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## Seeing Florida With a Priest

Patrick J. Bresnahan

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# SEEING FLORIDA WITH A PRIEST



By P. J. Bresnahan



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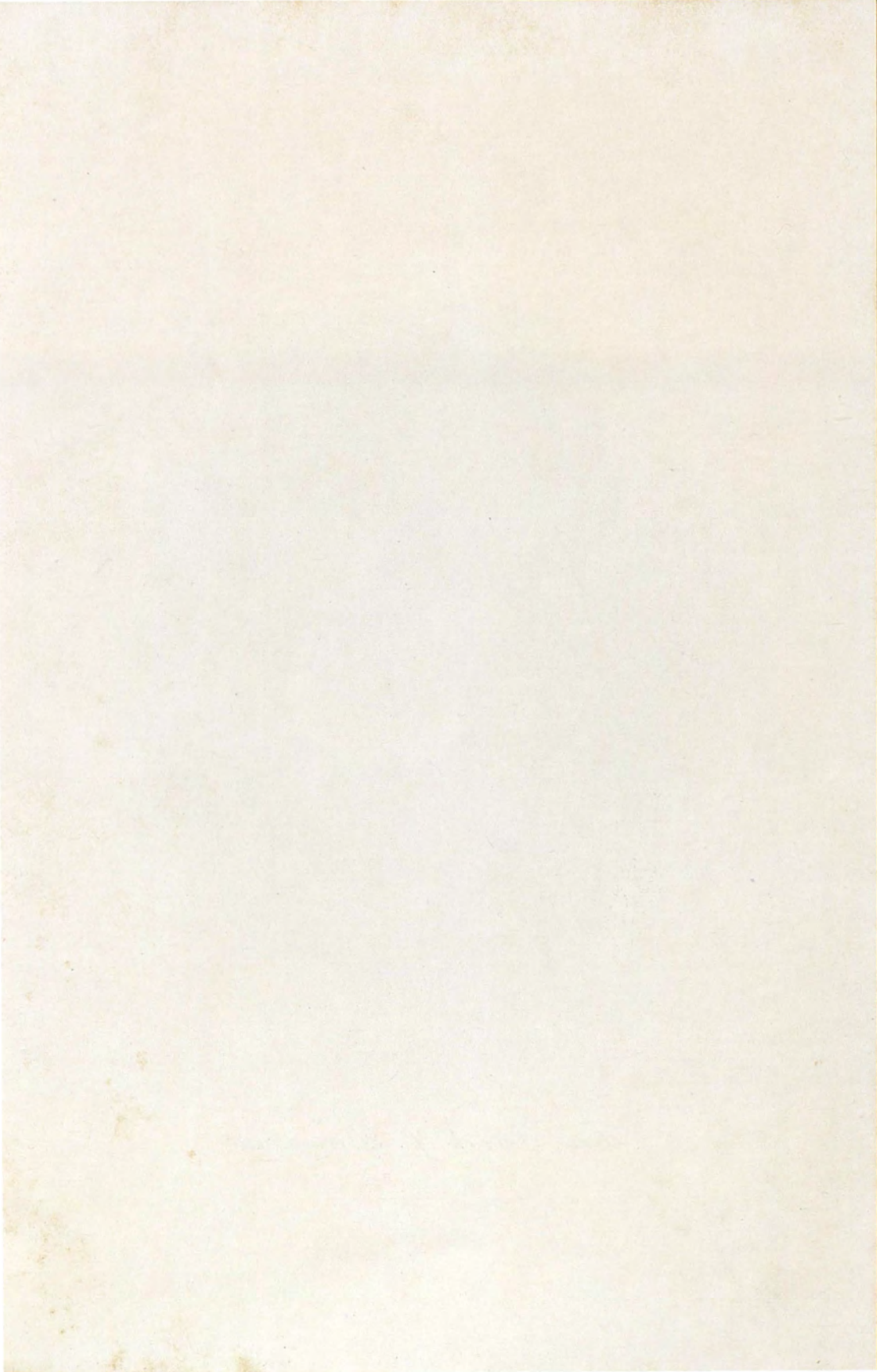


