

## A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AMONG SLOVENE IMMIGRANTS IN THE U.S.A. (1871-1941)

Darko Friš

### Introduction

While a number of books on the history of the Catholic Church in the U.S.A. have been published, only few individuals have written about the Church's activities among Slovene immigrants.<sup>1</sup>

In the U.S.A. Church institutions play a different role from the one they play in Europe, as the "Church" is separated from the state. In practical terms this means that it is responsible for its own support. Owing to the large number of different religious groups, funding by the state would represent too big a burden for it, possibly favoring some religions and discriminating against the others. The activities of Church institutions are therefore totally dependent on the contributions of the faithful. This is true of the Catholic Church in the U.S.A., too. The Church in the "new country" was forced to "start from scratch," as it had, contrary to the situation in Europe, no possessions at all.<sup>2</sup>

An essential component of American life is religious communities. The Church helped new immigrants to integrate better in the new environment. The religion that they had brought with themselves was often more important to the immigrants than it used to be back in Europe: it played a cohesive role and also

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<sup>1</sup> See: Jurij Trunk, *Amerika in Amerikanci* (Celovec: published by the author, 1912); John Arnez, *Slovenci v New Yorku* (New York NY: Studia Slovenica, 1966); John Arnez, *Slovenian Community in Bridgeport, Conn.* (New York NY-Washington DC: Studia Slovenica, 1971); James J. Divita, *A History of the Holy Trinity Catholic Community in Indianapolis on the Diamond Jubilee of the Founding of Holy Trinity Parish* (Indianapolis IN: Holy Trinity Parish Rectory, 1981); Bogdan Kolar, "Cerkev in Slovenci po svetu," in *Zgodovina Cerkve na Slovenskem* (Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 1991); Darko Friš, *Razvoj slovenske katoliške Cerkve v ZDA od srede 19.stoletja do druge svetovne vojne* (unpub. M.A. thesis, Univ. of Ljubljana, 1992); Darko Friš, *Korespondenca Kazimirja Zakrajška, O.F.M. (1907-1928)* [= Viri. Objava arhivskih virov] (Ljubljana: Arhivsko društvo Slovenije, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> Darko Friš, "Delovanje šolskih sester kongregacije sv.Frančiška Kristusa kralja v ZDA med leti 1909 in 1915," *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* (Ljubljana) 2-3 (1992), 372.

linked them with their original homeland to which they, at least in the beginning, wished to return as soon as they had earned enough money to secure a better life for themselves and their families.<sup>3</sup>

Until 1908, the United States had a status of a missionary province within the Catholic Church. The U.S.A. was under the jurisdiction of the "Congregation for propagating the faith" (*Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) in Rome. On June 29, 1908 Pope Pius X (1865-1914) issued an apostolic decree, *Sapienti Consilio*, with which he recognized the independence of the Catholic Church in the U.S.A. Financially, however, it became independent only after World War I.<sup>4</sup>

The majority of Slovene immigrants in the U.S.A. were Catholics. Protestants from the Prekmurje region and atheists also immigrated to the U.S.A., but they represented only a small proportion of immigrants. Under the influence of the relatively liberal American society and Socialist organizations, a considerable number of Catholics in the U.S.A. abandoned their faith.<sup>5</sup>

### Missionaries

Among the first Slovenes who immigrated to the U.S.A. in the 19th century were missionaries. They worked among the indigenous population in the United States as well as among the white immigrants of different nationalities who settled in the new country. The most prominent among them was undoubtedly Friderik Baraga.<sup>6</sup> Some others have to be mentioned, including:

<sup>3</sup> Vendelin Špendov, "Katoliška cerkev v Združenih državah," *Ave Maria Koledar* (Lemont IL) 1976: 13.

<sup>4</sup> Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America* (New York NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981) 394.

<sup>5</sup> Darko Friš, "Napotnik in slovenski priseljenci v ZDA," *Napotnikov simpozij v Rimu 1992* (Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 1993) 215.

