



On the Confirmation Celebration at Lakeview Parish—Appreciating our Eastern Oregon Catholic Beginnings

St. Patrick Church in Lakeview celebrated its centenary on July 14th and it was my good fortune to take part in the festivities. I confirmed a number of the parishioners, as Bishop O'Reilly had done a hundred years ago on the day of the church's dedication. So St. Patrick's first and second centuries have both quite fittingly begun with the celebration of the Church's "birthday" sacrament. For the Church was born when the Holy Spirit came in power upon the disciples in Jerusalem that first Pentecost day, and the same Spirit came in 1912 as the Catholic community in Lakeview was just coming to birth. In the century since then the "Giver of Life" has never ceased to come, and He brings the same spiritual gifts in 2012. Confirmation makes Pentecost personal because the Church must be re-born in every generation.

It is humbling and instructive for all of us to look back on Lakeview's Catholic beginnings, for they bring to mind the enormous obstacles of terrain, climate and distance our ancestors had to face throughout Eastern Oregon as they labored to bring the faith to birth here. In 1880 a Catholic cavalry officer reported meeting Archbishop Charles Seghers twelve miles west of Lakeview - "a tall, erect and slender man, dressed in dark clothes and carrying on his back a bundle of clothing and provisions." He was

visiting the parishes of his enormous, multi-state archdiocese, then the only one in the Northwest. Perhaps he had been walking from Klamath Falls or even Jacksonville. Though the officer "offered to send ten men and wagons with him on his journey," the archbishop refused. He did, however, accept a horse from the admiring soldiers and continued alone on his mission.

The day I read this account I had ridden from Portland to Lakeview in an air-conditioned car with my bundle of clothing stowed on the seat, not on my back. In an age of rapidly accelerating technical progress the latest version is always the best, and we tend to regard the past as very quickly out of date. It is not so with the people of the past, as Archbishop Seghers' dedication makes clear. But the men and women and children he walked so far to meet must have been of the same mettle as he - faithful, determined, hard-working, and generous - or they would never have sacrificed so much of the little they had to establish the Church here and leave us so rich an inheritance. Will we do the same for those who come after us? That's the question such a centenary poses for us all.

Congratulations to the parishioners of Lakeview (and Paisley and Plush and Adel) on your first 100 years. May your second century bring you an ever-expanding share of life in the Spirit.