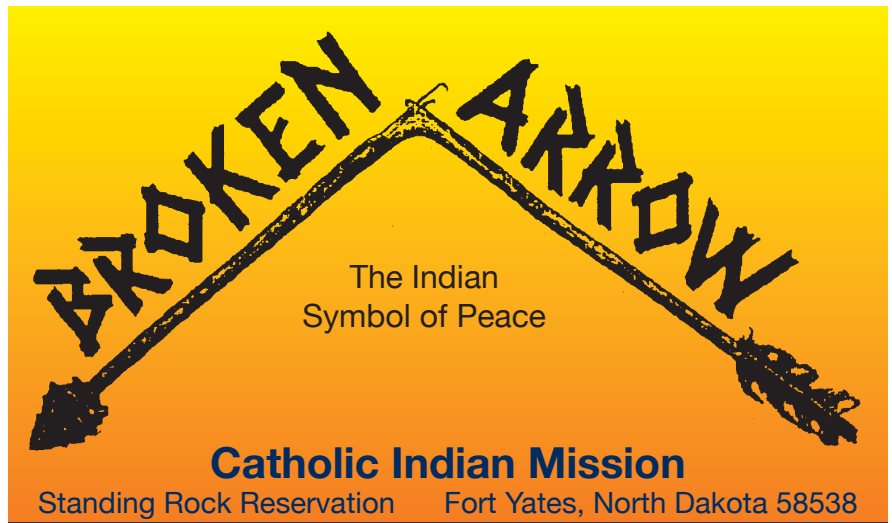




Father Basil Atwell, pastor



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From The Pastor's Desk

A Wish (List) and a Prayer (Life)

For those of you not familiar, the Catholic Indian Mission is located on a strip of land along the west side of the Oahe Reservoir, on what I call the big island on the Missouri. I once jokingly said to a friend that I wanted only two things when I got to the mission: a good cell signal and a bridge! So far, I have gotten neither. Frankly, I am not going to hold my breath. Oh! If wishes could come true!

I arrived here seven months ago and met the staff and faculty who serve the mission. I asked each one of them to make what I called their "wish lists." It took some time, but when I received the lists, I was astounded at the number of things they identified which needed attention. I have prioritized these lists and we will accomplish them as we have the time and necessary funds.

Needs, however, are not only to be found in the physical realm; there is also the matter of the spiritual needs of the Lakota/Dakota Native Americans on The Standing Rock Indian Reservation. I am primarily concerned with the spiritual and religious lives of our students, their parents, my

parishioners, as well as for all those in the wider community. Many people have been baptized Catholic or into other faiths.

In this regard, many people here have said to me, "Father Basil, I am a Catholic!" or "I want to be a better Catholic." One even said, "Many of us are baptized here, but we don't know how to *be* Catholic." I believe we must do all we can to give back to our Native American brothers and sisters a sound Catholic devotional life! As a priest, I also encourage other Christians to practice their respective Christian faiths and to study the Sacred Scriptures and learn!

I have told all of my parishioners (and many who are now returning to the Faith) that, by God's grace and favor, I am here as their priest. I have said that I mean to stay here and give back to them their sacramental life in Christ, as it has been handed down by the Church. For the true faith seems to be all but lost in the confusion of new-age-influenced (and so-called) "*Traditional Native Religion*."

Worship of the one true God seems always to have been known

among their ancestors, but a formalized religion it was not. Now, among many Native people, confusion reigns!

I have said over and over, as gently as I can, that there is no such thing as "Native Religion." Rather, among the people, there has always been known those ancient and most beautiful native ritual practices--practices which go back millennia, practices which I wish to uphold and honor as pastor.

These ancient ritual practices, such as smudging, sweats, sun dances, etc., are useful in helping the Lakota/Dakota Catholics to understand better their true connection to Christ, and to Christian faith and life. After all, these practices were given to them by the working of the Holy Spirit long before Jesus Christ came to walk among us as a man; so that, they might recognize Christ when he was introduced to them.

Living the sacramental life (which certainly includes all true Christian devotions) is the only way in which these beautiful people of God will be able to

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From The Pastor's Desk

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reclaim their traditional ritual practices and connect them faithfully to their Christian life and practice.

