

SAINT ANNE MISSION

Klagetoh, Arizona

D E C E M B E R 2 0 2 0

The Light of Christ

Dear Friends,

The approach of Winter and the diminishment of daylight hours can be especially daunting this year, as we are limited by the Coronavirus pandemic in our ability to gather traditionally with friends and family.

But it is precisely during these times of darkness and despair that the Light of Christ shines most brightly. The Church uses lit candles to symbolize Christ's presence throughout the year, but at special times the Church lights extra candles. During this season we add the Advent Wreath to our churches and homes to help us prepare for the celebration of Jesus' Nativity.

Although many of our Christmas preparations and traditions will necessarily be limited this year, let us not neglect to prepare room to once again accept the Christ-child in our hearts and in our minds.

May you be especially blessed this Advent and Christmas.


Bro. Charles Schilling, SC
Administrator

A Sabbatical Year

In Leviticus 25, the Lord instructs his Chosen People to observe every seventh year as a year of rest - a Sabbatical Year. During this special year the fields and vineyards would be left untended. It was to be a year of rest much as the weekly seventh day Sabbath was intended as a day of rest.

As I reflect on the year 2020 and Saint Anne Mission, it occurs to me that this has been for us a type of Sabbatical year. I don't mean to suggest that we have rested during this time; indeed, some of our activities have become more intense. But what we had come to know as the 'ordinary' pace of Mission life has changed.

In a normal year the Mission would host over a dozen groups of youth and adults engaged in service to the Navajo people. In 2020, only one group was able to visit. In a normal year we would celebrate every Sunday with our parish community in the Mission Church. The last public liturgy in the Church was in March.

In a normal year we would have an Easter egg hunt, outings with the local kids, Summer Bible School, and impromptu gatherings of people to play basketball or volleyball on summer evenings.

But while those fields have lain fallow, we have been busy in other vineyards. The Mission's food pantry has had more demand than ever. Generous donations have permitted us to keep it stocked and have enabled us to respond to calls for assistance with utilities, rent payments, and the like.

Brother Robert and I have also kept ourselves busy with needed improvements to the Mission's infrastructure.

It is my hope and prayer that conditions in 2021 will afford us the opportunity to once again host groups of volunteers.

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Happening at Saint Anne Mission

A number of ongoing and special programs have taken place or are underway at the Mission.

Mass Videos

To spiritually assist the local faithful while the Navajo Tribe has imposed weekend curfews, the Franciscan Friars at St. Michaels have begun a program of recording the Mass of each Sunday in advance for placement on YouTube. Brother Charles was recently recruited as videographer and editor for this project. Masses have been recorded at several of the Missions on the Navajo Reservation, including Saint Anne.



Brother Robert and Sister Monica attend as Father Edgardo Diaz OFM celebrates the Mass of the Third Sunday of Advent in advance for the cameras.

Saint Joan of Arc Christmas Angels

For several years the Mission has been one of the partners of Saint Joan of Arc Parish in Phoenix, Arizona in identifying local needy families that their parishioners can ‘adopt’ for Christmas. The local families are asked to complete Christmas wish lists in September and October and the lists are posted at the parish in Phoenix for families to adopt.

While volunteers from Saint Joan of Arc normally visit on a Friday in order to personally distribute the gift boxes to families, the pandemic made it necessary for them to abbreviate their visit, so most of the boxes were delivered to local families by Sr. Monica and local volunteers.

Food Pantry

Thanks to many generous gifts of food and funding throughout the year, the Mission’s food pantry remains well-stocked. Demand on the pantry varies, with some weeks seeing more requests for assistance than others.

Southwest Indian Foundation Christmas Baskets

The Southwest Indian Foundation (SWIF) has been supporting the Navajo people for years through housing assistance and other programs. Saint Anne has long been a distribution point for SWIF’s Christmas Food Baskets, and 2020 was no exception. The Mission received an allocation of 25 food baskets to distribute to local families in need.



Insulating the Mission House

The Saint Anne Mission House was built in 1956 in an era when little thought was given to thermal insulation. The attic was insulated years ago, but the brick construction of the house’s exterior walls left no room for insulation. In the summer, it was decided to begin construction of false walls in each of the house’s bedrooms in an effort to reduce Winter heating expenses.

The small guest bedroom was done first and much was learned. Since then, one of the three larger bedrooms has been completed with plans in place to tackle the remaining two bedrooms before the end of the year.