

Most Reverend Direction of the Leopoldine Foundation!

With sincere consolation I today inform the Most Rev. Direction that the progress of this new mission in converting the poor pagan Indians is now already considerable, and, besides, promises us continued good hopes. In the home village, as well as in the outlying places of this new mission, I have the consolation of leading many recently converted pagans into the fold of the Good

On June 13 I undertook a short mission journey to the new promising and blooming mission affiliate, St. Joseph. The Indians at this place expected me with great yearning for a long time. I already visited this place several times, (as I have already reported,) which the Indians call Mashkigong, and there are already many Christians here, however, also still very many pagans, who, in the course of time, will perhaps all be converted. On my last visit, in the past winter, we have selected the place where the church should be erected; and during this recent visit I had the consolation of seeing the zeal with which these good Indians work on their church. During my stay I said holy Mass daily in the house of an Indian, and immediately after the Mass they all went to work in a joyful mood, newly strengthened and encouraged by the merciful consolations of religion. On this mission visit of mine I baptized 10 Indians at Mashkigong, mostly adults, who since my last visit have prepared themselves for the holy baptism.

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The Indians of my mission, the Christians as well as the pagans, but especially the former, are very much depressed as often as they hear that perhaps they will soon have to leave this place and move far from here. Although they are all firmly resolved not to enter into any treaty with the government in regard to their land; and the government assures in public journals that the lands will not be taken from the Indians by force, but, instead, will be purchased from them; nevertheless, such means, (especially intoxicating liquors,) are always being used that deceive the Indians and deprive them of nice lands, as has been the case, until now, in all treaties of this kind.

But the good Indians of Arbres Croche especially are very much worried about their land. Some time ago a large part of those Indians came here to hold a grand council with the local Indians, who are of the same nation, in which they deliberated on the best means by which they

could protect their lands from the threatening danger. At this opportunity I had the pleasure of seeing a grand council of the Indians.

They came together from all sides, and assembled here at this place, because it is the most prominent in this region. They assembled out in the open, and chose a small round valley which has the form of a large amphitheatre. In the center of this valley they kindled several fires,\* and

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\* laid tobacco everywhere around the fire and a large kettle with sugared water; (Note by Baraga. Ed.)

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at the entrance to the valley they mounted a large flag. After these preparations a sign was given, and the Indians came here from all sides, slowly and seriously. Women and children were not to be seen. Silently they laid themselves prone in the circle, and each one lit his tobacco pipe. Thus they remained for a very long time, without speaking a word, just like Job's friends once upon a time. Finally one of them began to speak, and said: "Well, my brothers! why have you come here? What is your intention? Do explain yourselves!" - Now first arose the speaker from Arbre Croche, a venerable and holy Christian, went silently around in the circle and shook hands with each one of the local Indians. After multifarious preliminary greetings, and a usual introduction, he finally declared that all the Indians of Arbre Croche are firmly resolved never to cede their lands to the government of the United States, and not to make themselves and their children unhappy. After the concluded speech he handed to the chief of this place some glass beads, which were strung on a green ribbon,\* as a sign of their unity and their united sentiment. A general silence followed, and the chief gave the circlet with the glass beads to his neighbor, and had it passed around the entire circle. After a long silence several arose, one after the other, went to their speaker and in a low voice communicated to him their opinion; after that the speaker arose, went around the circle, shaking hands with all the Indians of Arbre Croche, and then declared to them their general opinion, that they also are disposed never to sell their land, etc., and explained his reasons to them. After that followed several reciprocal speeches so that they remained assembled in this council the entire day.

It is remarkable how the Indians, especially the old ones, are earnest and deliberate in their councils; and it is admirable how much natural eloquence and power of expression some of these simple inhabitants of the forests possess.

This summer we are expecting the governor from Detroit, who has received from the government the commission to conclude a treaty with the Indians in regard to their lands which they still possess in this Michigan Territory. The arrival of the

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June 26, 1834.

Rev. Fred. Baraga to the Leopoldine Foundation, Vienna.

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governor will decide the lot of our Indians.

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Mission of St. Mary on Grand River,  
June the 26th, 1834.

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Editor's notes:

\* Wampum.

This letter was published, with minor changes, in the  
Leopoldine Foundation's Berichte, Vol. VIII, pp. 38 to  
41.