



MAKING AN IMPACT

Introducing
Fr. Edmund Yainao, SJ

Highlights of Our Year



St. Francis Mission
AMONG THE LAKOTA



Dear Friends,

I have so enjoyed sending news to you about the wonderful things that are happening at St. Francis Mission (SFM). **You make these things happen** – through your support of our staff and our programs.

As I wrote in my last letter, Fr. Edmund Yainao, SJ, the newly installed pastor of SFM, will be sending you these updates going forward. I will continue to be deeply engaged in our programs, and I will continue to keep you in my prayers. I hope you will do the same for me – and for Fr. Edmund, and for all of us at SFM.

Fr. Edmund comes to us after serving for seven years as an associate pastor on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Before that, he served in multiple roles throughout the province of the Midwest Jesuits. And before that, he was growing up in the Kohima Region of Northeast India.

I think Fr. Edmund is uniquely suited to serving us on the Rosebud. First, he already speaks seven different languages! And he is looking forward to add Lakota to that list. His upbringing in a tribal community helps him to identify with our ways. And he is making a priority of faith formation and visiting area families.

As he told the *Todd County Tribune*, Fr. Edmund considers the entire reservation to be his community. “I know for sure if families are strengthened, that’s where the real magic is,” he said. “My ministry is not limited to the church... We are all part of the community and I want to be a blessing to my Oyate. I look forward to walking with them.”

Welcome, Fr. Edmund!

Rodney Bordeaux

Rodney Bordeaux, President
St. Francis Mission

Fr. Edmund Yainao, SJ, already has a Lakota name. At a recent ceremony, five Lakota women whom he lovingly calls “Unci” (Grandmother) bestowed on him a handmade star quilt, and the name “Wacekiyawicasa Lakol Ohan waunsila un” (“The Father who lives among Lakota with humility and compassion”).

Source: Diocese of Rapid City

“Since 2002, the Jesuits of the Midwest and of the Kohima Region of Northeast India have united in a mutual sharing to advance our mission accompanying people facing challenges and promoting faith that seeks justice. Father Edmund embodies this solidarity through his energetic enthusiasm for walking with the Sicangu Oyate -- the people of the Rosebud. We are blessed to have him serving in our province.”

- V. Rev. Karl J. Kiser, SJ, Provincial
USA Midwest Province of the Society of Jesus
(shown here, at left, with Fr. Edmund)

Message from Fr. Edmund

A warm hello and peace of Christ to you, my relatives.

It gives me immense joy and pleasure to tell you that as the newly appointed pastor of the St. Francis Mission, I am so very blessed and privileged to be part of this great family and I look forward to working together with you all.

Four months into my position as the pastor of St. Francis Mission, I am deeply fascinated by the many blessings and challenges that God sends our way each day. My one dear desire is to turn all those challenges into life-changing opportunities. I truly believe that together “we can do it” and I look forward to doing it together.

Please know that the people of St. Francis Mission (SFM) are ever grateful to you for your constant and unfailing support, and hold you close in our warm prayers.

In this newsletter, you will find some highlights of SFM’s work this year – with which I am so impressed! I’m also sharing an article about the aging infrastructure we must address in order to keep doing such important work.

It is only through the generous support of caring people like you that we can address current needs, and help our families and individuals build stronger foundations for brighter futures.

Will you please share your blessings with a gift today? With your help, we can continue all of the wonderful work featured in this newsletter – and so much more.

I wish you a blessed Christmas and New Year! May the good Lord bless us all in all our endeavors.

Fr. Edmund Yainao SJ

Fr. Edmund Yainao, SJ, Pastor
St. Francis Mission

Please detach reply card and return in the enclosed envelope.



✓ YES, Fr. Edmund! I would like to support Saint Francis Mission.

Please use my gift of \$ _____

to support your programs to improve the wellbeing of the Lakota community on the Rosebud Reservation. *(Please make checks payable to St. Francis Mission)*

This gift is in honor or memory of: _____

Please pray for: _____

Make your gift online at www.sfmission.org/YE2023.

You can make a donation via credit card, debit card, or directly from your bank account.
You will also be able to set up a recurring gift or just make a one-time gift.

Your gift today will change people’s lives every day. Each of our programs – founded on Catholic values and Lakota culture – are helping to create a healthy community on the Rosebud Reservation. Thank you for being a part of it!





PRESERVING HISTORY

During 2023 **Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum** hosted students from Todd County Schools and St. Francis Indian School. We have encouraged teachers to bring their students – from lower grades through high school – to enjoy and learn from the wonderful collection provided by the local community over many years. We also hosted a language immersion class of young students who were impressed by the opportunity to see and experience cultural items, photos and artwork made by the local community. The museum has also hosted a steady stream of visitors from various states, foreign countries, other tribes, former Rosebud residents, and local residents this year. Visitor feedback includes surprise about and admiration of the quality and context of the museum.

