

## **Bishop Baraga, Snowshoe Priest**

'Twas many, many years ago  
This saintly man was born.  
He was in truth, a man of God,  
Each day he prayed from early morn.

When just a boy, his parents died  
And though he grieved, 'tis true,  
He really knew that they were at peace  
In your kingdom, Lord, with you.

He was not happy in his homeland,  
His foes were many there, and he  
Had prayed that he could travel  
To America, across the sea.

His prayers were answered. He was welcomed  
And his mission then began.  
He traveled to a people who were waiting  
The return of the black robed man.

The Indians had heard Christ's story  
From the Jesuits years ago  
And they long had bedded for a Catholic priest  
There was more they wanted to know.

Baraga heard them and answered,  
Spent his life in answering their plea.  
Grew closer to God, in so doing,  
Which is where he wanted to be.

His travels throughout the region  
Took their toll, for you must know  
That much of the time he was on foot,  
Even through winter's snow.

He learned the use of snowshoes,  
From winter travel no longer deprived,  
But his life was often in danger.  
'Twas a miracle he survived.

Though he served people from many nations  
The Indian were his main concern,  
And so to improve his work with them  
Their language he did learn.

His years as a missionary ended,  
For a bishop he would be,  
And first the Sault and then Marquette  
Became the Episcopal See.

But now his health was failing,  
Years of suffering plaint o see  
And the gates of Heaven were open...  
That's where he soon would be.

The Holy Sacrament his last desire  
The Host was placed on his tongue.  
Pain coursed then through his body  
And he died; now the angels he's among.

Oh, Baraga, all people loved you.  
They never wanted you to go.  
You came to them when they did need you  
In troubled days so long ago.

Written by Dorothy Murk, 1988 for Baraga Days.