<sup>6</sup> Chrysostom Verwyst, *Life and Labors of Rt. Rev. Frederic Baraga, First Bishop of Marquette, Mich.*, (Milwaukee WI: M.H. Wiltzius & Co., 1900); Antoine Ivan Rezek, "The Right Reverend Frideric Baraga, D. D.," in A.I. Rezek, *History of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie and Marquette, Vol. I.*, (Houghton MI: published by the author, 1906), 216-237; Franc Jaklič, *Misijonski škof Irenej Frideric Baraga* (Celje: Družba sv. Mohorja, 1931); Joseph Gregorich, *The Apostle of the Chippewas: The Life Story of the Most Rev. Frederick Baraga, D.D., the First Bishop of Marquette* (Chicago IL: Bishop Baraga Association, 1932); Maksimilijan Jezernik, *Frederick Baraga: A Portrait of the First Bishop of Marquette, Based on the Archives of the Congregatio De Propaganda Fide* (New York NY: Studia Slovenica, 1968).

Franc Pirc,<sup>7</sup> Ignacij Mrak,<sup>8</sup> Andrej Skopec,<sup>9</sup> Lovrenc Lavtižar,<sup>10</sup> Janez Čebulj,<sup>11</sup> Janez Evangelist Možetič,<sup>12</sup> Janez Stibiel,<sup>13</sup> John Tancer,<sup>14</sup> Oton Skola,<sup>15</sup> Joseph F. Buh,<sup>16</sup> and Simon Lampe.<sup>17</sup> In addition to carrying out their missionary duties they helped the early Slovene immigrants to better adjust to the new country. They also wrote about opportunities for work and about living conditions in the U.S.A. Their writings were published in news-

<sup>7</sup> Franc Hrovat, *Franc Pirc oče umne sadjereje na Kranjskem in apostolski misijonar med Indijani v severni Ameriki* (Celovec: Družba sv. Mohora v Celovcu, 1887); A.I. Rezek, "Rev. Francis Xavier Pierz," in Rezek, *History*, 344-359; Franc Jaklič, "Franc Pirc," in *Slovenski misijonarji Baragovi nasledniki v Ameriki* (Celje: Unio Cleri, 1931), 12-20; William Furlan, *In charity Unfeigned. The life of Father Francis Xavier Pierz* (St. Cloud, Minnesota: W. Furlan, 1952); "Slovesnost stoletnice misijonarja Franca Pirca," *Ave Maria Koledar* (1953); Ivan Zika, "Franc Pirc - živa vez Amerike z domovino," *Slovenski izseljenski koledar* (Ljubljana) 1966: 170-173; Janez Stanonik, "Franc Pirc v Ameriki," in *Sadjarsko društvo Slovenije V spomin Francu Pircu (1785-1880)* (Ljubljana-Maribor: Sadjarsko društvo Slovenije, 1982) 27-32.

<sup>8</sup> A.I. Rezek, "The Right Rev. Ignatius Mrak, D. D.," in Rezek, *History*, 216-237; Franc Jaklič, "Ignacij Mrak," in *Slovenski misijonarji*, 39-43.

<sup>9</sup> "Iz dveh pisem gosp. Andreja Skopca, misijonarja v Ameriki," *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* (Ljubljana), March 17 1847, 43-44; John L. Zaplotnik, "Rev. Andrej Skopec," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1919: 69-78.

<sup>10</sup> "Pismo visokočastitiga gosp. Lovrenca Lavtižar-ja, misijonarja v Ameriki, do visokočastitiga gosp. Gustava Kostel-na, šenklavškiga kaplana," *Zgodnja danica* (Ljubljana), December 6 1855, 207; "Pismo gospoda misijonarja Lorenca Lavtižarja do gospoda Janeza Volčič-a, kaplana v Semiču," *Zgodnja danica* (Ljubljana), January 24, 1856, 14.

<sup>11</sup> A.I. Rezek, "Rev. John Čebul," in Rezek, *History*, 383-389; Franc Jaklič, "Janez Čebulj," in *Slovenski misijonarji*, 31-38.

