

Indian Mission Director Asks for Your Help

THOREAU, NM -

"Lord, when did I see you hungry and feed you?"

"When you did it for one of the least of my people, you did it for me."

Matt 25:40

As Catholics prepare for the Advent and Christmas season, the director, religious, volunteers and staff of a New Mexico Mission school pray for your help. They work daily to make quality Catholic education a reality for American Indian children in their care.

These children "do without" as a way of life... will you help them? For many of our students, the school at St. Bonaventure Mission is their "last hope." Trusting in God, everyone at the Mission prays for help to meet the needs here at the Mission.

St. Bonaventure Mission started a school more than a decade ago when the founder realized the Indian children in the Mission's

CCD classes didn't have even the most basic reading and writing skills. Today over 200 children, most of them Native American, join in prayers of thanksgiving for your gifts. Mission staff believe education is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty.

The Indian boys and girls attending St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School live with the following realities:

- 55 of the Navajo population cannot read or write;
- McKinley County (where the Mission is located) has the highest poverty rate (48) in the state;
- The suicide rate among Navajo teenagers is twice that for their age group in the U.S. population at large.
- McKinley County has the highest alcoholism rate in the United States.

Thirty dedicated volunteers teach and carry out the other work of the Mission. This "other work" includes maintaining the buses which travel the remote mesas to bring the children to school; preparing two nourishing meals daily for the children; and bringing food, water and essential home repairs to aging Navajos living in poverty in remote areas of the barren Reservation.

New volunteers often ask, "Can this be America?"

Many of our students experienced failure in other schools or inability to get to school from great distances.

Will you help?

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



The shining eyes of these three Navajo "angels," part of last year's preschool pageant, reflect the hope of all at St. Bonaventure - to be able to meet the needs of children, families and the elderly for food, water, education and safe shelter from the severe winter. Please join us in this effort. Thank you.

Dear Catholic Courier Readers,

I'm turning to you for help. My concern is for the children and elders served by St. Bonaventure Indian Mission. Without caring friends like you we can't exist.

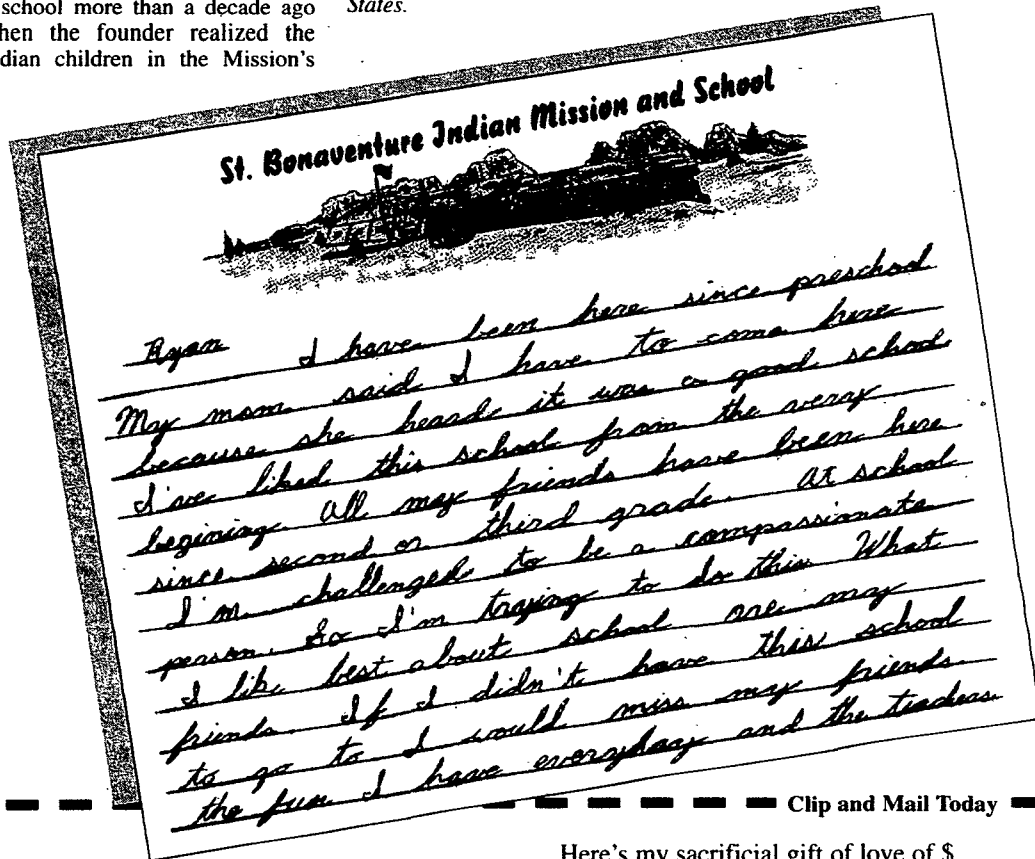
With the especially cold weather this winter, families need warm clothing, blankets, emergency heating fuel and repairs to their homes. The elderly are especially vulnerable.

Something as simple as a new window instead of wind-torn plastic, can mean the difference between survival and pneumonia for an at-risk child or elder. Will you please help us make urgent home repairs before winter makes the work impossible? Lives can literally be saved this winter through your generous prayers and gifts.

I can't meet their needs without you. Please become part of this life-giving work! I don't want to have to say "no" to even one child or one elder who needs food, water or clothing or safe shelter.

In Christ's Love,

Bob O'Connell, Director
St. Bonaventure Indian Mission & School



St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School

Ryan I have been here since preschool. My mom said I have to come here because she heard it was a good school. I've liked this school from the very beginning. All my friends have been here since second or third grade. At school I'm challenged to be a compassionate person. So I'm trying to do this. What I like best about school are my friends. If I didn't have this school to go to I would miss my friends the fun I have everyday and the teachers.

Clip and Mail Today

Here's my sacrificial gift of love of \$ _____

Please pray for my special intentions: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

- () Please check here if you would like to receive a beautiful rosary hand-strung with reconstituted turquoise nuggets and silver-plated beads as a token of appreciation for your gift of \$100 or more.
- () Please check here if you would like to receive a sterling silver cross, set with turquoise, made by our local Indian artisans, as a token of appreciation for your gift of \$35 or more. It is a unique piece of jewelry you will wear-or give-with pride.
- () Please check here if you would like to receive information about St. Bonaventure's Planned Giving program including wills and annuities.
- () Please check here if you would like a year 2003 Mission calendar with envelopes for monthly giving.

Send to: **Help from The Catholic Courier Readers**
St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School
Eastern Navajo Reservation, P.O. Box 610, Thoreau, NM 87323-0610

0326 UTX 005

