

Class of Deaf School Children And Their Chaplain at St. Joseph's



The Rev. Charles J. Burger, C. S. S. R., and His Friends

The above picture shows a group of Catholic school children who are deaf. They may be termed the "Junior" group of a small congregation of similarly afflicted people whose spiritual wants are being looked after by the Rev. Charles J. Burger, C. S. S. R., an assistant at St. Joseph's Church, and their Chaplain. Father Burger has a much larger group, adult Catholics who are deaf, under his care.

Rev. Father Burger, C. S. S. R., was given charge of the Catholic Deaf of the Diocese by the Rt. Rev. Thomas F. Hickey, D. D., on Wednesday, February 13, 1926. His first list of names of those afflicted people was handed to him by the present Rt. Rev. Bishop, John Francis O'Hern, D. D., at that time Vicar General of the Diocese. The burden of his commission was to gather the Deaf of the Diocese into a Body or Congregation and to look after their spiritual needs until further orders.

The above picture gives an idea of the gathering together of "outlying" of the Deaf into a Congregation or Parish. The Children's picture is a group of 25 faces, whilst the adults number 46, making a total of 71. Nine children are missing from the picture. Their absence was unavoidable because of sickness, long distance, etc. If the picture could speak it would tell you that they portray descendants of Irish, American, German, French, Irish, Italian and Polish races, most of whom belong to the Latin race, whilst a few belong to that of the Ukrainians and Syrians. It is a "Catholic" Congregation indeed, affording their Rev. Pastor a good opportunity to carry out Our Saviour's words: "Go and teach all Nations."

A Labor of Love In carrying out the orders given to him by his Rt. Rev. Superiors, Rev. Father Burger has endeavored as much and as far as circumstances will permit to give his Deaf Congregation whatever the "speaking and hearing people" receive in their own respective parishes. Consequently on Sundays and Holy Days, he brings the children to St. Joseph's Church, to attend the Children's Mass at 9 A. M. Every Friday he assembles them in the basement of St. Joseph's School where he gives them Religious Instructions from 4 to 4.30 P. M. In this work he is generously assisted by Misses Eberhart, Cormier, Le Reno, Haight, Molyneux, and Mrs. William Schwab, Miss Yawman and Mrs. Schwab form a "Volunteer Auto Corps," using without cost or expense to Rev. Father Burger, their autos to bring the children to and from the Rochester School of the Deaf to St. Joseph's Church. Misses Cormier and Haight and also Mrs. Schwab help with the teaching of prayers and catechetical instructions on Fridays.

So far, 24 of the children have been prepared for their First Communion and First Holy Communion and 22 for Confirmation. No signs whatever are used in instructing these children. All instructions, orders and "talks" are carried on with the fingers, commonly and tritely called, "spelling."

Receive Sacrament Regularly On the first Sunday of each month, both the Children and Adults receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist. In the afternoon at 3 o'clock the Adults meet in St. Joseph's Church for their own special services. The services consist of prayers, sermon and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. The prayers before the sermon and the sermon itself are delivered in the manual language. At Benediction, however, all prayers are said in the sign language. The members of this section are graduates of the Buffalo, Albany and New York schools.

All obey the manual language, not that of the sign. The manual language is descriptive and figurative, whilst the sign language is "enter spelling."

our language just as it is spoken and written. During Lent, a special course of sermons is preached every Sunday to the adults. The course is composed of a series of sermons, varying each Lent. One year it may be a series of sermons on the Sacrament of Penance, the next year a series on the Passion of Our Saviour. After the services the Deaf go over to the basement of St. Joseph's School, where they remain until 6:30 P. M., enjoying themselves with their own games and exchanging news and stories in a most animated "talk fest."

Their Patronal Feast The 11th Sunday after Pentecost, on which is read the Gospel of the cure of the deaf and dumb man, is for the deaf their Patronal Feast. Pope Pius X, of blessed memory, selected and appointed that day as their own special Feast Day. On that day, the deaf and their benefactors may gain a Plenary indulgence by going to Confession and to Holy Communion and praying for the intention of the Holy Father. A plenary indulgence, also, at the hour of death is granted to all who die within the year during which they work for the salvation of the deaf, and also for those who, while living, have at least for one year in the schools or missions worked for the salvation of the deaf.

Such, in brief, is the work that has been done and accomplished among the Catholic Deaf of our Diocese. They have been trained in contributing to the Seminary, Christmas and Easter collections. This remark may seem out of place in this article, but it is inserted to show how Rev. Father Burger carries out his idea of placing in his deaf parishioners whatever "speaking and hearing people" get in their respective churches.

The Work is Progressing Year after year, the work is progressing like the sun's shadow on the wall, slowly but steadily. This is especially true of the Children's Section. It originated in 1926 with a class of seven members, and now has grown to 37 in number. As it grows, Rev. Father Burger, C. S. S. R., hopes and prays that some day a kind and patient Sister of some Religious Order will come to his assistance in the care of these poor afflicted children. A Sister, particularly skilled with deafness, would be well suited for this work. Her special affliction would make her realize the heavy cross of these children and open her warm and pious heart to them. She would be of great assistance to Rev. Father Burger in the Sunday School after the Children's Mass and in the Catechetical classes on Fridays.

