

St. Anthony Indian Mission

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From the desk of Fr. Patrick McGuire

Greetings from the high desert where we are bathed in beautiful spring sunshine and blue skies!

We are rapidly approaching the end of another school year, and I notice that our graduating class is ripe with anticipation as they prepare to transition to the next level of their education and future careers.

As I have noted in previous years, there are limited options available to our young people as far as local high schools are concerned. So there is a strong competition for placement. I am pleased to say that several of our soon-to-be-graduates have been accepted into prestigious schools -- some quite far from home, such as the famous Santa Fe Indian School. I feel this is a tribute to both our students and St. Anthony Mission School.

This is also the time of year when alumni return home from schools and colleges, and I have the opportunity to catch up with many of them as they report their progress. I see pride on the faces of our faculty as they also get to chat with former students. These encounters testify to the fact that our faculty see their work not simply as a profession -- but more as a vocation of service to their pupils.

The downside for me at this time of year is the thought of our students departing from our care and influence. I have known several members of our graduating class since before they even entered kindergarten. While I am delighted to see them move forward with their young lives, I will truly miss seeing them every day on campus.

The eighth grade "pilgrimage" to Notre Dame University was a great success. Hats off to Mr. Bobelu, plus parents and chaperones -- as well as the University -- for their outstanding efforts to make it all happen. My personal involvement was to drive some of the students to Albuquerque for their flight. We departed at 3:30am and they made their early morning flight with moments to spare. I noticed that our students were focused and considerate as they gathered their belongings and made their way through airport security and onto their flight. They demonstrated both responsibility and courtesy as they made their way through the hustle of the busy airport



Upon their return, they had many stories to tell and did so with great gusto. The opportunity to try ice skating was the subject of several conversations. And there was much thoughtful reflection on future opportunities for career advancement. I hope and pray that these thoughts will come to fruition.

While the 8th graders dominate our thoughts at this time, the other students are certainly not forgotten. I enjoyed listening to their tales and exploits during Easter break, yet almost all were actually happy to be back at School. As one young lady said to me, "too much free time gets boring!"

During April, we were joined by a group of students from Mater Dei High School in California. Their School has been very helpful to us for several years. This was a delightful group of both students and chaperones. Nothing seemed to be too difficult for them to tackle. They worked on our rain collecting project, installing yet another giant tank next to the cafeteria roof; they poured a concrete foundation at our storage units; repaired pathways; painted the gym basement floor; and set up the facilities for our youth group. They even took time each day to join us for Mass and conduct prayer time in the evening.

Their last night with us, they built a campfire, then sat around it with their evening meal and sang songs. I found that quite a moving tableau: a group of young people, having worked hard to help others, simply enjoying the serenity of creation in wholesome fellowship with each other.

Mrs. Torres, our new Principal, continues to settle in and find her place among our little family. She finally made the big move from her home in Albuquerque. I notice that she carefully studies various aspects both of our School and our local culture. It is good to have a pair of "fresh eyes" take a look at our daily routines and make constructive suggestions. My gratitude is great that we now have a professional at the helm of St. Anthony's.



Our little world continues to turn and now as I write to you -- May has come around. Recently, our eighth graders led the School in our short service of "May Crowning". In their Zuni traditional dress, they led the other students in praying the rosary, with one member speaking to the "congregation" and all singing a few hymns. The culmination of the service was the crowning of Our Lady's statue with a wreath of flowers. I find it meaningful in that their Zuni Christian identity is displayed and celebrated. Many parents joined the School for the traditional service and pride was obvious in their faces.

Now we are moving towards those last days of the school year. Our graduation ceremony will take place on May 21st. (We moved it forward one day because parents have students in several other schools with conflicting graduation ceremonies.)

This past weekend we had a very beautiful Confirmation and First Communion celebration for 11 of our young children. Our children dressed immaculately, were very attentive, and moved with a solemn dignity. I am humbled by the honor of conferring the wonder of the sacraments on these beautiful young people. Thank you for making it all so wonderfully possible.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Fr. Pat".

Fr. Patrick McGuire