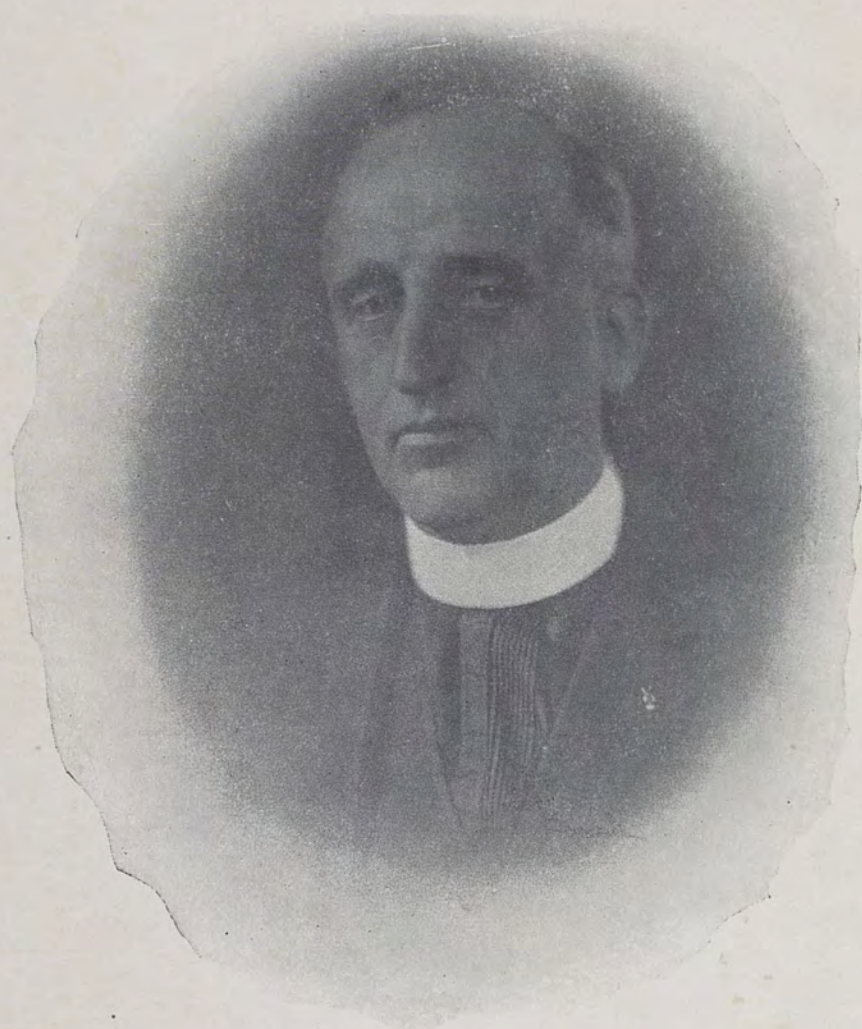
# SEEING FLORIDA WITH A PRIEST



By P. J. Bresnahan  
St. Petersburg, Florida







*Rev. Patrick J. Bresnahan*



### Dedication

*To the good people of the Sunshine State  
this book is dedicated by the author who  
over thirty years ago came amongst them as  
an alien, to remain and glory in the title of  
"Florida Cracker."*

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## INTRODUCTION

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The following narrative is submitted for two reasons. First, to aid the diocesan historian, who has asked not only the author but other priests of this diocese for facts and figures with regard to parishes and missions that may prove interesting and instructive to future generations and helpful perhaps to missionaries of a coming age; second, in the hope that others—both the clergy and the laity—may be inspired and encouraged to work for the conversion of our fellow-citizens to the true Faith.

The reader is requested to excuse the EGO that seems to predominate; for, it was not used with the intention of personal aggrandizement, but because he could find no better way of expressing his experiences to a reading public.

P. J. Bresnahan.



## CHAPTER ONE.

### The Start—Lake City and Live Oak.

In the fall of 1904, having completed a year's course at the Apostolic Mission House, at the Catholic University, Washington, D. C., under the guardianship and direction of the dean of American missionaries, the saintly Father Elliott, C.S.P., we initiated the work of giving missions to non-Catholics in Florida. I write "we" for Rev. Aloysius Delabar, O.S.B., of St. Leo Abbey, Florida, who died a martyr to his work in Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco counties, was to labor in the southern part of the state and my allotment was in the northern district. On our way from Washington we stopped over



Rev. P. J. Bresnahan, Rev. Father Younan, C.S.P., Most Rev. M. J. Curley, present Archbishop of Baltimore, Most Rev. P. Barry, Bishop of St. Augustine.

for a few months in North Carolina to learn some of the methods used by Rev. Thomas Price, of saintly memory, and good Father Michael A. Irwin, who is still in the harness. During our stay with them we learned to appreciate privations. In the shacks, that had been already erected, amid the

tobacco fields of the "tar heel" state we read Mass, catechized, preached, slept on benches, cooked and ate, and helped to feed the ticks, that take to you so easily in shrubbery around the plantations.