<sup>12</sup> John L. Zaplotnik, "Very Rev. John Ev. Možetič, V.G.," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1915: 104-106; John L. Zaplotnik, "Generalni vikar Janez Ev. Možetič," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1936: 31-40.

<sup>13</sup> John L. Zaplotnik, "Very Rev. John Stibiel, V.G.," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1915: 83-93.

<sup>14</sup> John Zaplotnik, "Rev. John Tacer," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1926: 63-68.

<sup>15</sup> A.I. Rezek, "Rev. Oton Skolla, O.S.F.," in Rezek, *History*, 359-374; Franc Jaklič, "Oton Skola," in *Slovenski misijonarji*, 25-30; John L. Zaplotnik, "Rev. Oton Skola, O.F.M.," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1916: 71-105.

<sup>16</sup> Matija Šavs, "Monsignor Fran Jožef Buh," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1943: 60-72; John L. Zaplotnik, "Monsinjur Franc Jožef Buh: misijonar v Minnesoti," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1970: 49-84; Bernard Coleman, *A Biography of Monsignor Joseph F. Buh. Slovenian Missionary in America. 1864-1922* (St. Paul MN: North Central Publishing Co., 1972).

<sup>17</sup> Hugo Bren, "Rev. Simon Lampe, O.S.B. - 70-letnik," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1936: 77-78; John J. Oman, "Simon Lampe zlatomašnik in indijanski misijonar," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1940: 156-160.

papers<sup>18</sup> in the "old country" and influenced many prospective immigrants either to come to the U.S.A. or not.<sup>19</sup> They also played a significant role in founding the first Slovene parishes in the "new country."<sup>20</sup>

### Slovene Parishes in the U.S.A.

The prevailing view among the European Catholic hierarchy at the beginning of the 19th century was that the most important thing for the immigrants in the U.S.A. was to establish contacts with Catholic communities of their own nationality. Some were even of the opinion that the loss of ethnic identity of the immigrants equaled the loss of religious identity. In order to prevent such loss, Catholic circles in the U.S.A. began to found ethnic parishes, that is, parishes based on ethnic languages. Most ethnic communities in the U.S.A. wished to have their own ethnic parishes; such was also the case of immigrants belonging to other religions.<sup>21</sup>

The immigrants settled in neighborhoods where their fellow-countrymen lived; this facilitated their search for accommodation and work, and also helped them adjust better to the American way of life. A large wave of Slovene immigrants brought with it a need for their own ethnic parish, as they were not welcome in the parishes of other ethnic groups. The first Slovene parishes were therefore established in the U.S.A..<sup>22</sup> The very first two were established in 1871 in St. Stephens MN, and in Tower MN.<sup>23</sup> The majority of Slovene parishes were established in the first quarter of the 20th century. In 1941 there were 39 Slovene parishes and one church as well as a Franciscan monastery in the U.S.A. There were Slovene parishes in the following states: Minnesota (eight), Ohio (seven), Illinois and Pennsylvania (five), Wisconsin (four), Colorado (three), Connecticut (one), New York (one), Indiana

<sup>18</sup> Among those who were most eager to give advice was Franc Pirc; see, for example, Franc Pirc, "Iz Amerike," *Zgodnja danica* 8 (Ljubljana), Apr. 12, 1860, 67; "Iz Amerike," *Zgodnja danica* July 21, 1865, 168; "Amerika," *Zgodnja danica* July 10, 1866, 158.

<sup>19</sup> Slovene newspapers frequently published letters by missionaries to their relatives and friends in the "old country;" see, e.g., John A. Arnez, *Slovenian Letters by Missionaries in Amerika, 1851-1874* (New York NY: Studia Slovenica, 1984).

<sup>20</sup> Friš, *Korespondenca*, 10.

