

A POLYGLOT DIOCESE

If St. Luke could take his stand in the diocese of Pittsburgh to-day, he might well apply to it the words he used in the Acts of the Apostles in reference to Jerusalem on the Feast of Pentecost: 'There were dwelling there devout men out of every nation under heaven.' And the sacred writer's description of the amazement of the multitude, 'Because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue,' is still verified in the ten counties of Western Pennsylvania, where the inspired utterances of the great Evangelist are read Sunday after Sunday to the assembled congregations in no fewer than seventeen languages (writes Rev. T. Coakley, D.D., in *America*). In addition to this, many different dialects are used, some of them almost rising to the dignity of a separate tongue. Every quarter of the world has sent its representatives. There are English and Germans, French and Belgians and Italians, Slovaks and Poles, Slovenians and Croatians, Bohemians and Russians, Bulgarians and Lusatians, Lithuanians and Magyars, Rumanians and Syrians. It does not seem an exaggeration to say that Pittsburgh is the Pentecostal diocese of America. We have Catholics all the way from the frozen steppes of Siberia to the burning sands of the Sahara, and far beyond: from China, Egypt, Arabia, and the Islands of the Pacific, from pagan India and infidel Turkey, from Catholic Spain, and Protestant England. Any Sunday morning in the majestic Cathedral at Pittsburgh, for instance, one can see dusky negroes lisping the quaint dialects of the sunny South, almond-eyed Japanese from the far-away gardens of Nagasaki, and olive-skinned Castilians from the blushing vine hills of their own delightful Spain. There are freshly-baptised Jews from the local tobacco factories on Centre Avenue, as well as Syrians, speaking the self-same language as Christ Himself, and who were Catholics at a time when history seems just emerging from the night of antiquity. There are well-groomed American converts, impetuous and eager in their new-found faith, but who, as yet, have had no opportunity to suffer for their religion, while they worship side by side with Catholic immigrants from southern Europe, swarthy men, with military tread, and muscles of iron, whose history is bathed in glory, for it was their sires that saved Europe from the Turk, drenching the fairest plains of the earth with their heart's blood that the Cross of Christ might be unfurled as the standard of western civilisation. It is not for nothing that the Slav wears the Cross publicly on his coat, for he has been in very truth

The Athlete of Christ.

Including the Slavs of the Greek Ruthenian Rite, nearly 300,000 Catholics in the diocese of Pittsburgh do not say their prayers or go to confession in English. In other words, about three-fifths of the diocese speak a foreign language, for the last issue of the *Catholic Directory* gives the Catholic population as 500,000. Among these half a million Catholics there are, according to statistics published recently by Bishop Canevin, 70,000 Italians; 65,000 Poles; 15,000 Slovaks of the Latin Rite; 8000 Lithuanians; 8000 Croatians; 6000 Slovenians; 4000 Magyars; 4000 Bohemians; 2000 Belgians and French; 2000 Rumanians; 1500 Syrians, and 30,000 Greek Ruthenians. In proportion to the total negro population, there are few cities in the country having a larger proportion of Catholic negroes than Pittsburgh. There are 18 Italian parishes and 6 Italian missions, in charge of 22 Italian priests. There are also 78 separate parishes and 25 missions for the various Slavonic races, in charge of 112 priests. Many priests of the diocese must be able to speak four, five, and six languages and dialects, in order to take care of their many-tongued flocks. Every seminarian training to become a priest of the diocese is required to learn, as an integral part of his course, either Italian or one of the Slovak tongues.

The difficulties encountered in thus preaching the Gospel in the diocese are paralleled only by the labors of the early Apostles of Christianity. The many thousands of immigrants working in the coal mines and at the coke ovens, and in places far distant from established churches, have imposed a gigantic burden on the bishop and priests of the diocese. To make due provision for their spiritual welfare, and to instruct the children in their religion, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine has been splendidly organised and officered. It is a body of the laity, old men and young, maidens and matrons, under the direction of the clergy, who go out into the remote villages and hamlets on Sunday afternoons searching for Catholics, gathering in the children and adults, teaching them catechism, and preparing them for the Sacraments. In many instances their work results in the organisation of a flourishing parish, and the erection of a church and school. These lay missionaries now have under instruction over 4000 children in this diocese, who would otherwise be lost entirely to the Faith. To equip the teachers for their work properly, a school for catechists has been established, with a graded course of two years, leading to a diploma. If Christianity flourishes in after years in Pittsburgh, no small measure of its progress will be due to

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which these devoted lay missionaries are making to spread the kingdom of God on earth. May their number increase! Conditions in one parish may be cited as typical of the obstacles encountered and overcome by sheer hard work and everlasting persistency. It stretches for eleven miles up and down the river, along both banks, comprising ten different villages and hamlets, in which more than fifteen languages are spoken. In one locality the office of the mine superintendent serves as the Sunday schoolroom; at another village the kitchen of a dwelling is used as the place of assemblage; at a third point, no building at all being available, the zealous pastor may be seen in favorable weather on the banks of the flowing river, a few inches from the water's edge, instructing his youthful flock, as did St. Paul when he met Lydia and her companions on his first European missionary journey. At a fourth place a stable is used, and the hospitable beasts of the field again give room, even as they did to Christ Himself, on the first chilly Christmas night at Bethlehem long centuries ago.

So striking are the resemblances, that it is not such a far cry after all from Jerusalem and the days of the Apostles, to their successors, the zealous Bishop, priests, and people, 'devout men out of every nation under heaven,' who, in this twentieth century, are obeying literally the command to 'teach all nations' in this polyglot diocese of the western world.

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