OFFERING SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES AMID AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Since the 19th century, parishes have served as the heart and soul of St. Francis Mission. While the many programs today care for the whole person, the people of Rosebud cherish their opportunities to worship, and enjoy the parishes’ place in their community. Four Catholic churches serve the Rosebud Reservation: St. Charles Borromeo Parish, St. Agnes Parish, St. Bridget’s Parish, and St. Thomas Parish. And while the parishes are vibrant congregations, the buildings where they meet are aging.

It’s been a busy year trying to keep up with the maintenance and upkeep of our properties. We have upgraded all of our buildings’ lighting to LED bulbs to help conserve energy and lower electricity bills. Saint Thomas Parish has had ongoing water and sewer problems. Saint Charles Church has been dealing with a crumbling basement and problematic HVAC system. Saint Charles Cemetery continues to see vandalism and will always need upkeep. And Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum has also seen its share of maintenance problems with a water leak this past spring. **Any of our friends who can help are asked to consider a gift to support these efforts today.**



*Your gift today
will make our
Christmas brighter!*



PROMOTING WELLNESS

St. Francis Dental Clinic had a great year! Through a series of coordinated clinics, we fabricated and delivered multiple corrective procedures. With a grant for community health from the South Dakota Department of Health, we hired four individuals to serve our people’s needs. We are also completing our internal billing process to be able to bill Medicaid. We referred 40 children to outside clinics to complete their extensive dental needs under general anesthesia, and have received confirmation of 30 of the cases already being completed! And we presented at SAID (Society of American Indian Dentists) Annual Conference at Creighton University School of Dentistry.



Since January 2005, **White River Recovery Center’s** outreach referral program has helped hundreds of people get into recovery from alcohol/drug addiction and substance abuse. We provide access to detox, treatment and aftercare as well as 12-step support meetings. We work with all social agencies and programs on the reservations and surrounding communities, and facilitate 12-step meetings in the tribal juvenile and adult correctional facilities. Plans are in the works for collaborating with the newly formed **detox center in Rosebud** to facilitate 12-step meetings, and for a half-way house. **St. Francis Recovery Center** has restarted this year, seeing rising numbers of weekly attendees. Thanks to everyone who helps us to help our people on the good road to recovery and a new life.

PROVIDING EDUCATION

Last year was an important one for **Sapa Un Jesuit Academy**, as the first more “normal” year since coming out of the pandemic. The time of online and limited instruction took a heavy toll on the education of most children in our nation, and Sapa Un was no exception (although we did exceed the results of other district schools). Last year we purposely did not take many new students other than kindergarteners as we hoped to bring our returning students back to the level commensurate with their educational abilities. Most of our students did make significant progress in returning to pre-pandemic levels thanks in no small part to the hard work of our staff. After a joyful graduation ceremony last May for our three eighth graders, we immediately started preparing for the new academic year, which began with a cookout where we welcomed new families.



This year, we added He Dog Elementary to our **Religious Education** program, bringing the number of schools where we now teach to four – through two full-time and one part-time teacher. We celebrated birthdays every month – including that of the bishop! Ten of our SFM Youth Group members and chaperones traveled to Bloomington, Minnesota, in July for the 84th Annual Tekakwitha conference, where they participated and represented their families, SFM, and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe well. Our five Body, Mind, and Soul camps continue to be a strong program, aided this year by Tampa (Florida) Jesuit High School, Loyola Academy, Chicago, and our own youth.

Connect With Us!

HOW CAN YOU HELP US IN OUR MISSION?

- ◆ Let us know what you think of our newsletter – or anything else!
- ◆ Pray for us.
- ◆ Follow us on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, and share posts with your family and friends.
- ◆ Donate now at www.sfmission.org/newsletter



Saint Francis Mission
PO Box 499
St. Francis, SD 57572

225 children in school-based religious education (an increase from **150** in September)

Students rose from **50%** below grade level in math to around **85%** at or above grade level.

42,000+ photographic items and much more at our museum

15 new Sapa Un students supported by our small size, multi-grade classrooms, and specific training in needed skills

2023 Outcomes
Your Gifts
Helped Achieve -
THANK YOU!

3 weekly recovery meetings helping **30** people at the Adult Correctional Facilities

52 sets of dentures
37 root canals with crowns for each completed

Students rose from about **40%** below grade level in language to **88%** at or above grade level.

8 confirmations celebrated in May