

ORIGIN AND EARLY BEGINNINGS OF OUR LADY OF THE LAKE

As their ancestors before them, a small group of Catholics who had settled in Green Lake, (then Dartford) in the late 1800's and early 1900's, felt a need for a church to practice their religion which was the guiding light of their existence all through the years. Dartford was changed to Green Lake in 1907.

I will try to tell you from my own memory and from facts I have heard through the years how our beautiful little church came into being.

Father Thomas Cosgrove was the priest at St. Patricks Church in Ripon and was the one that encouraged the few families in Dartford to build a church. Of the various denominations, Catholics were by far the smallest in number so you will see the same names over and over again in the various activities for the church. Some of the devout would travel by horse and buggy to Ripon on Sunday to attend Mass which was nearly a full day event, so Father Cosgrove knew the Green Lake families and he baptized their babies for them.

In 1907 Father Cosgrove started to say Mass in the homes of Thomas Collins, George O'Callaghan, Mary O'Callaghan, Dennis McCarthy, Mathew DeMoss and John Broder, my Father. During that summer a building fund was started and a meeting was held at Pleasant Point Hotel which was owned by George and Will Ross. While they were not Catholic, one of the wives was and most of the meetings were held there at the Hotel. The following were present: Mathew DeMoss, Joseph DeMoss, Dennis McCarthy, Thomas Collins, John Hoffman, Thomas Keenan and John Broder. Some of these families were summer residents interested in helping to start a church. Thomas Keenan was asked to purchase two lots at the corner of Lake and Ruth Streets and my Father gave him \$25.00 for a down payment. \$600.00 was the total price paid. Joseph Kein, son-in-law of Dennis McCarthy, a very generous man who came to Green Lake every summer, bought the adjoining lot on Ruth Street and donated it to the church. He also gave generous sums of money over the years.

In 1908 the first Catholic Church was built by Charles Butler who lived in Green Lake and on August 23, 1908 the cornerstone was laid by Archbishop Sebastian Messmer and the first official meeting was held on October 27, 1908 at the John Broder home. Formal dedication services were held in

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 January of 1909/a name was chosen - "Our Lady of the Lake", a beautiful and truly fitting name.

Thomas Keenan was a little old man when I knew him who lived on the Depot Road. His wife was ill and confined to the house but he walked to church every Sunday and would teach Catechism when we were young and later after we graduated to Bible History. We memorized all of the questions and answers and if they were asked out of sequence we were in trouble. It went like this "Who made the World?" "God made the World". "Who is God?" and so forth. We met usually on Saturday at church but when the weather was bad, like two feet of snow and twenty-five below zero, our parents asked the questions and those that could walk to the Keenan home went there for Catechism.

Money was raised by raffles and cardparties in homes in the winter. In summer the men were busy in the fields but the cardparties in winter were attended by the whole family. Some of the babies put on beds to sleep. Furniture was moved out of the living room, dining room and bedrooms and the women made sandwiches, cake and coffee and the men brought in borrowed tables and chairs. I believe a fee of 25¢ was charged and prizes were given for first and second prize winners and a booby prize also. You could hear the men slapping down their cards when winning in smear, five hundred and euchre and a good evening was had by all. Homes that I remember having cardparties were: Jess West, Louis Brisky, Herman Busse. (Lucille Ameely's parents) Clara Busse (Lucille's Aunt), Anton Formiller (Sunnyside Farm) Mike Jankowski, (Dave's parents) and John Broder, (my parents.)

In summer there would be afternoon cardparties for the ladies only given by the summer residents and the quilts and watches or whatever I had been selling chances on, would be raffled. As I went up and down the lake-shore selling chances practically every week, I knew all the people in the cottages and when they saw me coming they knew what I was there for. I went to all the cardparties in the summer and once won the article I had sold chances on. Mrs. Neilson (Grey Rock) would take me into her home and see that I had cake and ice cream and in that way I got to know all the help, sold

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Mrs. Charles Gnewuch (Dorothy) is the daughter of the David Aherns and Tom Gnewuch is a Grandson.

them chances and many attended our church as well. Names I remember as having summer cardparties were: Mrs. George O'Callaghan, Mrs. Thomas Collins, Mrs. John Schaack, Mrs. Vincent Duncan and Mrs. David Ahern.

The Aherns were relatives of Thomas Ahern, , hostage that was held in Iran.

