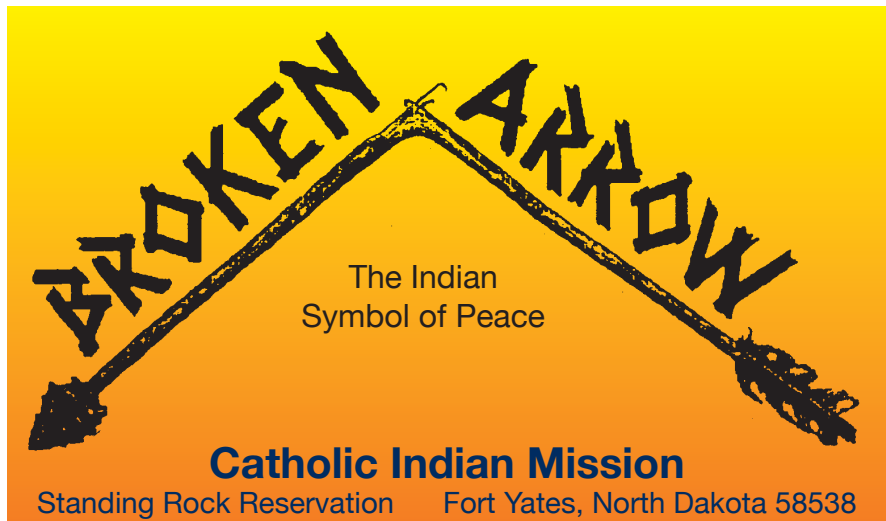




Father Basil Atwell, pastor



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From The Pastor's Desk

Real Change for a Real Future

Before I begin this letter, I wanted to thank all of you who have given your support regularly to the Catholic Indian Mission. You have no idea just how much your generosity is appreciated. Thank you!

As I write this to you, I have been stationed here for 11 months; my first year anniversary will be on August 5th. I am grateful both to my abbot and to my bishop for my assignment. So much has happened in the past year that it is difficult for me to put into words. But I will try.

The other day, a parishioner of mine stated that she believes that "the reservation is slowly getting better." She made this statement knowing both the continual cycle of addiction and the good that

the Mission had done here on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. I very much concur with her belief.

The grade school that we operate, St. Bernard's Mission School, is truly a gift to the people on Standing Rock. The sisters are good to the children. Many people tell me how grateful they are for our presence here; others, having little understanding of Christ's Church and its ability to effect real positive changes in the world, believe most of what they hear and read in the news. They still have

no idea why this Catholic mission, with its valuable school and outreach programs, is so necessary to the life of this place and its people.

When I tell them that our students are "safe in our school," that our graduates normally make up approximately one half of the honor students at the Junior High and High School, and that our students have achieved an incredible 90% high school graduation rate, they begin to take note. This is quite a thing when one considers that our SBMS students make up 20-25% of each graduating class. The "honor-ratio" is indeed a very high one! What is more, our students who graduate from the local high school, always seem to be the valedictorian and the salutatorian of each graduating class! And what is still more, the leadership of the tribe, for the most part, either attended our school or have children and/or grandchildren attending St. Bernard's.



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From The Pastor's Desk

From page 1

Our food pantry, clothing goods depot (which sometimes looks a bit like a war zone when people come to pick through our donations!), and homeless assistance fund, help to alleviate some of the painful realities of poverty. God is good!

Since Brother George Maufort has been laid up, recovering from his knee surgery, I, along with many volunteers, have staffed the pantry. Please pray for his quick recovery! I have come to learn that food is not the only thing people need. They need someone to help them out of the predicament that addiction and abuse have caused in their lives.

Brother George has been a gift to the people here! So many individuals and family are victims of injustices most of us cannot even begin to imagine. Besides your financial support, your prayers are vital!

And so the Church is here. Change is happening. You are a real part of the positive change happening here. Again I thank you and I pray daily for all of you our benefactors and friends.



School Year Winds Down With a Field Trip

By Mikayla Kuhn
First Grade Teacher

As the school year wound down, grades 1 through 3 went on a field trip to explore the history of North Dakota. In early May, the classes visited the Heritage Center in Bismarck where they saw many interesting things, including dinosaur fossils ranging from the smallest sea shells to a mummified Hadrosaur called "Dakota."

Some things were very familiar to them when they explored the Native American heritage exhibit. They saw replicas of teepees and earth lodges, and felt buffalo hides and other Native American artifacts. Their trip culminated with a trip to the 18th floor of the state capitol building. The view was spectacular!

Lunch was Little Caesars pizza in Kiwanis Park in Bismarck where the students were able to picnic and play.



