



DIRECTOR'S DESK

Dear Friend of St. Bonaventure,

As St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School enters its 50th year of service to the people of the Eastern Navajo Reservation, the theme of renewal looms large in my mind.

Self-renewal - the process of making ourselves new again - is an essential and often necessary part of life. However, this is by no means an original or new idea.

Indeed, centuries ago, in his Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul urged the people of Corinth to "...not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Today, we use various terms to describe the act of self-renewal. Words like restored, rejuvenated, and refreshed all share a similar meaning and point to the power of renewal to reignite our passion and reconnect us with our life's purpose.

In our personal and professional lives, we renew ourselves when we take on new challenges, learn new skills, and enter new relationships. Renewal leads to growth and development and to becoming stronger and more resilient people.

CELEBRATING



Our faith calls us back to Christ, to be rejuvenated by the Holy Spirit, to allow God to work through us, transforming us into something new, something better. Spiritual renewal clears the path so we can earnestly seek God's will for our lives and build His Kingdom on earth.

In this issue of our benefactor newsletter, the *Mission Messenger*, I invite you once again to see how St. Bonaventure continues to renew ourselves and our efforts to

bring about lasting change for the Diné (Navajo) People we serve each day. I thank you for sharing so generously and faithfully in this challenging yet truly rewarding process started fifty years ago. We could not do any of this without you.

Finally, renewal prevents stagnation, fueling us with the passion and purpose to keep moving forward and live life to the fullest. As you inspire us with your every gift and act of kindness, I pray our partnership and collaborative efforts here on the Eastern Navajo Reservation will encourage you to continue challenging yourself and exploring new possibilities - to renew you!

With renewed energy and purpose,

Chris Halter

RENEWELL

MISSION RENEWS COMMITMENT TO DELIVERING SAFE WATER

St. Bonaventure Indian Mission is proud to celebrate fifty years of service to the people of the Eastern Navajo Reservation. Over the years, we have expanded the breadth and scope of our services to better respond to the urgent needs that exist in this poverty-stricken Native American community.

Today, these services include K-8 education for more than one hundred children at our school each year, job placements in our school, outreach programs, and administrative office, increasing access to food at our Native Hope food pantry, offering safe housing at our mobile home park, and providing urgent heating assistance during the bitterly cold winter months – just to begin the list.

Yet, of the various outreach services we offer, St. Bonaventure Indian Mission is best known for our Water Delivery Program.

Indeed, delivering millions of gallons of safe drinking water to hundreds of homes on the Eastern Navajo Reservation each year has earned St. Bonaventure Indian

Mission national recognition in print publications, televised news reports, syndicated radio shows, and even children's books!

Needless to say, we could not delivery fresh water to some of the most remote and impoverished Native American households in the country without a safe well from which to draw it from. Enter the main water well at our St. Bonaventure Indian Mission Office located in Thoreau, NM.

A FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

Our main well serves as the primary source of water for hundreds of families on the Eastern Navajo Reservation. From our well, we are able to fill our water storage tank and refill the St. Bonaventure water trucks many times over each week. Maintaining our well in good working order is of vital importance to our ability to provide life-sustaining water to the Navajo people we serve.

That's why, last year, we made the difficult yet long-overdue decision to shut down and refurbish the water well at



OUT with
the OLD

IN with the NEW





our St. Bonaventure main office. After nearly 20 years of use, exposure to extreme summer and winter temperatures, and numerous repairs, the old well and storage tank stood in desperate need of attention.

NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION

To minimize the impact of the projected year-long shutdown and the ensuing water shortage it would cause the people of Thoreau and neighboring communities, an innovative solution emerged – water by rail!

And so, for the past year, St. Bonaventure partnered with a rail company specializing in the safe storage and transportation of potable water by rail. This alternative method of bringing water into the community acted as a stopgap while our main well was being refurbished. The

Water = Life

generosity of our benefactors in helping cover the cost of these water tank cars was vital to ensuring the people of the Eastern Navajo Reservation had an ample supply of safe drinking water during the shutdown.