The good, fatherly bishop of St. Augustine, Rt. Rev. William J. Kenny, S.T.D., advised me to start work at Lake City, as there was a chapel there and some few Catholics. So with a grip in each hand, the one containing the paraphernalia, etc., for Mass and the Sacraments, and the other, the personal belongings, I got off the train on a Saturday afternoon at the above-mentioned station, and almost immediately was greeted by a Catholic, whom I met then for the first time, but whom I soon learned to love. He was the late Mr. John Keane of Jacksonville, then, and for many years afterwards, a well-known drummer in the southland. He directed me to a boarding house kept by a good Catholic, Mrs. Briere, who made me feel at home, not only then, but on many occasions when duty called me to that mission afterwards. With the assistance of hand-bills I had brought along I made known my arrival and the object of my coming to the county seat of Columbia county. Over the sacristy of the little chapel I found a bed, such as it was, that had been used some years before by Rev. Joseph L. Hugon, of Tallahassee, who had charge of this mission for years, and later by Rev. Patrick J. Lynch, of Gainesville, then in charge of Lake City mission, which he visited occasionally. It was a little better than the hard benches of the North Carolina shacks. By it I set down my grips. I was asleep by 10 o'clock, but soon after 12 o'clock, I was awakened by the crowing of the roosters in the neighboring chicken yards. Then I learned for the first time that these Florida birds are apt to crow at any time, and unlike the birds I was used to elsewhere, they were not accustomed to usher in the dawn of day with their vociferations. I was soon asleep again, only to be aroused about two hours later by pistol and rifle shots. I confess that I was a little scared; for I had heard some things about this district of Florida before coming hither, that were not reassuring. Late

the next day I learned my second lesson; for, I was informed that I had only heard a "fire alarm."

At the morning Mass were present all the local Catholics: Mrs. Briere and children, Mrs. Quinness and son Joe, Miss Riley, and Mrs. Mahon with three little ones. The Mission, to which of course every one had been invited, went on for a week, and the average attendance was about thirty, some of them non-Catholics like Mr. Robins and family never missing an instruction. It was there I met Doctor A. Julian, one of our state senators and a prominent Mason, who was one of my best friends until his death. One night as I was closing up I heard him deliver a lecture of his own to some men he had brought with him to the chapel, to the effect that there would be no Bible if it had not been saved to the people by the Catholic Church; and he ended his discourse by saying, that, if he ever joined a church it would be the Catholic Church, for if Christ was God that was His Church. He came to me soon afterwards, and asked me to recommend a Catholic school for his boys, whom I had the pleasure of greeting some months later at the St. Joseph's Academy, Loretto, Florida. When they graduated there they entered St. Leo College, Saint Leo, Florida. Dr. Julian also subscribed for many Catholic papers. Conviction had come to him, but not the grace of Faith, and unfortunately his death came suddenly, whilst I was absent from the state.

Two years later I again visited Lake City, and, whilst the congregation increased somewhat, we had few converts principally because of indifference to all religion, and, of course, prejudice did its part, but I was always treated kindly. To this mission soon came another good and influential family—Mrs. Aleck Paul and children. The husband and father, whilst not a Catholic, was kindness itself to the Missioner, whom he invariably insisted on entertaining at his palatial home in Watertown, two miles east of Lake City. I also had the pleasure of bringing back Mr. Briere to his Church. He had the misfortune to lose his eye-sight and was confined to his home. The first confession he had made in years I heard as he sat by my side in the sitting room of his home, while

he was smoking the pipe, that was then his inseparable companion.

My next stop was at **Live Oak**, where there was no chapel; but the courthouse was placed at my service, and the handbills again did good work. Mr. Eugene Pichard, now resident of Tallahassee, insisted that I take his room, whilst he slept at a friend's living near by. "Gene", as we generally called him, whilst a good Catholic, was very popular in town and helped to gather an audience in the courthouse. The judge's bench was used as an altar on Sunday. The Question Box was well patronized. The Adventists were strong there then mainly because the principal business man of the town took a great deal of interest in that denomination. Mr. John McDaniel and Mr. Chas. Sanders, whose families were Catholics, were especially interested and they did not spare the Box. Soon afterwards they both became Catholics and Mr. Sanders, as I write, is a very active member of one of our parishes in Jacksonville, and Mr. McDaniel, in Palm Beach. We have often discussed together with profit and amusement our first meeting at that mission. Mrs. W. H. Williams was also a convert of that mission. Mr. P. McGriff and family asked for instructions during a mission given there two years later, and Mrs. Delago and Mrs. Benent returned to their religious duties. On the occasion of my second visit, I lectured in the Knights of Pythias Hall and on the third occasion, I occupied the Christian Church, which we were thinking of buying. To this mission subsequently came Mr. Arnold P. Mickler, whose wife soon after joined the Church, Mr. J. T. Bohen and family, all Catholics, Mr. Kaeil and family, Mrs. Clark and daughter, and a Mrs. Dubose; so there was ere long a goodly congregation. Property was bought for a church and with the assistance of the Church Extension Society an old Methodist church building was purchased and remodeled. This chapel was dedicated to SS. Margaret and Elizabeth. Therein I have officiated quite frequently as well as many other priests. Presently the mission is attended one Sunday a month by Rev. M. C. Clasby, of Tallahassee.