Grateful For Blessings

By Sister Richardé Marie Wolf, SSND, Principal

May was a busy and interesting month at the Mission School! The students and staff celebrated the “Year of the Priest”, enjoyed the annual Fishing Derby, experienced kite flying and games for Field Day and helped the sixth graders celebrate their graduation.



The Catholic Indian Mission was started by the Benedictine priests in 1873. This marks the fifteenth year that the Bismarck Diocese has staffed our Mission with priests. In response to Pope Benedict’s special year to recognize our faith-filled priests, we invited those who had ministered at the Catholic Mission since 1995 to return for a day of celebration in their honor. Joining the students, parents, and elders from our community were Fathers Casimir Paluck, Terry Wipf, William Cosgrove, and our present pastor Basil Atwell, OSB. Our guests co-celebrated at the Friday School Mass, enjoyed lunch with the children, and shared their vocation stories. In honor of Mary we closed the celebration by praying a decade of the rosary for vocations.

The Derby brings together the community for fun,

fishing, and food. This year was no exception; the gathering was a big success! Many good people made it happen! Thank you to Barry from Hansen’s Mens Wear in Bismarck who printed T-shirts, using third grader Regan Dunn’s logo, and gave them to all present. We are grateful to the Third Order of Carmelites

who again generously furnished prizes for the best “catches of the morning.” This year Queen of Peace Parish in Dickinson refurbished 25 bicycles. They brought lots of joy to the children who had their names drawn for a bike of their choice. Many others

helped, filleted the fish, provided, prepared, and served food, and helped with the clean-up.

St. Bernard students are our #1 resource! During the last week of school many students expressed appreciation to the teachers and staff for the help they received from them. Some shared stories that gave witness of how they have matured in their



**Sister Richardé Marie Wolf
School Principal**

understanding of what it means to be honest when challenged at home, at school, or when on the bus with friends. Lifelong values have been instilled through our



ministry at St. Bernard Mission School.

In our 100th year of operating as a day school, St. Bernard Mission School will open its doors to kindergarten through seventh grade students for the 2010-2011 school year! The Mission School continues to provide quality education and a safe environment because of the cooperation of the parents, the support of the Diocese, and the generosity of so many donors.

God’s blessings on all who gift us!

Third Grade Student Wins First Place in Keep North Dakota Clean

By Ms. Deb Roberts
Third Grade Teacher

Kelsey Iron Ring, a third-grader in Miss Deborah Roberts' class at St. Bernard Mission School, won first place in this year's Keep North Dakota Clean poster contest. Kelsey is the fourth student of Miss Roberts to win the statewide competition.

This year marked the 42nd year of the Keep North Dakota Clean billboard/poster contest, which promotes keeping North Dakota clean and protecting its natural resources and environment. The contest was open to all students statewide in grades one through eight and special needs.

Contestants had to create a unique poster that reflected their knowledge of the specific theme assigned to their grade level. The different themes included keep our state and water clean, reduce waste, recycle, plant trees, prevent wildfires, create wildlife habitat and use all our natural resources wisely. A variety of agencies and organizations that believe a positive impact can be made through daily choices and actions sponsor the annual contest.

All the students at St. Bernard Mission School created posters. The staff had to choose a classroom winner from each grade to represent the school at the state level. Iron Ring, the daughter of Darlene Gray Bear and Russel Iron Ring, was awarded first. On her poster, the words "reduce," "reuse" and "recycle" were



Superintendent Wayne Sanstead, Kelsey Iron Ring and Ms. Deb Roberts at the Annual "Keep North Dakota Clean" poster contest awards ceremony.

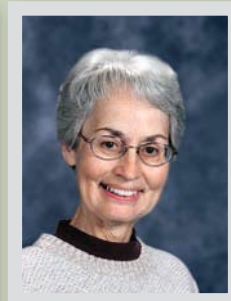
in the form of a crossword puzzle on the outline of North Dakota.

Kelsey received a cash award of \$100, a certificate and a gold medallion and had her poster made into a billboard. Her billboard is facing south on Highway 1806 just south of Mandan.

Congratulations Kelsey!



Sister Dannel



Sister Nicolette

Sisters Bid Farewell to SBMS

Sister Dannel Wedemeyer, SSND and Sister Nicolette Karcher, SSND said good-bye to the Catholic Indian Mission. Sister Dannel had ministered as a teacher of Grade 4 for the past 16 years and Sister Nicolette for 13 years in Grades 5 and 6.

A farewell celebration honoring their contribution to the Mission took place on May 25 at a potluck supper. Their life's journey took them back to St. Louis, MO.