Most people involved in the Church here understand that living the sacramental life will assist them in building lives full of hope for themselves and their children for generations to come, just as it assisted indigenous populations throughout the world in past generations.

I remind my parishioners that faithfulness to God is essential when offering ourselves to God. I also remind everyone that God our Father, our "Grandfather," Tunkashila, as he is so lovingly called here, does not force Himself upon us. Rather, God invites us to be faithful to Him and to love one another. God desires to help all people grow in the spiritual life.

Many are answering God's invitation. On Sunday, February 28, Bishop Paul Zipfel of the Diocese of Bismarck will bestow the Sacrament of Confirmation upon more than sixty (60) youths and adults! Recently, by God's grace, there seems to be a growing desire to live the Catholic faith. Sister Ann Schoch is helping me to prepare this group to receive the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

With all the past hardships and human tragedies which have afflicted this land and its people for so long, including the scourge of suicide, native rituals all by themselves, without a Christian character, offer no real transcendent hope. Christianity offers true hope to those who have real needs; we Catholics do not live

on wishes. Instead, we hope.

I do not know whether I will ever live to see a bridge over the Oahe. I do not know whether my cell phone will ever again pull in a decent signal. And time will tell if this mission will ever see enough funding to pay for all the physical needs that my staff members have wished for.

I do believe, however, that with God's help, both the spiritual and physical needs of these beautiful Lakota/Dakota people will come to

be realized.

So long as this mission has good benefactors who pray for the spiritual well-being of all those who live in this remarkable place, wishes can indeed come true!

I pray to God for the health and well-being of all our benefactors and friends who support the Catholic Indian Mission. And I thank God for all you do to help our Native American brothers and sisters. God bless you all.

Authors in the Making

By Mrs. Tessa Carman
Sixth Grade Teacher

In Language Arts class, we have been studying the various forms of written literature. We have learned how to write an autobiography, a personal narrative, and an explanatory paragraph. In the near writing future, we will be writing poetry and how to conduct an interview. Toward the end of the year we will be inviting parents to our classroom for an informal Author's Reception where students will share all the creations we have been working on. Here is a taste of what our parents will experience

About Me

By Katie

I love to read a lot of books! My favorite books are Twilight, New Moon, Eclipse, Breaking Dawn, and Sleeping Beauty (The one who took the really long nap.) I also love Science! What I really want to learn about is Astronomy! I like Cross Country running too! It's fun going up hills and running as hard as you can to finish.

How to Saddle a Horse

By Chloe

You must first catch the horse that you want to ride. You put the halter on the horses face around the ears and nose. Then, you tie the horse up to the trailer or the fence. Then, you go and get your brush, saddle, fly spray, saddle blanket, and bridal. Next, you brush the horse. Then, you spray the horse with fly spray. Put the saddle blanket on the back of the horse and put the saddle on the saddle blanket. Then, you cinch the strap under the horse's belly. Last you go riding.

Welcomed Guests

Saint Bernard Mission School had the wonderful opportunity to connect with Saint Mary's Catholic College in Moraga, California. Brother Michael contacted the Mission in early September to see if we would host two juniors during the month of January on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. We readily agreed to receive young hearts and minds to minister to our Native American relatives.

Saturday, January 2, 2010 at the Bismarck airport, we welcomed Erica Arroyo-Ramirez and Jodie Wu, two of the finest young women from sunny California, to a cold blustery evening in North Dakota. It only took a short time to load the huge suitcases, to scurry off, and to be warmed by the girl's wholesome openness and eagerness to begin their off-campus Christian Service Internship.

Erica's parents immigrated from Mexico to San Diego where she was born and raised. Jodie moved with her family from China when she was ten years old.

Saint Mary's School offers the opportunity for students to give service in another state or country. While the two young women could have opted to go to Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Chicago or New York they chose Fort Yates, North Dakota. They wanted to experience life on a reservation, a small town atmosphere, and real winter weather!

