

BISHOP BARAGA CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Press Release

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BISHOP BARAGA CATHOLIC SCHOOL BACKGROUND

CHEBOYGAN, MI: Bishop Baraga Catholic School is celebrating 150 years of Catholic education in Cheboygan. The school was established in 1856 by Bishop Frederic Baraga.

Frederic Baraga was born on June 29, 1797 in Malavas, Slovenia. On September 21, 1823, he was ordained a priest in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Father Baraga, then age 33, answered the Diocese of Cincinnati's call for missionaries to the Indians of North America, arriving in the New World, after a two-month journey, on December 31, 1830.

During his extensive travels in North America, Father Baraga established mission churches and schools throughout Michigan and Wisconsin, including Harbor Springs (1831), Grand Rapids (1833),

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La Pointe, WI (1835), L'Anse (1843), and Sault Ste. Marie (1853). Father Baraga studied and spoke the Ottawa and Chippewa languages. He also authored a complete dictionary in Chippewa.

Father Baraga visited many villages in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Canada, including Muskegon, Peshabestown, Cross Village, Good Hart, Alpena, Cheboygan, and Mackinaw City. His arduous winter journeys earned him the name "The Snowshoe Priest". It is estimated that he traveled 80,000 miles on his North American journeys.

On July 29, 1853, Father Baraga was consecrated as the first Bishop of Upper Michigan. In 1856, after several visits to the area, Bishop Baraga helped establish St. Mary's permanent chapel and school in Cheboygan. The school's first teacher was Nicholas Murry. In 1857, the first school building was purchased for \$30.

Bishop Baraga died on January 19, 1868 in Marquette. He is buried there in the crypt at St. Peter's Cathedral.

Bishop Baraga Catholic School has been in its new building located at the corner of Western and Lincoln Avenues since September 2005.