Gleaning Wisdom from Our Elders

**By Sister Ann Schoch, SSND
Pastoral Minister**

Grandmas love their grandchildren and their great grandchildren. They also love bingo! Many of the elders, to whom I minister and from whom I draw wisdom, recently gathered at the Nutrition Center in Elderly Housing for an afternoon of fun, snacks and bingo. As they left carrying their “winnings” it crossed my mind that, more than likely, the fleece blanket, the mug, or the stuffed toy would soon be the possession of one of the grandkids. In their wisdom, grandmas teach by action what it means to share, to be generous, and to look out for others!

But it’s more than a fleece blanket that grandmas give their “grands”! Traditionally, in the Native American culture, the first born grandchild is raised by the grandparents. They pass on the important stories and rich traditions of their ancestors. A concerted effort today is to regain and reclaim the rich customs, the true Indian way of life lost by some families over generations.

One elder not present for bingo was Evelyn. For years now she is not able to join the other women for any activities; women with whom she shared and received wisdom over her eighty years. Once a school matron and teacher aide, she now sits on her bed, day after day, month after month, but not idle and surely never with a complaint on her lips! Evelyn had both legs amputated 12 years ago. Surrounded by their goodness and love, she depends on her children and grandchildren to assist her, though she has not lost her independence! Yesterday



I found her, yes, perched on her bed peeling potatoes for the family supper! Not able to use her sewing machine any longer, I frequently find her hand-stitching a star-quilt-designed cover slip for a pillow or making an accessory to go with a granddaughter’s dress for the jingle dance at the next pow wow. Her gentle manner, her selfless spirit, and her sweet smile warm my heart every time I come to bring her Eucharist and, in turn,

to glean a little more wisdom. The gift Evelyn’s children and grandchildren will have, long after she is gone, is what they receive each day from their faithful mother and wise grandmother as they watch her arthritic hands peeling, stitching, and praying the rosary and as they witness her patient suffering. I always leave her home grateful, believing I carry with me her gift of wisdom, deep faith, and genuine love!



First Communion Celebrated

By Margaret Lebak
Second Grade Teacher

Excitement filled the air as the long awaited "First Communion Day" as it was called finally arrived. Students and family members had prepared for this day for several months. Second grade students studied during their regular religion classes. Students in other grades met with Sister Richarde to learn about God's great gift of His Presence in the most Blessed Sacrament. Fr. Basil met with families to answer any other questions when they invited him to their homes. All of the time and preparation were worth it.

Do you remember when you were studying for your First Communion? Do you remember how amazing it was to discover that the bread and wine actually change to become the body and blood of Jesus Christ? And do you remember how surprised you were when you were told that the priest would never tell anyone anything that you told him during Reconciliation?

A Retreat, led by Mrs. Patricia Clark from Bismarck, was offered during the week before First Holy Communion. The students planted wheat, baked bread and even made communion-like wafers. To celebrate the occasion, students made First Communion placemats. They also learned a special song accompanied by sign language for the First Communion Mass. By the end of the retreat, they were ready.

On April 11, 2010 the celebration was held. It was easy to imagine God's grace pouring down upon the children during the service. What an incredible day it was!

Congratulations to all the First Communicants!



The Sixth Grade Graduating Class of 2010

By Mrs. Tessa Carman
Sixth Grade Teacher

"Sixth grade has to be the funniest year of all, we made jokes, and I learned geometry, and lots more" Donald Blevins III This quote says it all, "This year's sixth graders have been, by far, the most enjoyable class for me."

These thirteen students have a lot to offer the world. Not only do they keep a positive outlook on life, but think deeply about their faith and its meaning in their lives. So with this said, I say good-bye and offer a prayer for them and their future lives.

May God bless them with an abundant life! Amen

SBMS Web Page

By Lillian Coyle

St. Bernard Mission School has a web page that has been up and running for a long time. We are privileged and grateful to have Mary Bollinger in our school who has kept this updated for us. Mary is our Title I teacher and uses her free time to maintain the web page. If you have not visited this web page, please do so because there is information about our school that you may be interested in. Mostly, there are pictures posted of the students and the activities that they take part in at the school. Please feel free to notify the school and offer some feedback on this website.

The website address is: www.stbernardmissionschool.com



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 Graner, Daughter -
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Parents - Maria Concetta
 and Joseph Lazzaro

Marie McCartan (Wife),
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Sixth Grade Environment Study

*By Sister Dannel Wedemeyer, SSND
Sixth Grade Teacher*

The last month of the school year found the 6th grade busy learning about Biomes and creating displays of the Biome they chose to study. Then we studied Skulls and Skins identifying the animals by their skulls and skins. Lastly, the students examined the inside of owl pellets. As each worked on the pellets, it was fun to see how their interest increased as they put the bones together and identified what the owl had eaten. All students were enthusiastic with doing this experiment and thought it was a great way to end the school year.