Let me remark in closing this chapter that **Live Oak**, Suwanee county, is the home of Senator Johnson,

who was president of our Florida Senate, when the anti-Catholic bills were up before the Florida Legislature, and, who, although not a Catholic himself, did more than any one else to offset the said bills. No less than three times, in my own presence, he left his place on the rostrum to go on the floor of the senate and denounce the bigots who fathered and sponsored and supported the anti-Christian measures, which, if passed, would have disgraced fair Florida.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### Madison and Monticello

The first mission in **Madison** was also held in the fall of 1904, and the courthouse was used for the lectures and sermons, and the judge's bench served as an altar. It must be confessed that bigotry and prejudice were then rampant in that pretty town although some of the leading families were partly Catholic. I refer to the Wadsworths and McClellans and other descendants of a Captain Brady family who lived close by and who were connected with the Lourcey family, well known for their Catholicity, at Loretto, Florida. The attendance averaged about forty, mostly men, who told me they were compelled to come secretly in order to keep peace at home. The leader amongst them was Mr. Archie Livingston, Sr., who had often been accused of being a Catholic by his neighbors, as he took occasion at times to refute the calumnies he had heard against the Church, of which he knew something. One of my first converts was received into the fold here, a Mr. L. J. Johnson, who was the first also to advise me to use the simplest words in speaking to the people. On the occasion of my second visit, I put Mr. Bodenstein and family under instruction, and also a Mrs. V. P. Harmeling. The home of Mr. John W. Wadsworth, whose wife was one of the Carltons of Micanopy, was always open to receive the Missionary, and I believe this good family was instrumental more than any other in starting a real Catholic mission. Of course, I am not forgetful of the kindness and good work of others, like Mrs. McClellan, Mrs. Vann and her sister, Miss Ruth Cannon, who was our choir leader. Senator B. D. Wadsworth,

John's father, became a Catholic also; his funeral was one of the largest ever held in Madison county. I headquartered here for about a year, and (1907) we undertook work of building a church. All the Catholics contributed generously and some non-Catholics, amongst them Mr. Eugene West of Jacksonville, who had many interests in and around Madison, and his wife, who was a Brady, helped not a little. The grace of Faith became his also at a later date. I might mention also Mr. James Sullivan, born and brought up a hardshell Baptist, who had married a sister of John Wadsworth, and who remained one of my best friends until his death. Our Rt. Rev. Bishop Kenny came to our assistance also, but at first we could get no one to sell us a lot. After weary waiting one man, in need of ready cash, consented to sell a piece of property to a private Catholic party, who transferred it to the Bishop afterwards, and we found ourselves the owners of a residence, a remodelled Methodist church, and two large lots; so we started our building. In order to raise adequate funds we undertook a bazaar and a supper, and then the bigots showed their teeth once more. The sheriff of the county was influenced to threaten the ladies in charge with arrest, unless they discontinued the taking of chances on a beautiful silk patch-work quilt they had made for the occasion. They refused to yield and the town marshal (Dale) hearing the noise was among the first to come forward and help them. The sheriff was laughed at for his trouble, and notwithstanding opposition, which helped only to advertise the work of the ladies, the entertainment netted almost \$400, a good sum in those days. When the church was built I advertised another mission, and assisted by a choir composed mostly of non-Catholics, including Mr. Randall Roe, the town's mayor and now a Senator from the district, we had a very successful one; in fact, on account of the record attendance we kept it up for two weeks, the attendance never abating. In Madison I discovered one colored family which should have been Catholic. These folks hearing of the success with the white people brought a delegation to ask me for a mission to their fellows. I consented and in another chapter I intend to tell of that experience.