RENEWING OUR PROMISE TO THE NAVAJO PEOPLE

As you can see in these pictures, the work to restore our well for the sake of future generations of Navajo families, children, and elders has been an extensive and costly project. Deconstruction and removal of the old well, site work including excavation and laying down a new foundation and driveway, purchasing and installing a new water storage tank as well as new pump and electrical systems – this year-long construction project required significant resources and investment.



RENEWELL

The newly refurbished well and storage tank will enhance our efforts to supply the impoverished families on the Eastern Navajo Reservation with a safe source of water for years to come. Whereas the old water tank was only able to safely store 4,000 gallons of safe drinking water, our new modern storage tank boasts a maximum capacity of 12,500 gallons.



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capacity and by significantly reducing our refill times, we look forward to better meeting the great demand for clean water that exists in this poverty-stricken region.

Once again, St. Bonaventure Indian Mission wishes to extend our profound gratitude to our benefactors and friends for helping to bring this vital project to completion, especially as we celebrate half a century of service to the Navajo people. Our newly refurbished well and storage tank are up and running again and providing our Navajo brothers and sisters in need with the life-sustaining gift of water - all because of you!

Darlene



This increased storage capacity will ensure a greater supply of clean water is always on hand. Additionally, the newly installed pump system will fill our new larger tank at 65 gallons per minute. This means it will take roughly 3 hours to fill completely, compared to 4 hours it took to fill the previous tank. With much greater storage



Cecil

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

The seeds of Catholic faith were first planted in the American Southwest more than 400 years ago. In fact, San Miguel Chapel, a Spanish colonial mission church originally built around 1610 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, is said to be the oldest church building in the continental United States!

It was also during this time that Catholicism was first introduced to the Navajo people.

Over time, the Catholic Church established churches, missions, and schools within the Navajo Nation to provide religious services, education, and community support. Indeed, this was the case when Bishop Jerome Hastrich of the Diocese of Gallup, New Mexico, established St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School back in 1974 – now 50 years ago!

Countless Navajo individuals and families have embraced Catholicism since and begun incorporating its sacred teachings and rituals into their lives. Many have done so while also maintaining aspects of their traditional Navajo spiritual beliefs and practices.

The seeds of faith planted during the Spanish colonial period and nurtured by the arrival of missionaries in the Southwest region of the United



States continue to bear fruit in the hearts of the Navajo people still today.

This spring, several families from Thoreau and the surrounding communities, many with children attending St. Bonaventure Indian School, gathered at St. Paul Catholic Church in Crownpoint, New Mexico, to celebrate the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion.

Father Gil Mangampo, the Pastor of St. Paul Parish, concelebrated the Mass with Bishop James S. Wall of the Diocese of Gallup in New Mexico. Sr. Josephine Mangampo, a member of the Congregation of the Franciscan Immaculate Sisters currently serving as the Religious Education teacher at St. Bonaventure Indian School, also joined in the celebration!

Once again, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to you, our generous benefactors, for your unwavering support of St. Bonaventure Indian Mission. Your support not only provides our Navajo brothers and sisters with essential resources and services, but it also helps us renew the love of God in the hearts of Catholic Navajo families in our community.



RENEWING INDIGENOUS EXCELLENCE

SCHOOL ALUMNUS RECEIVES NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD



“I want to be a bridge that helps the Navajo People to advance in healthcare.”

Layla has much to be proud of. Her journey is one of resilience and determination.

From her humble beginnings on the Eastern Navajo Reservation, growing up with little water or electricity, she has emerged as a beacon of hope and inspiration.

Layla James is an alumnus of St. Bonaventure Indian School (Class of 2018). She is currently a junior at Navajo Technical University (NTU)

School of Science, where she is working on her undergraduate degree in Biology.

On March 10, Layla traveled with a group of

“Our youth is not inspired, and I think it would be so much better to see someone they can relate to, someone who grew up the way they did without electricity and without running water to say, ‘I made it.’”

her fellow students and professors at NTU to Minneapolis, MN, to attend the 2024 American Indian Higher Education Consortium. The American Indian Higher Education Consortium is an annual gathering of Tribal College and University (TCU) students representing tribes from across the country. The annual culturally rich conference is filled with inspiring events and distinguished speakers.