Ironically, that first day they awoke to a heavy snowfall and by noon they enjoyed shoveling for the first time in their lives. Erica and Jodie spent much of their time in Saint Bernard Mission School, assisting the teachers and helping the students. Because both girls are tech savvy they assessed and

assembled extra school computers to be shared with Mission families without a computer in their homes. Brother George was quick to engage the girls in the Mission Food Pantry. They enjoyed unloading food items, stocking shelves, and distributing food to the people. It was an honor for Jodie and Erica to be asked to meet and greet the Elders of the community at a winter Bingo and to visit some of them in their homes.

Life at the Mission was not all work! We took a weekend holiday to share a bit of beauty and history of our State. The first stop was lunch in Dickinson's quaint coffee shop, once a church in which Theodore Roosevelt worshiped. We journeyed on to the wide open spaces and quiet beauty of Medora's hills, prairie dogs and, yes, buffalo! Our return trip on Sunday included fun at Papa's Polar Patch and another history stop, the Heritage Center in Bismarck to view the Native American display.

While here, Jodie and Erica took advantage of cultural opportunities such as a Sweat, the Wiping of Tears ceremony,



Sister Richardé Marie Wolf
School Principal

and tasting native foods. They so appreciated the warmth of the native people and how readily they were accepted by them.

As Erica and Jodie were putting the last beads and feathers on dream catchers they had learned to make, we sat together to debrief and share highlights of their Christian Service Internship. Together, as School Sisters of Notre Dame ministering at the Mission and the two young college students, we realized how positive the experience was for all of us and how much we enriched one another.

Thank You, St. Mary's Elementary, Bismarck

By Sister Nicolette Karcher, SSND
Fifth Grade Teacher

St. Mary's in Bismarck gifted St. Bernard Mission School with ten used computers. Each classroom received one or two Apple Computers.

The fifth graders were busy typing their Language assignment "My Favorite Book." Thanks to St. Mary's School the students were able to finish the assignment more quickly using the extra computers. We appreciate the kindness and generosity of St. Mary's.

The World May Have the Olympics – St. Bernard Mission School Has Sledding

When you give a student snow, he will probably want to go sledding. When he goes sledding, he will most likely need snow pants, boots and mittens. Generous donations helped to supply snow pants, mittens and hats for many students. Sledding needs are complete with sleds that children bring from home. The playground becomes a winter wonderland. The snowy slope on the playground is perfect for sledding.

While it is not quite the same as watching downhill skiing or snowboarding in the Olympics, it is nearly as exciting.

Somehow children are always more excited about snow than adults. We may see a snowstorm as frost covered car windows and slippery roads. On snow days when school is closed, we may worry about power outages and closed roads. But students may be thinking that these days bring more snow. And what do you do with more snow? Go sledding!



Generous donors from near and far gifted students and staff at the Mission School. We are most grateful to Kay Power from Cathedral Grade School and her third grade classes who have purchased backpacks and filled them for several years for all of our students at the Mission. May God bless you for being angels of generosity.

Catholic Education Week Fun

**By Mrs. Margaret Lebak
Second Grade Teacher**

What a week it was! Students at St. Bernard Mission School anticipated Catholic Education Week since last year's Catholic Education Week.

On Monday students created crafts ranging from beaded necklaces and pipe-stem cleaner insects to origami animals. They also made placemats for nursing home residents. They had a great time doing the projects, but probably enjoyed it most because they decided to give one of their craft projects away within the community.

Students did fitness activities on Tuesday. They climbed the climbing wall, played with the parachute and enjoyed the luna sticks. Who would think that staying fit could be so much fun?

Wednesday was Bingo Day. This was bingo for students, not the bingo made for grownups. They had a great time watching their cards and winning fun prizes.

On Thursday the students celebrated with a Picnic Day Lunch. It was our little piece of summer. Can you imagine a picnic during February?

During the All School Mass on Friday, Father gave the St. Blase Blessing of Throats. Students from each grade were selected to participate in the Mass. The Mass was followed by a social in the school cafeteria.

The week went very well. Students will probably be talking about this week until next year.



