

## Frederic Baraga (1797-1868)

I. Frederic Baraga was born at castle Mala vas by Dobrnic (Lower Carniola), in present-day Slovenia. He attended law school at the University of Vienna where he graduated with high honors. He entered the seminary and was ordained a Roman Catholic Priest on September 21, 1823, in the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Ljubljana. Baraga's spiritual director was Clement Hofbauer and in 1865, to further the Cause of St. Clement Hofbauer, Baraga wrote a letter to Pope Pius IX stating: "For three years I enjoyed the singular blessing of having as my confessor the Servant of God, a blessing I number among the greatest blessing Divine Providence has granted me during my entire life."

Father Baraga arrived in America on December 31, 1830. His first mission was along the shore of Lake Michigan near present day Harbor Springs and known as Arbre Croche. He then labored two years at Grand Rapids before moving his mission to Lake Superior at LaPointe, Wisconsin. In 1843, he moved his mission to Assinins near present day Baraga, Michigan. It is there that he wrote his *Grammar and Dictionary of the Chippewa Language* that is still in use today.

Fr. Baraga's responsibilities grew when he was named bishop of the newly created Vicariate of Upper Michigan. He was elevated to bishop by Pope Pius IX, and consecrated November 1, 1853 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Sault Ste. Marie was the See City until 1866 when he moved the See to Marquette, a central location for his Diocese. On January 19, 1868, the feast of the Holy Name, Baraga died. The day of his funeral was declared a civic day of mourning in the city of Marquette while Catholics and non-Catholics mourned the man they considered a Saint.

In 1930, St. Stephen's Church in Chicago established the Bishop Baraga Association. It was later moved to Marquette. In 1952, Bishop Thomas Noa appointed an historical commission to collect material pertinent for the cause of Bishop Baraga. Bishop Baraga's *positio*, or position paper, was accepted in December of 1999 and he was declared a Servant of God. We pray that the miracle we need to declare Bishop Baraga *Venerable* will be confirmed soon. In October 2005 a potential miracle was sent to Rome.

The Bishop Baraga Association continues to work for the cause of Sainthood and to make the life of our beloved Bishop Frederic Baraga known to all people. For more information contact The Bishop Baraga Association, 347 Rock Street, Marquette, MI 49855 (906) 227-9117 or [edelene@dioceseofmarquette.org](mailto:edelene@dioceseofmarquette.org)