<sup>21</sup> Ludwig Hertling S. J., *Geschichte der katholischen Kirche in den Vereinigten Staaten*, (Berlin: Morus-Verlag, 1954), 166-167; and Andrzej Brożek, *Polish Americans 1854-1939* (Warsaw: 1985), 98.

<sup>22</sup> Friš, "Delovanje," 372.

<sup>23</sup> "Slovenske župnije v ZDA," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1948: 67.

(one), Kansas (one), Michigan (one), Wyoming (one) and California (one).<sup>24</sup>

Parishes in the U.S.A. were founded when the number of immigrants was sufficiently high to financially support them. The years of founding Slovene parishes are therefore an important indicator of the number of immigrants in individual time-periods (especially, given the lack of reliable statistical data about the exact number of Slovene immigrants). They were founded in times of mass immigration. In the period from 1871 to 1900 twelve parishes (30% of the overall total) were founded, in the period from 1900 to 1914 twenty-two parishes (55%) and after 1914 six parishes (15%).<sup>25</sup> The beginnings of Slovene parishes correspond to the processes of Slovene immigration to the U.S.A. from the middle of the 19th century until World War II.<sup>26</sup> Every larger Slovene community in the U.S.A. had its own parish, which is why these parishes are an excellent indicator of the areas of settlement of Slovene immigrants.

Some immigrant groups, however, were too small and financially too weak to establish their own parishes. Ethnically mixed parishes were thus founded in addition to exclusively Slovene ones. Slovenes most frequently joined forces with Croats and with Slovaks, but also with Germans, Italians, Hungarians and others. In 1915 there were at least fifteen ethnically mixed parishes in which there were also Slovenes.<sup>27</sup> In the years that followed the neighborhoods with ethnically mixed parishes grew in size owing to new immigrants and to the growing birthrate. They thus improved their financial situation and ethnically mixed parishes began to separate. Independent ethnic parishes were formed and in 1941 there were only nine ethnically mixed parishes left. Five were in Minnesota, two in Pennsylvania, one in Montana, and one in California.<sup>28</sup>

Slovene Catholics in the U.S.A. were faced with many problems, the worst of which was perhaps a lack of priests. It was for this reason that Slovene priests from the U.S.A. often visited the "old country" in order to recruit seminarians and priests for

<sup>24</sup> "Slovenske župnije in šole v Sev. Ameriki," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1943: XIV-XV.

<sup>25</sup> "Slovenske župnije in šole."

<sup>26</sup> See: Ivan Molaček, "Naše izseljevanje v številkah," *Čas* (Ljubljana) 1913: 266, and Vlado Valenčič, "Izseljevanje Slovencev v tujino do druge svetovne vojne," *Dve domovini/Two Homelands* 1 (1990) 43-81.

<sup>27</sup> "Slovenske župnije in slovenski duhovniki v Združenih državah," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1915: 141-154.

<sup>28</sup> "Slovenske župnije v Ameriki; Mešane župnije," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1944: 188.

work among Slovene immigrants.<sup>29</sup> This method of recruitment was also the priority of the *Zveza slovenskih duhovnikov*, which was founded in 1902 in St. Paul MN.<sup>30</sup> The Franciscans of the Holy Cross Commissariat also tried to solve this problem by establishing a Slovene seminary in Lemont IL.<sup>31</sup>

Catholic parishes in the U.S.A. frequently faced serious crises and conflicts. The conflicts were usually between members of Church committees, which included most prominent immigrants, on the one hand and the priest with his followers on the other. Conflicts often escalated into various drastic forms, such as intervention by the bishop, fighting in the priest's house, public demonstrations in immigrant communities, police interventions and even the use of arms. Many priests were forced to leave their parishes on account of such conflicts.<sup>32</sup> Relations between the priest and parishioners were often strained because of lack of funds, especially when the priest was not popular.<sup>33</sup>

The worst conflict broke out between 1906 and 1907 in the so-called "American Ljubljana," i.e., Cleveland OH.<sup>34</sup> The bishop tried to solve the conflict between the priest and the parishioners by establishing a new Slovene parish to which he appointed a monk. This attempt, however, only worsened the conflict and led to years of disputes between Slovene diocesan priests and monks in the U.S.A.

