

Despite all of the headaches that came by taking on a complicated task of overseeing and funding a new Church building project, **We did it!** Many thanks to all of you who gave to this project. There is still more to do like purchasing and installing pews, laying pavement in front of the church etc. But we are nearing the finish line!

The New Church stands as monument to the fact that **God has not forsaken the Red Lake Reservation.** You can imagine the heartache of so many who learned of the old church burning to the ground. The years that were spent going to Mass in the school gym. And finally seeing the New Church taking shape. The New church is a constant reminder that with God's blessing, generous people from all over our nation and the dedication of so many to oversee the construction, **miracles can happen.** God brought all of us together to rebuild His Church on the Red Lake Reservation. St. Mary's Mission is so blessed by all who have contributed their gifts of money and labor to make God's plan a reality.

Thank you!



Fr. John Christianson
St. Mary's Mission
Red Lake, MN

PS: Please keep St. Mary's Mission in your prayers and please remember to send us your special intentions.



Greetings from St. Mary's Mission on the Red Lake Reservation!

We have just finished another successful school year! The students and the teachers are looking forward to the summer break to rest from all their hard work this year. Some of these students have registered for our summer school program in dedication to their studies and the fun and social atmosphere of summer school. More details in the following article.

St. Mary's Mission has been a staple on the Red Lake Reservation for over a century. We are the longest standing Christian presence here. The local people know that St. Mary's is very generous to people in need, having a long-established school that is ever improving, and a Church of their own where all are welcome. St. Mary's presence is as necessary today as it was in the 1800s. It is a privilege to be a part of this century old history.

The New Church is a testament to the commitment of the Catholic Church to the people in Red Lake. For people not knowing if they would ever have a Catholic Church again, the Church is a symbol of hope and comfort knowing that they once again have a church to call their home.

In the construction of the Church, special attention had been given to bringing some of the elements of the culture and this

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Inspire Hope
Empower Love
Ignite Faith

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MISSION STATEMENT:

The purpose of St. Mary's Mission School on the Red Lake Indian Reservation is the holistic formation and education of the mind, heart, body, and spirit of our students. We achieve this by providing a God-centered, culture enhancing, quality Catholic education in a nurturing, safe, and Christian environment.

This newsletter is mailed quarterly to all our donors, church families and student families. Thank you for sharing in our ministry...

"Never underestimate
the good that you do!"

To learn more about us, please visit our
website:
stmarysmmission.org

area into the New Church. One example of this is our **new baptismal font**. This font came to be by a conversation that I was having with a funeral director before a funeral. I shared with him how I was struggling to find a designer to make a baptismal font that incorporated both the upper and lower Red Lake into its design. He said do you mind if I give it a try. I was so astonished that he was that confident in himself, let alone his willingness to help to make this unique baptismal font that had never been made before.

Over the next year as the Church was slowly being constructed, we met a couple of times to discuss ideas for this font and drown ourselves in drawings with pens in hand to adjust the design. Finally, the font, though not complete, was delivered Saturday March 9th, a day before the dedication of the New Church. The day before that, March 8th the altar, tabernacle stand, and ambo were delivered and set up. Those were a very busy couple of days on top of a very busy week cleaning the Church and planning for that special day.

All the countless hours that I have put into St. Mary's Mission is worth it especially when I look back and see how far we have come in the last couple years. There is always one more need that demands immediate attention each day, Which is quite exhausting but knowing where we are going transforms the exhaustion into satisfaction because the work we do today will ultimately bear fruit in the future.

The 2023-2024 school year has come to a very successful end. With the hard work of our principal, Joalah Webb and our staff, we have provided a full curriculum for all our students at St. Mary's Mission School the first time in many years.



This summer we are expanding our summer school program, **Summer Adventures**, into four days versus the three days of the previous years. This expansion of summer school gives us an extra day of having our students immersed in their studies. We are also enhancing Summer Adventures by having the results of the students' spring testing to guide their lesson plans over the summer so that when they return in the fall, they will be prepared for the next grade in key areas of learning.

At St. Mary's Mission we are now in a position, thanks to your generous donations, to move from strictly maintaining to updating our facilities and equipment. This movement is a work in progress because there are some things that demand maintaining but we are now also looking to the future to circumvent future

problems by updating old equipment as we can avoid eventual breakdowns in the near future. It is such a relief to see these updates slowly being implemented. This makes for a very bright and hopeful future.

Two projects that we are working on this summer:

The camera system is essential for the safety of students while they are in school. Our current system is 19 years old. Some of the cameras do not work anymore and the cameras do not have the clarity of a newer model. The new system that we will be installing this summer will have thirty-two cameras that will cover the 'dead spots' that the old system did not cover, which enhances the safety of our school for the children. The cost is \$17,000. This price, we are getting at a discount from the dealer and for thirty-two cameras and the increase in today's prices, it seems very reasonable given that the price includes labor to install the camera system.

We are also replacing a **furnace in the school** that seems to be on borrowed time. Furnaces are a necessity in Northern Minnesota. Though the furnace is still heating, we know that it will only be a matter of time, a short time, before this furnace stops heating. Replacement parts for this 20 plus year old furnace are becoming hard to come buy. When a part that is irreplaceable no longer works, we will be replacing the furnace. Murphy's law would suggest that this eventual breakdown will happen in the coldest months of winter when it is most essential. Rather than waiting for Murphy's law to take Place, we will preemptively replace this furnace so that we avoid her law.

Our New Church has been Dedicated!

On **March 10th, 2024**, we were blessed to have our Bishop Andrew Cozzens. It was a heartwarming celebration that was filled with many people who helped the dream of a New Church become a reality. Not having pews for the celebration, we rented 100 chairs to add to the chairs that we had on hand to accommodate all our attendees. Among the attendees were Fr. Jerry Rogers' brother and sister-in-law, two monks from St. John's abbey who had both served at St. Mary's Mission in previous years, and numerous nuns who had also served here in the last fifty years.

The construction of the New Church was a daunting task. Soon after I arrived at St. Mary's Mission on July of 2021, a group of us presented a plan of building a new church at St. Mary's to the Diocesan Financial Council. After being approved for this project came the hard part, raising the money.



Bishop Cozzens at the dedication of the St. Marys Mission Church