Certain questions naturally arise here, to wit: "Can any of the Lally help in the promotion of this special work? If so, how?" Most assuredly they can, and here are a few suggestions as how to advance this noble work:

- 1. If you know of any deaf child or adult not yet in Rev. Father Burger's tiny congregation inform him of the same immediately. By all means notify him of such afflicted children, who are 10 to 12 to 14 years old, and are hidden at home by parents. The deaf schools want deaf children at the age of five years.
- 2. If you have a deaf child in your family by all means send him or her to the Catholic Deaf School at Buffalo, where the Sisters of St. Joseph are in charge. If the child is at the Rochester School inform the Superintendent of that school, that you want your child to attend Holy Mass and catechetical instructions at St. Joseph's Church, Franklin St., near N. Clinton Ave. This permission has never been refused.
- 3. Rev. Father Burger is brimful of utopian dreams in regard to this special work. As in other

places in this city of Rochester, if you have an auto that is his hopes to see a school and a residence on Friday from 3:30 to 5:00 P. M. called Mission Church, specially M. put it into service for Rev. Father Burger for the deaf of the Diocese. Father Burger by bringing the child to see the blessed day of the patronal feast and also taking fulfillment of such dreams, yet he is not back to their school. Join his "saving up" for that happy day. His "Volunteer Motor Corps" this party in view. By themselves, in your prayers and devotions. God these parties are not hearing the deaf, as a special love for these people and blesses the work done in their behalf in spite of the heavy cross and burden, irrespective of the amount of resources. In a short time Rev. Father Burger

Palestine Peace In Future Seen By Nathan Straus

(By N. C. W. News Service) New York, Feb. 7.—Nathan Straus, business leader and philanthropist, who reached here Saturday morning, issued a statement on universal peace and the Palestine problem. The statement follows: "On my eighty-second birthday I am happy to express my joy that I have lived to see the practical realization of the prediction of the ancient prophet's vision of universal peace. The London conference for limitation and reduction of naval armaments is the most significant and vital move in the direction of peace."

"I fervently pray that it will yield the results when all right-thinking humanity is hoping for. I am particularly happy that America has taken the moral leadership in this question which directly affects the welfare of this generation and of the future mankind. This is something for which all Americans should have grateful and of which we should be proud."

Deplores Rioting "I have been asked repeatedly to press my views regarding Palestine in the heat of the recent events that occurred there last summer. Palestine is ever dear to my heart, because of what it meant to the life of my people in the past, what it means to them today, and what it is destined to mean to the Jewish people in the future. The Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate over Palestine, given by the League of Nations and approved by the American Congress, are regarded both by the Jews and the British as sacred pledges to be fulfilled."

"I have been an advocate of peace for many years. I always tried to save human lives. I want peace in the East. I will close his fourth year with the charge and care of the Catholic Deaf of the Rochester Diocese. He grasps this opportunity, publicly to thank all who have aided him by their encouraging words and financial assistance to bring this work up to its present standard. The fifth year of his zealous work is about to be ushered in. May God bless it as abundantly as He has done in the past! Rev. Charles J. Burger, C. S. S. R., Chaplain of the Deaf, St. Joseph's Church, Rochester, N. Y."

Holland Church Named After An American Martyr

The Hague, Feb. 7.—The new parish church, at Boekelo—a newly founded place in the Eastern part of Holland towards the Westphalian borderline, where, in recent years, salt mines were discovered and new textile plants are going to be a shrine in honor of Isaac Jogues, one of the earliest American martyrs. A few days ago the first stone towards the erection of the new church building was solemnly blessed and laid. The protocol of the ceremony made manifest many gifts from Dutch and American citizens of all denominations, headed by handsome donations of both the former U. S. Minister to Holland, Mr. Richard M. Tobin, and the present Dutch Minister at Washington, Dr. Van Rooy.

K. C. Pilgrimage To Have Chapel Car

San Francisco, Feb. 7.—A palatial chapel car will be one of the features of the special Santa Fe train which will leave San Francisco June 15 on the official visit of the Knights of Columbus of California to Rome and the Passion Play of Oberammergau, Charles H. Duff, chairman of the transportation committee, has announced. Several hundred knights and their families on the pilgrimage will be accompanied by Father Joseph R. Stark, S. J., State Chaplain of the K. of C.

Following an audience with Pope Pius XI, the pilgrims will visit the Shrines of Catholic Saints in nine countries. Palestine, but not a peace imposed by pogroms. The Jewish pioneers in Palestine, who came there to live and work in peace, having fled from religious hate and bigotry in other lands, will not permit themselves to be terrorized or intimidated by misguided mobs spurred on by dishonest instigators and egoistic ring-leaders. "The Jews have survived program governments. They will go on with their work of upbuilding the Holy Land with renewed effort and increased perseverance. I have faith in the Jewish people. I have faith in the British declaration, sanctioned by all the other nations, and I have faith that the great mass of the Arab population will realize that it is also in their own best interests that peace and prosperity and mutual good will shall prevail in the land so sacred to the three great faiths."

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New Jersey Church Preparing To Offer 16th Passion Play

Union City, N. J., Feb. 7.—One hundred parishioners of the Church of the Holy Family, are rehearsing the American Passion Play, which will be presented for its 16th season in February, March and April, under the direction of the Rev. Joseph N. Griff, founder and rector of the play. The dramatic recital of the Passion, death and transfiguration of Our Lord is in six scenes and ten tableaux. The former present Jesus' trial and betrayal and the latter the scenes of the Last Supper, the Way of the Cross, the Crucifixion, Entombment and Resurrection.

William Ender and Albert Frech, who have achieved fame in the part, will again enact the role of the Saviour. They will alternate between the 35 performances. Children's performances, which adults may also attend, will begin on Saturday, February 15th and continue on Saturday and Sunday afternoons until March 8th. The first adults' performance will be given the next day, and others will follow on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and Tuesday and Thursday nights until April 16th.

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