Despite difficulties like these, Slovene parishes in the U.S.A. became centers of the religious and, in those cases where they had parochial schools, also of the educational life of Slovene immigrants. They also played an important cultural and social role. Priests were often the founders and leaders of singings societies, music bands and theater circles. The social aspect of parish life was very important. In addition to attending religious services, parishioners gathered at various other occasions such as festivals, picnics, dances, beauty competitions, bingos, organized excursions to the "old country," and so on.

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<sup>29</sup> For information on the priests and seminarians leaving the Maribor diocese see Friš, "Napotnik."

<sup>30</sup> Matija Šavs, "Četrto zborovanje Zveze slovenskih duhovnikov v Ameriki," *Ameriški Slovenec* Avgust 1, 1906, 4.

<sup>31</sup> "K slovesni blagoslovitvi kolegija sv. Frančiška v Lemontu, Ill.," *Amerikanski Slovenec*, June 14, 1925, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Ivan Čizmić, *Jugoslavenski iseljenički pokret u SAD i stvaranje jugoslovanske države 1918* (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu - Institut za hrvatsku povijest, 1974), 21-22.

<sup>33</sup> Arnez, *Slovenian Community in Bridgeport*, 21.

<sup>34</sup> For more information see: Friš, *Korespondenca*, 14.

### Bishops, Priests and Monks

The representation of Slovene missionaries in the American Church hierarchy was considerable. As many as five obtained the title of bishop. They were Irenej Friderik Baraga (1797-1868),<sup>35</sup> Ignacij Mrak (1810-1901),<sup>36</sup> Janez Vetrin (1844-1899),<sup>37</sup> Janez Stariha (1845-1915),<sup>38</sup> and Jakob Trobec (1838-1921).<sup>39</sup> Even Polish immigrants who in 1908 represented one-eighth of all American Catholics had only one bishop.<sup>40</sup> Such a large number of Slovene bishops in the U.S.A. does not reflect the status of Slovene Catholics among American Catholics, where at the end of the 19th century Irish, German and French bishops were in the majority. Rather their importance stems from the role that they played as missionaries among the indigenous population and among the white immigrants of other nationalities.

Before the year 1941 there were about 130 Slovene priests in the U.S.A..<sup>41</sup> Some were already ordained when they came to North America, while the majority were seminarians. Some seminarians were from among the second generation immigrants. The majority were diocesan priests, and only a few were monks. Slovene nuns were also active in the U.S.A. A large number of Slovene priests were active also in the parishes of other ethnic groups, in hospitals as well as at secular and Church universities.

The most notable mark in the life of Slovene immigrants in the U.S.A. was left by the Franciscans of the Holy Cross Province from Ljubljana. Already in the first half of the 19th century they tried to establish their first foundation in the U.S.A., but were not successful. The first to start with preparations for the arrival of Slovene monks was Father Kazimir Zakrajšek in 1906. He was joined by other monks. In 1909 he established a missionary superiorate and in 1912 a New York-based Slovene-Croatian-Slovak commissariat. In 1916 the commissariat moved its seat to the newly-founded Slovene parish of St. Cyril. In 1923 the seat of the commissariat moved to Lemont IL, where in 1940 a monastery was built.<sup>42</sup> The commissariat was in charge of several Slovene

<sup>35</sup> Rezek, "The Right Reverend Frideric Baraga, D. D.," 216-237.

<sup>36</sup> Rezek, "The Right Rev. Ignatius Mrak, D. D.," Jaklič, "Ignacij Mrak."

<sup>37</sup> Rezek, "The Right Rev. John Vetrin, D.D."

<sup>38</sup> Antoine Ivan Rezek, "Rev. John Stariha, Bishop of Lead, S.D.," in Rezek, *History*, 383-389.

