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## Indian Mission School Seeks Christmas Miracle Priest Says Prayers, Donations Urgently Needed

Special to Catholic Courier  
 THOREAU, NM —With the approach of Christmas, Very Rev. Douglas A. McNeill ("Fr. Doug" to his friends) has cause for both rejoicing and concern.

Fr. Doug's cause for rejoicing is the Indian Mission's spanking new "Miracle Van" that many friends helped earn for the school through Campbell's Labels for Education program!

"We call it our 'Miracle Van' because we knew when we started saving for it that it would take a miracle for a school our size to earn it," the Brooklyn-born priest declares. He says he daily gives thanks for (and remembers in prayer) all those who shared in the hard work of the labels project.

Fr. Doug's cause for concern is the struggling Indian Mission's critical financial need.

"Right now, I'm praying for the miracle we need for the funds to assure we can keep our school open and meet other critical needs of our American Indian neighbors," Fr. Doug declares.

In his 17th year as Mission Director, the Irish priest is at the helm of a nearly 50-member strong corps of dedicated lay missionaries.

Some of the missionaries serve as teachers in the Mission's fully-accredited school, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Academy and some help carry out the other work of the Mission, including bringing both food and water to aging

**Many friends helped Fr. Doug and students collect 975,000 Campbell's labels to earn this new "Miracle Van" for the Indian Mission school. Fr. Doug is praying now that Catholic Courier readers' hearts will be touched to send an urgently-needed gift as the school faces a financial emergency.**

Navajos living in abject poverty in remote areas of the barren Reservation which has been often compared to an emerging "Third World" nation. Many dwellings have dirt floors and no water or electricity.

Fr. Doug acknowledges that new lay missionaries often ask, "Father, is this America?"

For all help the Mission is able to provide, the priest gives credit to lay missionaries, who, he said "can stretch a dollar farther than anyone else I know."

Gifts to St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School are tax-deductible. The school also qualifies for "Matching Gifts."



St. Bonaventure Indian Mission Director Fr. Doug McNeill and School Principal Sr. Michelle Geerken, M.H.S., are pictured with a group of students in front of the "Miracle Van" that many friends helped the Mission School earn through Campbell's Labels for Education Program.

Dear Courier Reader,

I'm turning to you for your urgent help. I'm praying you will join me this Christmas in a partnership of prayer, love and concern.

My urgent and serious problem is the plight of destitute families and aging First Americans here on the Eastern Navajo Reservation ...and the future of our Mission school boys and girls.

I cannot turn my back on the despair bred my near-Third-World poverty, so I'm begging for your prayers...and your help. I cannot turn my back on starvation and malnutrition, so I am begging for your prayers...and your help. I cannot turn my back on a new generation of American Indian boys and girls I see as condemned to lives of hopelessness without an education, so I am begging for your prayers...and your help.

Christmas blessings,  
*Father Doug*  
 Father Doug McNeill

P.S. I'll pray for your needs in my Christmas Masses.

Clip and Mail Today

Dear Father Doug, here's my emergency Christmas gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Pray for my Intention: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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Send to:

Father Doug McNeill

% Christmas Help from Catholic Courier Readers

St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School  
 Eastern Navajo Reservation -- P.O. Box 610

Thoreau, New Mexico 87323 - 0610

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Brooklyn-born Fr. Doug McNeill with a group of students

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