patrick McGuire

Greetings from our hot and dry high desert. Summer monsoon season is late in arriving this year; I hope and pray it is still on the way! Our land is severely parched, making it extremely vulnerable to fires. July 4th saw two wildfires break out in the Zuni Pueblo; thankfully, both were contained quickly by emergency services.



Our 102nd Graduation took place as St. Anthony's closed for the summer vacation. It was a very special event, particularly meaningful for me. I have known several of the graduates since kindergarten: to see them leave was like a disruption in family life. Yet I know it was time for them to move on to the next phase of their lives, and after all that is why we exist: to give them the best formation for new and greater things. Following our tradition, the 7th graders served a special breakfast for the graduates, looking forward to their own turn to move on.

June was also a time for graduation from the local high school. Several former students of St. Anthony's invited me to their celebrations. I am pleased to report that all of them -- having done well in high school -- are moving on to various colleges next year! Both of these graduation celebrations served to encourage us with glimpses of success. I am also pleased to report that several of our graduates have been accepted by excellent high schools, including the prestigious Santa Fe Indian School. (We have two former students graduating from there this year.)

Our dear Sr. Marsha returned to us for our graduation, together with her guitar to lead the music for the ceremony. The warmth with which the students and parents received her was testimony to her strict but motherly leadership of the School.

One event that I failed to report on before school ended, was a presentation by Zuni High School students on the dangers of addiction. (Sadly, use of drugs is growing among younger people.) The high school students made a first-class presentation in two parts, one for younger and one for older students. Our students most certainly listened, asked meaningful questions and fully participated. Peer group presentation from young people whom they knew was highly effective for our students.

After a week's break, Summer School got underway and the sense of purpose returned to our hallowed halls. I always enjoy this time. Although serious



about their studies, they are even more serious about sports and games. I made a mental note for next year to try to inspire a better fashion sense: you would not believe the ensembles that walked through our doors!

Once Summer School was over, the campus was taken over for Vacation Bible Camp. A group of young people from Centennial Colorado came well prepared with chaperones to lead the camp. Most of the 17 in the group, including chaperones, had been to St. Anthony's in previous years to help with summer maintenance and were delighted to be back. Just another example of the "magic" of St. Anthony's.

They young people took "The Angelus" as their theme. I was surprised how well it worked out. Each morning began with a slide show presentation followed by a short talk by one of the young people. They broke up into groups for talks, games, sports, drama and music. Each day ended with Mass in the church, followed by lunch. Once again, "presentations by peers" held the young people's attention (although it was a wee bit of a challenge for old folks like me!). But thanks to the enthusiasm of our young visitors and their chaperones, our young people were well instructed and enjoyed every moment.



Fun, education and games aside, we have to move forward with our maintenance and preparation for the coming school year. There are always repairs of course. Classrooms need to be cleaned, floors need to be scrubbed and polished, tiles need to be replaced, carpets to be shampooed, restrooms to be cleaned and repainted. It's amazing how much damage even well-behaved students can cause!

We planned two major projects for this summer. First is to upgrade the connections for the internet access, to improve speed and response time. Each year, we find that intelligent use of the internet by our faculty enhances student learning. We are blessed to have slowly equipped all our classrooms with interactive boards and laptop computers for individual students to use for research. The kids love these and learn a great deal.

The other major task this summer is to renovate the School quadrangle. Originally it had been covered with gravel, and while it looked handsome for a time, it soon became overwhelmed by weeds. Kneeling on gravel to pull weeds is time consuming and no fun at all. With the help of Jeremy, one of our teachers, we are now converting the space to grass. This of course requires water not readily available here. So a large part of the project is harvesting rain water from our roofs, whenever the skies open. I was fortunate enough to have some personal funds available for the project so as not to put the burden on the School finances. In addition to being ecologically sound, the project will ease the maintenance of School grounds, and create an even better environment for the students -- as well as saving my knees!

As I write, we are still searching for a new school principal. Our remote location adds to the difficulty in finding a suitable candidate, but we have an interim plan in place, thanks to the wonderful cooperation of our faculty. St. Anthony's is almost ready for its 103rd year, and I am truly looking forward to the students' return. Thank you for making it all so wonderfully possible!

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Fr. Patrick McGuire.

Fr. Patrick McGuire