<sup>39</sup> John L. Zaplotnik, "Škof Jakob Trobec," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1923: 30-59.

<sup>40</sup> Andrzej Brożek, *Polish Americans 1854-1939* (Warsaw: 1985) 99.

<sup>41</sup> The number of priests is calculated on the basis of annual reports in the *Ave Maria Koledar*.

<sup>42</sup> *Dedication Book On the Occasion of the Dedication of the New Monastery in Lemont, Ill.* (Lemont IL: Franciscan Fathers, 1940) 1-84.

parishes.<sup>43</sup> It also published books and newspapers; particularly Kazimir Zakrajšek and Hugo Bren were very active in the field of publishing.<sup>44</sup>

The Benedictines did not found their own Slovene order in the U.S.A.. Instead they worked within the system of American abbeys. The most prominent Slovene Benedictines were Bernard Ločnikar<sup>45</sup> and Ciril Zupan,<sup>46</sup> a priest who served many years in the Slovene parish of Marija Pomagaj in Pueblo, Colorado.

### Catholic Organizations

Following the Czech example, Slovene immigrants began to found fraternal benefit societies, whose basic purpose was to provide insurance for their members. In addition, they played a culturally and politically cohesive role. The oldest benefit society was the St. Joseph's Society, which was established in 1882 in Calumet MI. Later several other benefit societies came into being. Among those with Catholic orientation were the Yugoslav Catholic Society, The Holy Family Society and The Slovene-Croatian Union. The one with the largest membership was the Kranjsko Slovenska Katoliška Jednota, which had in 1894, when it was founded, 500 members, at the beginning of World War I 12,000 members<sup>47</sup> and in 1937 approximately 25,000.<sup>48</sup>

Slovene Catholic immigrants in the U.S.A. did not form a political party. They belonged, however, to the Union of Catholic Slovenes (*Zveza katoliških Slovencev*). Slovene priests joined the Union of Slovene Priests (*Zveza slovenskih duhovnikov*). The Union of Catholic Slovenes was established in 1914 in Chicago, Illinois, as a counter-reaction to the founding of Slovene socialist and liberal organizations.<sup>49</sup> The Union, however, did not flourish as planned and was in 1917 transformed into a literary society.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Hugo Bren, "Naš domači jubilej," *Ave Maria Koleda*, 1937: 19-32.

<sup>44</sup> Friš, *Korespondenca*, 24-27.

<sup>45</sup> Janez L. Zaplotnik, "Bernard Ločnikar opat v Minnesoti," *Novi Svet* (Chicago IL) 1944: 195.

<sup>46</sup> "Rev. Ciril Zupan O.S.B. 75-letnik," *Ameriška domovina* (Cleveland OH), April 14, 1937, 1.

<sup>47</sup> Trunk, *Amerika in Amerikanci*, 449-451.

<sup>48</sup> Ivan Mladineo, *Narodni adresar Hrvata-Slovenaca-Srba* (New York NY: published by the author, 1937) 17.

<sup>49</sup> "Zveza katoličanov v Ameriki, Poročilo o ustanovnem shodu," *Amerikanski Slovenec* (Joliet IL) Aug. 1, 1914, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Kazimir Zakrajšek, "Posamezne pozicije" (ms., location and time unknown), Franciscan Provincial Archives in Ljubljana.



The Union of Slovene Priests was established in 1902 in St. Paul MN. Its tasks included supporting Slovene seminarians, providing Slovene priests for Slovene parishes and communicating with American bishops.<sup>51</sup> The union ceased to work in 1906. It resumed its activities in 1914, when it was already political in its orientation; its objectives, now very different from those in 1902, were: to defend and promote the religion of Slovene immigrants, to combat anti-religious movements, and to promote the awareness of communalty. The Union was joined by 34 priests, but ceased its activity after a few years.<sup>52</sup>

In order to assist Slovene immigrants Kazimir Zakrajšek founded in 1908 a New York NY branch of the Ljubljana Society of St. Raphael. The Society's representatives intervened with immigrant authorities on the immigrants' behalf, advised them with regard to finding jobs and also offered financial assistance when necessary. In addition the Society took care of those Slovene settlements that had no Slovene parishes and priests. With the outbreak of World War I the Society ceased to exist.<sup>53</sup> Judging by the number of the Society's members, the cases in which they intervened and by the capital at their disposal,<sup>54</sup> it seems that this Society was not as influential among Slovene immigrants in the U.S.A. as their founders had expected. The reasons for this relatively weak position of the Society are yet to be explored.

