

St. Mary's Mission Appeal 2018

In 2017, Roman Beaulieu was an 11-year-old sixth grader who was chosen to represent St. Mary's Mission School for the 2017-2018 school year as their "brave".

As the school brave, Roman was royalty for the school at St. Mary's Mission pow-wow where children dance in competition. Chosen by a set of judges and the faculty based on his skill and his character, he put his heart into his dance. Roman's responsibilities as a brave included public appearances where he sang, drummed and represented St. Mary's Mission at pow-wows. He was also a member of the honor guard at tribal functions where he wore the traditional celebration regalia of his ancestors.

From pre-school to sixth grade, Roman has attended Catholic School located in the heart of the Red Lake Nation. He and his grandparents, Karen and Adrian Beaulieu are elated that he is in the first class of seventh graders at St. Mary's, a long-held dream of many students and Fr. Jerry Rogers, Pastor of the Mission. In May, Roman, who was legally adopted by his grandparents when he was a very young child, captivated the attendees at the fundraising GALA at St. Pascal Baylon Catholic Church in St. Paul, MN. There, he drummed and sang in the sweet clear voice of a boy while carrying the responsibility of a young man. The room was crowded. Roman's costume was ornate. He had colorful ribbon wristlets, but more beautiful and dramatic were the traditional Ojibwe beadwork flowers ornamenting the loincloth and pants of his outfit. Grandma Karen Beaulieu and her sister Tammy Day learned beadwork from their mother as tiny girls and have been beading all their lives. Roman, in full regalia, was the best dressed person at the GALA! Grandma Karen's favorite part of Roman's outfit is his otter fur hat. Tom Barrett, Karen's brother, had trapped the otters; Karen crafted them into a hat and beaded a medallion to accent the fur. As a member of the Bear Clan, Roman had a necklace beaded into the image of a bear claw to complement the painted bear image on his hand drum. As Roman drummed at St. Pascal Baylon, his grandfather stood nearby with a cell phone used as a mini-teleprompter assisting the boy with his Ojibwe song.

Adrian Beaulieu, Roman's grandfather, is an alumni of St. Mary's school from back when the Benedictine Sisters and Benedictine Monks from St. John's Abbey were running the school. He graduated from St. Mary's in 1966, his father had attended as well, making Roman a fourth generation St. Mary's Mission School graduate. Adrian's wife, Karen Beaulieu lived on the west end of the Red Lake Nation and so didn't attend St. Mary's, but her father was a practicing Catholic. Mrs. Beaulieu said, "My mother practiced the traditional religion, but Dad ruled the roost and so all the children were baptized Catholic and attended Mass." The couple is wholly committed to St. Mary's Mission School and Parish. Mrs. Beaulieu says she wouldn't have her children or grandchildren go anywhere else. Three of her grandchildren are in pre-school at St. Mary's as well as Roman in the seventh grade. She exclaimed, "This is the best education you can get for your children on the reservation, we will do anything to help to keep this school open and to build a new church!" The Beaulieu's are on the building committee at St. Mary's making plans to replace the 159-year-old structure that burned to the ground in December of 2017. "We have to help," she said, "our little grand-children tell me, Grandma, we have to go to gym-church now and sit on the floor. When are we getting our new church?"

Bishop Michael Hoepfner has stated, "We are committed to building a new church at St. Mary's to house the real Church..... the wonderful elders and inspirational children represented so well by the Beaulieu family".



Watch the St. Mary's Mission
video at: www.crookston.org/smma