St. Mary's High School Annual Mission Trip

By Ms. Roberts
Third Grade Teacher

On November 23, the senior class of St. Mary's High School made its annual mission trip to St. Bernard Mission School. Each year before the Thanksgiving holiday, St. Mary's High School organizes a food drive to resupply the Emergency Food Pantry at the Catholic Indian Mission in Fort Yates. Under the guidance of Jerome Richter, teacher and Religious Studies Chair, many families and students donated nonperishable items to help the needy of the Standing Rock Reservation.

While here, the St. Mary's seniors got an opportunity to spend time with the students. First the students welcomed the seniors as they entered St. Peter's Church. The grade school students were partnered with high school students for the weekly Mass. Fr. Basil Atwell, St. Peter's priest, and Fr. Waltz, chaplain of St. Mary's, celebrated Mass. The high school students lead the Mass by doing readings and intentions and presenting the gifts. Their active participation during the Mass was a well-received example to the young students of St. Bernard's.

After Mass, all the students and

staff shared a delicious lunch. High school students sat with the grade school students and they shared stories and asked lots of questions about each other. It was a great way to forget about differences and just enjoy each other's company. Recess followed lunch, something the high school students don't get to do back home. Everyone had a blast playing kickball, football and pushing and riding the merry-go-round.

Soon after recess, the seniors had to board the buses for the ride back to Bismarck. They left with a

better understanding of life on the reservation.

The Emergency Food Pantry greatly appreciated the generous donations from the families and students of St. Mary's High School. The food pantry, operated by Father Atwell and Brother George Maufort, currently serves about 150 to 160 households a month. The pantry has been in operation for about six years. St. Mary's High School donations as well as all other donations are greatly appreciated.



State Science Fair 2010

*By Sister Dannel Wedemeyer, SSND
Fourth Grade Teacher*

January 18, 2010 found eighteen students eager to set up their projects for judging on the nineteenth. I am pleased to report that of our eighteen projects twelve placed in their division. They are as follows:

Grade Four

Erian Fox - 1st Place
Syanne Young Bird - 2nd Place
Chaska Moore - 2nd Place
Ma Cante Azure - 3rd Place

Grade Five

Laura Feist - 1st Place
Tatum Bahm - 2nd Place
Sheldon Silk - 2nd Place

Grade Six

Isaiah Archambault - 1st Place
Donnie Blevins - 1st Place
Thai Decouteau - 1st Place
Schea Bullhead - 2nd Place
Elijah Red Tomahawk - 2nd Place



We are proud of all our students and the work on their projects.

Advent, a Season of Anticipation

*By Mrs. Margaret Lebak
Second Grade Teacher*

As December was upon us, you may have been thinking about wrapping things up for the year's end. But December actually brought the season of Advent, the beginning of the church year. Advent was filled with the anticipation for celebrating the birth of Jesus. It was also the perfect time for families to reflect upon the real meaning for the season.

Many families chose to celebrate with an Advent Wreath. The circular shape of the wreath represents God's unending love for us and the candles reminded us that Jesus is the light of the world. Traditional wreaths were made from evergreen and had three violet candles and one pink candle. The violet candles were symbols of the penitent color for



Advent. The pink candle, lit on the third Sunday of Advent, symbolized Joy.

At St. Bernard Mission School this year, the students celebrated Advent with an Advent Wreath and a Jesse Tree. In the Old Testament, it was promised that a Savior would be born from the root of Jesse. Jesse was the father of David and Jesus was born from the family of David. The Jesse Tree was celebrated daily with prayers and symbols that were hung on a tree.

Advent was a season of anticipation. It was so easy to be caught up in the commercialism of the holiday. The real challenge for all of us was to keep Christ in Christmas.

Memorials

The donors and the deceased are remembered at the altar each day.