Because there was no religion taught in U.S. public schools, Slovene parishes began to found parochial schools. The first was established in 1895 in Joliet IL. The teachers were mostly American nuns, but also Slovene nuns who came from the Slovene lands. Among the latter we should mention the Benedictine sisters<sup>55</sup> and the šolske sestre kongregacije sv. Frančiška Asiškega - Kristusa Kralja from Maribor. They taught also in nursery schools, kindergartens, orphanages and so forth.<sup>56</sup> The language of instruction in parochial schools was normally English, while the mother tongue was taught a few hours weekly.<sup>57</sup> In 1941 there were 16 Slovene parochial schools in the U.S.A., which means that only 50% of all Slovene parishes had their own schools.<sup>58</sup> The

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51 Šavs, "Četrto zborovanje."

52 Zakrajšek, "Posamezne pozicije."

53 Archdiocesan Archives in Ljubljana, Records of the Raphael's Society in New York, (1908-1914), 1-63.

54 Arnez, *Slovenci v New Yorku*, 9-13.

55 Kolar, 281.

56 For more information see: Friš, "Delovanje," 371-388.

57 "Nekaj opazk o farnih šolah," *Ave Maria Koledar* 1946: 77.

58 Friš, *Korespondenca*, 12.

ratio between the number of Slovene parishes and Slovene parochial schools in 1941 was close to the ratio for U.S. Catholic parishes and schools from 1968 (57% of all parishes had parochial schools), which represents the golden age of Catholic schools in the U.S.A. By contrast, only 37% of parishes had their own schools in 1884.<sup>59</sup>

### The Press

The first Slovene newspaper in the U.S.A., *Amerikanski Slovenec*, was published in 1891. Prior to that period Slovene immigrants maintained contacts by letters and personal visits. Their settlements were scattered across the entire country, and there were no links among them. The only factor that could establish the missing links were newspapers.<sup>60</sup> Newspapers were particularly important because they were printed in the Slovene language and, in addition to news from American Slovene settlements, the U.S.A. and abroad, published news from the "old country," thus preserving Slovene ethnic awareness.<sup>61</sup> Newspapers were of different political orientations. Their basic objective was naturally preserving the faith of their readers. Jože Bajec lists the following newspapers: *Danica*, *Oglasnik*, *Ave Maria*, and *Glasnik župnije sv. Štefana* from Chicago IL; *Glasnik Presvetlega Srca Jezusovega*, *St. Francis Magazine*, *Sv. Jožefa glasnik*, *Vestnik fare sv. Lovrenca*, *Zvonček* and *Ave Maria Koledar*. Newspapers for youth were also published; example of these last were *Angelček* and *Mali Ave Maria*. Slovene newspapers whose basic orientation was political were also published in the U.S.A. They were: *Amerikanski Slovenec*, *Ameriška domovina*, *Sloga*, *Edinost* and *Glasiilo K.S.K.J.*<sup>62</sup> It was typical of many Catholic newspapers in the U.S.A. that they were not published during long periods of time. Such pauses were caused by insufficient funds of the publishers, unqualified staff, and other reasons. The main reason, however, was in the fact that they did not attract sufficiently large

<sup>59</sup> Robert D. Cross, "The Origins of the Parochial School in America," *American Benedictine Review* 16 (1965), 194-209; cited in Leopoldina Plut - Pregelj, "Katoliški šolski sistem v Združenih Državah Amerike in ustanavljanje osnovnih šol pri slovenskih župnijah (1895-1941)," *Dve domovini/Two Homelands* 2-3, 395.