I left Madison with a feeling that I had done something to remove prejudice, even on the occasion of my first visit; for we missionaries had been taught to build on charity and although occasion offered many times through the Questions dropped in the Box at the door, an attack was never made on any other church; but calumnies were refuted and the claims of the Church presented in all kindness. From a friend in Madison I bore a letter of introduction to a Mr. Perkins, the owner of an opera house in **Monticello**, Jefferson county. We had already asked him to use his influence to get the court house there for me, if the opera house could not be used. I presented myself to Mr. Perkins, who apprized me that the opera house had no lights and, that soon after hearing from my friend in Madison, he had asked the sheriff about the court house and was refused. He told me of the Village Improvement Hall, but the good ladies in charge of it gracefully told me they never rented it. In desperation I looked up the sheriff, Mr. Dan Bird, and asked for an explanation. "Did Perkins tell you that, Father?" was his first remark, and then added, "Why, I never refused that building to a white man. I will have my deputy clean up right away and then you can use it until court convenes, and again after its adjournment, if you wish. Use that watchman's bell up there to notify the people and count on me to be present as often as I can." "Thanks, sheriff," I said; for I was delighted, and then asked if there were any Catholics in the district. "Yes, sir," he replied. "There is one Catholic here, and a good one—Mrs. Charles Henry, wife of our town marshal; and I say 'good' because she never bothers with any other church." So I found the situation. Then with the help of this good Catholic I discovered others who also came to Mass in the courthouse next morning. A goodly crowd of non-Catholics likewise attended and their number increased as the week went on. At the boarding house where I stayed I found some of my audience, and they did not hesitate to question me. On one occasion a dispute arose amongst the devotees of a local Sunday school as to whether or not Samson committed suicide. The case was appealed to me. I told them I would answer the question if one of their number would recite the Lord's Prayer for me.

They were dumb-founded and I would never have settled their dispute if I had persisted on the condition laid down. Indifference more than prejudice kept the people of Monticello away from the court house on the occasions of my visits. Yet I always found them kind and courteous. One convert, Dr. Perry, a local physician, was the immediate fruit of the first course of lectures. The sheriff, true to his word, attended regularly and insisted on ringing the bell which he showed me beforehand, although mostly used only for fire-alarms at that time and it had been used only a few years previous for announcing the night hours. I visited this mission many times afterwards and offered Mass at the house of Mr. Leo Majewski, whose guest I was on several occasions. As time went on some Polish farmers came into the country around and frequently I also visited the home of Mr. Chas. Murdock, whose wife and boy were Catholics. Later on with the increase in Catholic population the necessity for a chapel of our own arose; so we purchased a couple of lots. The local Methodists thought we were building too near to them, and in order to get rid of us they offered to secure a lot far more valuable and better located in exchange for ours. We accepted. Then with the assistance of the Church Extension Society we built, a beautiful little chapel, dedicated to St. Margaret, on a main street of Monticello. It is still doing good service as one of the mission chapels attached to the parish of Tallahassee.

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### CHAPTER THREE

#### Tallahassee, Quincy, Chattahoochee, River Junction

Our State's capital, **Tallahassee**, was for many years (1908) my missionary headquarters, but I visited it for the first time in November, 1904. The Rev. John L. Hugon, although an invalid, was then still in charge as rector. He received me very hospitably and gave me some very wholesome and interesting information regarding West Florida. My home then was supposed to be at the Cathedral in St. Augustine and I had instructions from Bishop Kenny to let him know where I was each week. Months passed sometimes before I rested in St. Augustine for a week or so. I may remark

by way of parenthesis that in going to St. Augustine I had to pass through Jacksonville where Very Rev. Michael Maher, S.T.D., was pastor then and up until his death in the year (1925). I well remember the feeling of joy and restfulness that came to me when I first got a glimpse of the front light at the parish house of the Immaculate Conception church; for I could already anticipate the warm hand-clasp and welcome in store for me from that truly hospitable Tipperary Soggarth. Many the heartache he relieved not only for me but for other missionaries, too. God rest his soul!

In 1908 Father Hugon retired from active work and Rev. Paul Donovan of Salt Lake City, Utah, (Elmwood, Nebr.) was appointed temporary pastor. Then it was I gave my first mission at the Capital. The attendance increased daily that week. Some lukewarm Catholics resumed their former fervor. The number of interested listeners from the non-Catholic population was large. Some of them even came to Mass. I left five under instruction. Four, namely the Misses Elliott, Rogers, Thomas, and Mr. Guy Haynes, persevered. In the fall of the same year I took up headquarters there. Hitherto the rectors lived in the rear of the church. Now a rectory was built (1908) and paid for in a short time—thanks to the generosity of the congregation, Bishop Kenny and liberal northern friends. As time went on more converts were received into the Church. A leader among them was Mr. John S. Winthrop of the well-known family of that name. For years he was looked upon as the leading Episcopalian in Tallahassee, but due especially to the prayers of a devoted wife he merited the grace of Faith and was received into the Church about two years before his death. I well remember the simple ceremony he asked for to prevent notoriety and curiosity. The Winthrops, Randolphs, Johnstons, Gerards, and Pichards have done much to keep Catholicity alive in that city of Tallahassee. Very little bigotry ever manifested itself there as most of the resident population are both educated and cultured. The bigotry that did show up was imported in vomitings of “cheap” politicians seeking power or money. It was interesting, but many times disgusting, too, to listen in at the meetings of our “cracker” Legislature. Sanity, however,

prevailed and Florida has escaped thus far from the anti-Christian legislation, and bigots are in the minority, becoming so every day.