<i>Gift From</i>	<i>Memory of</i>
Fran Beck	Ernest Thomas Bogle
Caroline Heidt	Rudy Heidt
Henry Snyder	Momie Snyder
Agnes V. Haines	Anne B. Elbert
Vivian Rotering	Nick & Rose Koppinger
Byrle & Edithe Miller	John Thomas

Sr. Mary Rosaline Roman & Donna Weiler	My parents, friends & benefactors
Marilyn Cunningham	Sr. Angeline Weiler
Marilyn Cunningham	Irma Auck Hoff
Albert & Libby Imbrone	Herbert Maston
Mary Ann Albrecht	Kurt Weber
James & Ann Pitcher	Alvin Albrecht
Gladys Trudell	Joan Connolly
Patricia Torres	Floriene Deville
Michael J. Myers	In honor of sister, Susan Vaughan
Valley Forklift Service	Louise Kunesh
William & S&ra Kurtz	Louise Kunesh
Lillian McLoughlin	Louise Marie Kelly Kunesh
Arthur Hintz	Josie Hughes
David & Patricia Schoon	Edna Hintz
Douglas & Kathryn Larson	Louise Kunesh
Robert Burge Jr.	Louise Kunesh
Lois Pleets	Ruth M. Burge
Mrs. Marvel Miller	Lynda Lee Ironeyes
Jack & Judy Kane	Oscar Miller
Blanche Kubik	Kitty Giarraffa
Mary Lou Bankovic	John Kubik
Donald & Eleanor Miller	Patricia Bankovic Rimovin
James & Sara Doyle	William Miller
James & Sara Doyle	Tom Visconti
	Joe Doyle, in honor of his birthday Dec. 8
Roger & Karen Andrascik	John & Dorothy Andrascik
Genya Lee Lyon	Harry G. Lee
Amy Kautzman	Honor of: Daniel & Patricia Kautzman
Gayle Olsen	Mel Remy & in honor of Earline & Karl Smith
Mary Eoloff	Joan Connolly
Keven & Linda Hayhurst	Honor of: Jim & Mary Ruelle
Joan Larson	Ruth M. Eder
Rosemary Walko	Honor of: Joseph J. Borodach
Betty Fusick	Daniel Eitzen, Viola Gaeddert- Eitzen
Sr. Renee Zastoupil	Rose & Joseph Zastoupil
Michele Granse	George Granse
Thomas & Patricia Stocker	Jake & Arleen Stocker
Thomas & Nora McCormick	Michael T. McCormick Jr., for his parents & Sister Meg
Wanda Zebrowski	Joan Connolly
Marie Hoff	Honor of: John & Elizabeth Dinneen
Clyde & Mary Smith	Honor of: Roger Smith, Kay Pugh, Susan Smith-Johnson, Patricia Shushan, Stephen Smith, Gregory Smith, Mary Laid Law
Jerry & Maureen Munch	Their parents
Jane Atkins	Peggy Gwyther
Verona Loechler	Charles & Caroline Loechler

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Please send me Memorial forms:

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“For Unto Us a Child is Born...”

By Mary Bollinger
Title 1 Teacher

On December 17, 2009 at 7 p.m., the church filled up as the St. Bernard Mission School students performed their annual Christmas program. It was called “The Christmas Story.” The children were excited to present this program and wanted to share the good news of Jesus’ birth to their family and friends through narration and song.

It was decided this year that the students would perform a “traditional” Christmas program with Christmas carols, poetry narration and the staging of the Nativity. The students had to perform their very best because they had a visitor from KFYZ TV. Cliff Naylor taped segments of the program for use on the KFYZ news on Christmas Eve. The students were complimented for a job well done, and their many hours of practice paid off.

The music committee involved three of the teachers at St. Bernard. They were Mrs. Tessa Carman, Ms. Deborah Roberts and Ms. Mary Bollinger, who was also the accompanist. Father Basil provided a rented piano from Eckroth Music for the program. The KFYZ news segment can be viewed at www.kfyrvtv.com.

There is also a link posted on the school web page at www.stbernardmissionschool.com under “Photo Album.” Here you can view pictures of the Christmas program and click on the link which will take you right to the KFYZ news section. A social was held after the Christmas program for all who attended, and a fun time was had by all.

Candlemas Day

On Tuesday, February 2, 2010, Brother George led the student body in prayer as we celebrated the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord. Student representatives processed in with lighted candles, listened to the readings from Scripture, and witnessed the blessing of the church candles that we will use in church and in our homes to remind us of Jesus our Light. Following the blessing rite we had the privilege of receiving Jesus in the Eucharist.