However, Layla did not attend the Conference to merely participate in the annual gathering and festivities. No, she was a distinguished guest of honor!

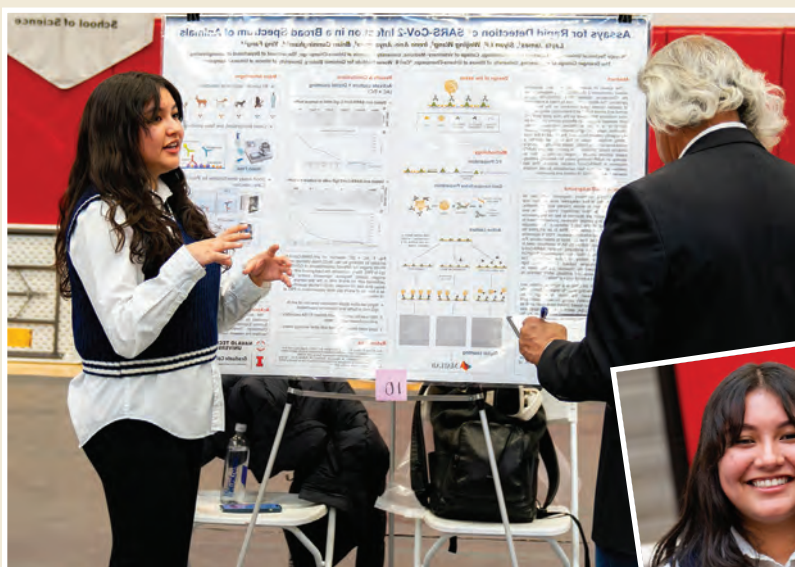
Layla was selected among the top 35 Native American students in the country at the 2024 American Indian Higher Education Consortium. She was also awarded the prestigious 2024 Indigenous Excellence Student of the Year award, a testament to her exemplary academic achievements and community involvement.

Your support of our school children and the Navajo people has renewed many lives, like Layla's



We are proud to share this exciting moment in Layla's young life with you. Despite growing up under extremely difficult circumstances, she has already achieved a great deal, and we look forward to seeing what comes next!

Thank you for your continued financial support of St. Bonaventure Indian School. Your generosity is a testament to what is possible for all the children following in Layla's footsteps right now and for many years still to come.



“That’s what I want to bring back, *inspiration*”





JESUS CALLS US ALL TO BE GOOD SHEPHERDS



As a member of the Good Shepherd Circle, YOU will be God's shepherd, caring for the most impoverished, isolated people among us - our Navajo elders, children and families who have been lost and forgotten for so long.

Even the smallest regular gift supports our mission to:

- PROVIDE CLEAN WATER - to over 200 families through our water delivery program.
- FEED THE POOR - provide two meals a day to our school children and deliver emergency food boxes to elders and families in crisis.
- GIVE SHELTER - and provide home repairs to families living in unsafe and unhealthy conditions.
- EDUCATION - help provide Navajo children with tuition-free Catholic education and a chance at a brighter future.

Please consider offering a monthly gift as a member of the Good Shepherd Circle to ensure St. Bonaventure Indian Mission can continue to reach out to those most in need.

The Mission is always looking to stock up on art and school supplies; regular and colored pencils, pens, notebooks, glue, crayons and of course disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer.

And, as always, we need the simple things; toilet paper, tissue, toothpaste and brushes, deodorant, soap and shampoo as well as cleaning supplies like laundry detergent, dish soap, paper towels.

The Native Hope Food Pantry always appreciates dry goods or canned foods to fill the shelves. Your kind donations are always welcome and very much appreciated! If you are interested in helping us provide any of these supplies you can send a donation box via

**UPS or FEDEX to: St Bonaventure Indian Mission & School
25 Navarre Boulevard West • PO Box 610 • Thoreau, NM 87323**



Please accept my MONTHLY gift of \$ _____ in support of St. Bonaventure Mission & School.

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