Before the close of 1904 I reached Quincy, Gadsden county, which, by the way, some years ago boasted of a Catholic parish, and in August, 1891, the Benedictine Sisters of San Antonio, Florida, established there a parochial school and academy. These were discontinued in 1896 for lack of support. On my arrival I found but a handful of Catholics and no church property. We had little difficulty in procuring the use of the Court House; but, alas, the attendance was very



Holy Names of Jesus and Mary Church, Quincy.

limited during my pioneer mission to non-Catholics. Some of the Catholics, whilst they did attend Mass on Sunday, were too busy with social engagements to come to the evening lectures, and some were at work. Among these latter was a convert, Mr. George Wendell, the postmaster, a veritable incongruity, for he was a Hebrew and a Catholic, a Floridian and a Republican. He had been the right-hand man of Rev. Patrick Donlon, O.S.B., once (1892-1893) pastor of Quincy, and, in the little cigar factory which he owned, he preserved a relic of the former local Chapel, that had been burned. The office of that little cigar factory served as a chapel during

my first stay in Quincy. A mission given there in 1909 was more successful; for, some converts were put under instruction. Senator Broome and family, although non-Catholics, were always kind, and a daughter, who married Mr. Peter Miller, soon became a Catholic. As a mission of Tallahassee, Quincy displayed progress in Catholicity, and we soon purchased a lot and built a chapel there in honor of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. The Catholic Church Extension Society assisted in its realization.

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Our Bishop Kenny, learning of my arrival at Quincy, (1904) on that first missionary trip, in a letter asked me to visit the State Hospital at **Chattahoochee**, and to this day I have never forgotten that trip. I arrived after midnight at the station of River Junction and groped my way in the dark to a boarding house that was pointed out to me by a railroad employee. After knocking for about ten minutes, a red faced man holding a lamp in front of him asked my business, and on learning it, stuttered that I go up the stairs and look for No. 3. Well, I did so and found it with the aid of matches I had. Ah, but such a den—a floor strewn with empty bottles and cards, and, a bed actually covered with grease and other dirt; bugs galore and in full view. One chair I found fairly clean and on it I dozed until five in the morning. Then with my grip on my back I walked it to the State Hospital two miles away. There I heard a number of confessions, as some of the officials and nurses as well as the patients were Catholic. Mass was read and a brief instruction given. The doctors were very kind and also the assistant superintendent, Mr. Yarborough. I visited many of the wards and saw many sad sights with which this history is not concerned. I continued my visits there for many years after that and became a sort of Catholic chaplain. It was there I met Dr. Green, now in charge of St. Luke's hospital in Jacksonville, and, Dr. Smith as well as other officials who although not Catholics, seemed as anxious as I was that the Catholic patients receive all the attention they desired. I remember Dr. Smith coming to me one day to tell me that one of the employees, whom I knew very well, was seriously ill and that he suspected him to be

a Catholic. The doctor actually urged me to see him right away, which I did, only to find that the doctor was correct in his suspicion. Amid tears of repentance our stricken friend was reconciled to the Church after some thirty years' straying.

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In May 1909 I preached for a week in the Woodmen's Hall at **River Junction**. While Miss Murphy, Mrs. Yarborough, and Mr. Legali were the only Catholics in the neighborhood, we had an average of at least fifty people in attendance every night. Many of them were greatly interested and asked numerous questions, and a great deal of prejudice was removed.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

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### **Brady's Farm, Branford, White Springs, Sopchoppy**

Christmas, 1904, I was recalled to St. Augustine to assist at the Cathedral; but the New Year saw me on the road again, back to northwest Florida. Four miles south of Madison, on **Brady's Farm**, there was a little chapel, built by Father Hugon for the Catholics who resided in that district, many years before. They were descendants of the Captain Brady already referred to. Some had drifted away in the meantime; but some like Mrs. Bridges and daughter and Mr. Joe Brady had remained faithful. The chapel I found in the possession of goats, and the altarstone had even been desecrated. I was offered hospitality in a "cracker" home which I accepted. The attendance at the mission was very good. The attitude of the people may be understood from what a good woman of the neighborhood told me some time afterwards. Her little girl had attended the first night and on her return the mother asked, "Did you see the priest?" "Oh, yes. Ma," shouted this little girl, "and he looked just like a man." The few faithful Catholics attended to their duties; but the others, whilst promising great things, continued to drift and to this date are lost to the Church. When the church was built in Madison (1906) we sold the goat house for fifty dollars, and we were glad to get that much.

