

I Recall.....

It must have been in the summer of 1911 or '12 that Father Fisher came to see me in the little store (groceries, ice cream, bowling alleys) I had on the Lake west of Pleasant View Hotel. Sometime prior to this I had, through a fellow baseball player, met Father Fisher on one of my visits to Manchester.

Father Fisher^{was} the priest who had built the lovely stone church in Manchester. The stones were gathered from the fields around the area and brought in by the parishioners - on bicycles or whatever possible way.

I was surprised when he came to me and said he wanted to build a church at Clark Lake, and would I help him find a lot. I asked him where, and he said he had in mind a certain general area west of my store. I told him that land was owned by Baptists, and they certainly never would sell any of it for a Catholic church! - He said, "Let's try, anyway." - So he parked his little Ford coupe out in front of the owners' home, and I went to the door and stated my mission ---- to be nearly thrown out on my ear!

When I reported my failure to him, Father laughed and said, "What'll we do now?" - So I told him I knew some people who had lots nearby, friends of my parents and with whose children I had played - Mr. and Mrs. Ben Graziani. He was a lawyer from Covington, Ky., with an imposing home on a bluff overlooking the Ohio River, and my Mother had visited them there. He had built a summer home at the Lake, back in 1898, the first truly handsome cottage to be constructed on the Lake. He had bought three acres along the shore East of his place, which he called Kentucky ~~Park~~ Park.

So ~~we~~ we drove down and I introduced Father Fisher to him, and told him that Father wanted to build a church at Clark Lake, and was looking for a site, and would he have a lot where they could build a church. ~~When Father asked him how much it would~~ Mr. Graziani turned to me and smiled, then turned to Father Fisher and said he guessed he could let him have a lot. When Father asked how much it would cost him, Mr. Graziani turned to me again, smiled, and then said to Father Fisher, "Well, I don't know that it need cost you anything. I can give it to you just as well as charge you for it." --- So Father was very pleased having a site for the new Church.

Well, Father Fisher left, and in a few days came back, and announced he had another job for me, after our success in obtaining a lot. - "I don't know any Catholics here," he said, "and I'd like to have you go with me and introduce me to those you may know!"

Of course our farm extended to the Lake, and I had known the families and grown up with the children of all the Catholics along the lakeshore. So, it being near lunch time, I asked Father

if he was hungry. He said he sure could eat! So I said our first call would be where we would be sure of a "hand-out" from a wonderful cook, Aunt "Stace" King, whose niece was a rather special friend of mine (Vonnie Macnanny, who as Veronica Chapple was Secretary for Lumen Christi when it was being built.) - Then we called on the Cook and Felder families; Mr. Richard Price, a lawyer; and others I don't recall, - almost all from Jackson, and all gave a promise of something.

Later, when they built the Church, it came in sections, hauled by horse-and-wagon from Manchester, and erected on the site.

I don't recall ever seeing Father Fisher again, but I do know that he built the lovely little field-stone church in Brooklyn on M50 north of the Square. Since there were only a very few Catholic families in Brooklyn, the church was never in use. Eventually it became, and still is, the Brooklyn Library.

I believe the Graziani family was Presbyterian; I was confirmed at All Saints Episcopal Church in Brooklyn in 1908; and while few people knew of St. Rita's beginning, Clark Lake cottagers, and I am sure, everyone else of whatever religion who ever saw the little Chapel, felt it belonged just where it was - a tiny, graceful House of Worship there in the trees alongside our beautiful Lake.

As Narrated by Rollo M. Every



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Since 1922

274 Euclid Avenue
Daytona Beach, Florida
November 24, 1978