Until 1921 we were a mission with St. Patrick's, Ripon with Father Norton, pastor. At that time he was made resident priest at Our Lady of the Lake. He was an ardent sportsman, encouraging the boys to play baseball. He knew Gabby Harnett of the Chicago Cubs and took the boys to some of the games. He was also a great storyteller and when he came for dinner he entertained the whole time with his humorous stories, mostly about priests and the Irish.

At that time you walked to Mass unless the weather was very, very bad. Then you went by horse and buggy in the summer or by horse and cutter in the winter. The church was heated by a wood stove which sat in the center on the left side. In summer the stove was removed and pews were inserted. In winter you got as close to the stove as you could when you arrived but soon you would have to move as the heat from the wood was so intense. During the service one of the men would put more wood in the stove and I don't remember anyone complaining. It was a way of life. Later a pipeless furnace was installed and at that time we had daily Mass, so often when walking to school we would attend Mass and also get warm. My brother took care of the furnace for several years which entailed going down at night to try to keep it going for the next morning.

Father Andrew Neufeldt was our next priest who came from the Capuchin Fathers at Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin. A history professor, strict disciplinarian and vigorous champion of our faith, he insisted we have a choir and I found myself playing the organ. We had practice once a week and struggled with the Latin words. Latin came later in school. We sang at one Mass on Sunday and had either the Rosary and Benediction or Stations of the Cross and Benediction Sunday night. If, for some reason, Father had to go back to Mt. Calvary early Sunday, we had Benediction after Mass. I remember these names in the Choir: Busse, Brisky, Dolske, Bartol and Broder. and most anyone

that cared to come up in the choirloft to help. In summer we often had visitors who after hearing us, realized we needed help.

The priests from Mt. Calvary came to Green Lake On Friday or Saturday night by train from Fond du Lac and would go back on Sunday night by train or Monday morning early to be ready to teach that week. In the summer they would stay at the Patrick Kelly home (Heidel House) and were often taken back to Mt. Calvary by the Kelly chauffeur. In the winter they would stay at my family's home and sometimes at Gurdy's Hotel and I can remember Father Andrew always arranging everything with my Mother before I knew about it as to things he wanted me to do. For instance, he wanted to call on his parishioners on Saturday afternoon and he would have me go along to point out the houses and farms and I would have to go, with the Kelly chauffeur driving and I would miss whatever I had planned.

Father Albert McParland was another Capuchin that came weekends to serve the parish and he still thinks of Green Lake with fond memories and I hear from him every Christmas. He was a young, tall, quiet, red-haired man with the exact opposite temperment of Father Andrew. Both liked my Mother's cooking and home made ice cream was ground out every Sunday with all of the family taking turns working the old fashioned ice cream freezer. For twenty-two years the Capuchins came on weekends and holy days and took care of the religious needs of Our Lady of the Lake. I think of them and had to grow up to appreciate all they did. Father Andrew was later sent to their home for priests in Milwaukee and after I lived there, I went to see him in that city.

From 1944 and part of 1945 Father Julian Bieniewski, Father Alphonse Popek and Father Anthony Czaja, each for a short time came to Our Lady. In 1945 Father Steve Szczeriak (we did not attempt to pronounce it) was appointed as Pastor by Archbishop Kiley. Once again I found myself playing the organ and by then my two daughters along with other young people of the parish were the Choir. Father Steve had been a chef before he was called to the priesthood and there were some bachelors in the community that would attest

to his expertise in culinary art. One I am thinking of is Doctor Alfred Leininger who was his guest many times.

For many years Katherine and Mary Dunn furnished the flowers and arranged them on the altars. At times when they were indisposed and later when Mary died, my Mother would go on Saturday with flowers she had grown and I would accompany her with milk cans of water for the vases. We changed the altar cloths when needed and then during the week would go to empty the flowers and wash the vases. Mrs. Kate Jankowski and Mrs. Fred Shikoski laundered the linens and the Altar Society looked after furnishing the vestments and other needs. Some of the vestments were donated by summer residents. Members of the Altar Society were: Mrs. Jess West, Clara Busse, Laura Busse, Kate Jankowski, Mrs. Anton Formiller, Mrs. Mary Formiller, Miss Harriet Savignac, Mrs. Mame Brisky, Mrs. Thomas Dolske and Clara Broder. They also cleaned the church.

I will stop here as at this time I moved to Oshkosh to live, coming back again in 1966 to stay.

The foregoing are the things that stand out in my memory. I probably have left out some names that I do not recall at this time and for that, I apologize.

I hope sharing this with you will in some way enrich the tradition of the early beginnings of Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church.

Dated: March 3, 1981

Gene Broder Haberman

x *William & John Nelson families should add names on enclosure*