**Branford**, Suwanee county, is a small village on the left bank of the beautiful Suwanee River, some twenty miles south of Live Oak. The only Catholic there ran a boarding house where I was offered hospitality and the school house was used for my mission purposes to profitable advantage. Nearly everybody in the hamlet attended the lectures and showed more than common interest. The local physician, Dr. Puterbaugh, was my constant companion, and since then I have often wondered whether he is now not a Catholic; for I left there shortly after and lost track of him. It was at Branford that I had one of my most consoling experiences. I noticed that every night an elderly man sat on the last seat in the school building and showed an interest superior to that of the rest of the audience. I inquired about him and, learning that he operated a boat on the river, I went to look him up. As soon as I greeted him and he answered, I knew I was talking to a Frenchman. "You are a Catholic," I bluntly asked him, and he pleaded guilty. "How long has it been since you were at confession?" "Well, mon pere," he replied, "since you came here I have been trying to remember and now I think it is nearly 45 years." "It is about time for you to go again?" "Yes, mon pere." That night I went to the boat with him, heard his confession, and, next morning with tears in his eyes, he received Holy Communion.

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**White Springs**, about 11 miles northwest from Lake City, is a well-known resort, because of its sulphur springs, beneficial to those suffering from rheumatism and skin diseases. The only Catholics in the small town, Mrs. C. S. Mosher and her daughter, Mrs. M. M. Jackson, a widow, a son, Dr. Hugh Mosher, and Miss Ada A. Mosher and Miss Stella G. Mosher, owned the Springs hotel and opera house. They were extremely kind to the missionary. Although the mission began propitiously, it did not prove a desired success for several reasons. Lack of diplomacy on the missionary's part was one of them. Another turned up in the shape of a musical troupe, who had rented the opera house in advance and broke into the mission in the middle of the week. One little blind girl in the neighborhood was our only convert, and, she was instru-

mental in bringing back her stepfather, Mr. Fitzgerald, to a sense of duty. He had ceased the practice of his religion years before.

I was the first and last priest to officiate at Branford. The same is true of **Sopchoppy**, which is a real country and "cracker" village, some miles south of Tallahassee. Prior to my advent to that neighborhood I knew of no Catholic in that country; but I succeeded in discovering one. The great interest exhibited during the mission was remarkable; it was conducted in the public shcool building. The natives, all "crackers", vied with one another, unlike any other place, in giving me hospitality; and, they went so far as to get up parties for my entertainment, even though many had never seen a priest before. Moreover, they all seemed glad to find out what they had heard concerning priests hitherto were "lies".

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### Carrabelle, Aucilla, Gum Swamp, Hixtown

It is easy to realize that this chronicling of missions may become tiresome, or, at least monotonous to the reader. There is much sameness to many of them. Sometimes the missionary was greeted by a large audience, because of interest and curiosity and a desire to learn coupled with an absence of bigotry and prejudice in that particular community. In other places the attendance was sparse, either because the bigots had influence in that district or because indifference to all religion prevailed to a degree, as unfortunately it does in many localities through the country at large. After twenty-two years' experience I wish to testify that the bigots are always in the minority in every community; but because of their tongues or maybe because of their financial or political standing, they gather a number of the residents to their standard, or, at least, succeed in intimidating. As I continue this little history I shall give concrete examples of what I mean.

Many of the missions had characteristics entirely their own and some furnished interesting adventures. In **Carra-belle**, Franklin county, for instance, where I lodged with Mr.

Holt and family (1907), we rented the Westburg Hall; but, on two nights of the week, we had to surrender the hall to some secret societies for their regular meetings. On those particular nights I occupied the hall owned by the colored people and preached to them. Many showed a great deal of interest but only one applied for further instruction. Mr. Holt, a convert, was one of those who could not see why everyone should not be a Catholic, and he may be said to be overzealous. He insisted on delivering a lecture himself to the negroes and he was well received. A revival in the Baptist church here militated against the mission and also a cold spell, unprovided for, cooled the ardor of many. I discovered about twenty nominal Catholics in this town, which is at the extreme western end of our diocese; three of them, only, were practical Catholics. Three among the white non-Catholics asked for instructions in our Faith which Mr. Holt volunteered to impart.

I got to Aucilla, Jefferson county, on a Sunday afternoon (October, 1907) and introduced myself to a company of men I met at the station, and I even joined in the game they were playing and afterwards invited them to a cold dinner. I was informed that there was a Catholic family four or five miles away. I rented the Knights of Pythias hall and that very night it was crowded; my discourse was on "The Church and the Bible." Interest was intense at the beginning, but it soon waned; for, the bigots wielded more power in that quarter than I anticipated. The Catholics (Conniffs) came only one night. Regarding that family I have something to tell later. Towards the end of the week the attendance dwindled to a minimum so that I resolved to close the mission. Still there were some who were favorably inclined to Catholicism; such as Messrs. Alman and Horne and a young lady, whose name escaped me. Intimidation finally played havoc among them all. During my stay I was compelled to offer up the holy Sacrifice of the Mass on the dressing table of a room I rented in a private house. I always made it a rule at every mission to obtain the names of the interested parties and have Catholic periodicals forwarded to them. This I did here and they are probably supplied even to this day.