<sup>60</sup> Ivan Molek, "Pedesetletnica slovenskega časništva v Ameriki," *Ameriški družinski koledar* (Chicago IL) (1942) 28.

<sup>61</sup> Darko Friš, "Zgodovina časnika Amerikanski Slovenec in 'verske vsebine,' ki jih je obravnaval med leti 1881-1931," *Znanstvena revija* (Maribor) 1991: 412.

<sup>62</sup> Jože Bajec, *Slovensko izseljensko časopisje 1891-1945* (Ljubljana: Narodna univerzitetna knjižnica, 1980).

readership. Exceptions are the newspaper *Ave Maria*, and the political newspapers *Amerikanski Slovenec* and *Glasilo K.S.K.J.*

Some Slovene priests were active also in the literary field, among them Kazimir Zakrajšek, Hugo Bren, Frančišek S. Šušteršič, Bernard Ambrožič and Aleksander Urankar.<sup>63</sup> The fundamental objective of their writing was to preserve the Catholic faith among immigrants. In addition, their works were of informative and educational character and helped preserve the Slovene language. They did not leave any notable traces in Slovene literature, but were extremely important for the everyday life of Slovene immigrants in the U.S.A.

### Conclusion

We are finally faced with the question about the percentage of Slovene immigrants in the U.S.A. who were members of Slovene parishes and/or Slovene Catholic organizations. I believe that in the Slovene communities more than 50% of immigrants were church-goers. Catholic organizations had even larger memberships, especially fraternal benefit societies. Only further research, however, will provide more accurate data on the percentage of Slovene immigrants who were members of Slovene parishes and Catholic organizations. Their exact number will of course remain unknown.

Pedagoška fakulteta, Univerza v Mariboru  
Translated by Nada Šabec

### POVZETEK

#### KRATEK PREGLED DELOVANJA KATOLIŠKE CERKVE MED SLOVENSKIMI PRISELJENCI V ZDA (1871-1941)

*Med prvimi, ki so se iz slovenskega prostora v 19. stoletju naselili v ZDA, so bili misijonarji. Prvi slovenski župniji v ZDA sta bili ustanovljeni leta 1871; 70 let kasneje, v letu 1941, je v ZDA delovalo 39 slovenskih župnij in ena cerkev ter en frančiškanski samostan. Katoliški slovenski priseljenci v ZDA so se v svojih župnijah spopadali z velikimi težavami. Ena največjih je bilo pomanjkanje duhovnikov. Kljub vsem težavam pa so slovenske župnije postale središče verskega, tiste, ki so imele župnijsko šolo, pa tudi prosvetnega življenja slovenskih priseljencev. V ZDA je do leta 1941*

<sup>63</sup> Joseph D. Dwyer, *Slovenes in the United States and Canada, A Bibliography* (St. Paul MN: Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, 1981).

*delovalo okoli 130 slovenskih duhovnikov, večji del svetnih ali škofijskih, med njimi tudi redovniških. Prav tako so v ZDA delovale tudi redovnice slovenskega rodu. Med redovniki so najpomembnejši pečat v slovenski diaspori v ZDA zapustili frančiškani province sv. Križa iz Ljubljane. Politične stranke katoliški priseljenci v ZDA niso ustanovili, organizirali pa so se v podpornih društvih, v Zvezi katoliških Slovencev, a duhovniki v svoji Zvezi slovenskih duhovnikov. Za pomoč slovenskim priseljencem je bila ustanovljena Družba sv. Rafaela. Zelo pomembna je bila časnikarska, publicistična in literarna dejavnost slovenskih izseljencev v ZDA, katere glavni namen je bil ohranjanje katoliške vere med slovenskimi priseljenci, njihova dela pa so imela tudi informativno in prosvetno poslanstvo in so tako pripomogla k ohranjanju slovenske besede.*