In Gum Swamp, 8 miles from Asheville, Florida, I gave many missions. The first one took place on 1905. This was strictly a country place. The supervisor of the local school, a "Dr." Hagan, who dabbled in Indian medicines and dentistry, I found to be a Catholic (convert), and also his youngest son. He offered me hospitality and the use of the school building for my lectures. The attendance was all that could be desired, and I succeeded in converting the rest of the Hagan family. Mass was celebrated daily in my bed-room, excepting once, in the school building. A number of Mormon elders were then active in that part of the state procuring colonists for Utah. Some of them had felt the cow whip in the neighboring county of Taylor. These men travelled in couples and whenever in our vicinity they never missed one of my lectures. On one occasion the entire membership of their Florida Council, composed of twelve, attended in a body. In 1906 and again in 1907, as the school house had been occupied as a residence by Greek laborers, I preached in an orange grove close by. For seats in these open air assemblies the listeners were accommodated with the school benches. The interest in religion here seemed never to abate and the result was nine conversions. Some of them like Mr. White and family have since left that neighborhood, and Mr. Holly and Mr. Morris have gone to their reward. On the occasion of my third visit, to the Gum Swamp I was awakened one night by a sinking sensation. The bed had gone down at the foot and that part of the floor with it. In the morning I found a dead frog under it. I slept on, however, and the next day the good lady of the house consoled me somewhat by saying that I must have put on weight since my last visit. At the close of that third mission I had an appointment in Monticello that I was anxious to keep. It happened that a young man volunteered to carry me on his mule cart to the nearest railroad station. We had scarcely travelled a mile when the mule fell sick with the colic. There was no post-office or telegraph station near, and, of course, it was too far to tote heavy grips over sand roads, so I missed my appointment,—a thing I hated to do. "Dr." Hagan doctored up the mule and the next day he was able to

carry us within two miles of the station where another "team" came to our rescue.

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**Hixtown** is a small settlement five miles from Madison. With the aid of a horse and buggy, gratuitously lent me, I made the journey each evening for a week, although an average of only about ten souls attended the mission given there in the school building. Heavy rains and cold weather during that winter week were blamable for the meagre attendance at this memorable mission. The work was blessed; for Mr. Bodenstein, who had previously made a mission at Madison, resumed his duties as a Catholic, and his family of five, continued the study of the catechism. Undoubtedly our pioneer missionaries, Bishop Verot, Father Clavreul, and others, traversed through here and by PRAYERS sowed seed for the conversion of souls, in the 60's and 70's.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### Hastings, San Mateo, Bakersville

Let it be understood that during those years, membership in the Catholic Missionary Union entitled me to five hundred dollars a year to meet the expenses of travel, board, and so forth. No collections were taken up, except when a mission was given in a regularly established parish church and the good pastor was kind enough to supplement the missionary's pocket book. These "parish" missions were few and far between. There was one in Palatka; others in Daytona, Loretta, Tallahassee, Gainesville, Moccasin Branch, Orlando, Fernandina, DeLand, Ocala, and Dade City. Of these missions I intend to write very little, leaving them to the mercy of the local historians; in like manner the missions given in other dioceses. For, I gave them as far up as New Hampshire, during what was supposed to be my vacation time.

Everyone who eats Irish potatoes has by this time heard of **Hastings**, Florida, which until 1905 was but little known. Mr. A. J. Pellicer, familiarly known as "Bud", with his wife and family of six children, was my host during the week of the mission there. We rented the Village Hall for fifty cents

a night. I opened with Mass at 11 o'clock Sunday, October 29, 1905, with a fair-sized crowd present. The Methodists, who had Sunday School at 10 o'clock, in the same hall, remained over to see what was going on. Our audience that



St. Paul's Church, Daytona, commenced 1899, photo 1920

night was greatly increased by the Catholics from the neighboring church, at Moccasin Branch. This was St. Ambrose Parish, then and for many subsequent years in charge of the saintly Rev. Stephen Langlade, who came to Florida in 1871. He with Father Clavreul of revered memory had done wonderful work for souls especially in that district. Here too the weather threatened to dampen the ardor of our audience; on Wednesday night we had to give place to our Methodist friends; on Thursday night we enlivened things with a magic

lantern exhibition; and, on Friday night we were unable to accomodate the throng present; and so it was to the end. Fully 150 persons attended that mission and the Question Box was freely patronized. The Moccasin Branch church choir contributed very materially in keeping up the enthusiastic interest manifested. William and Eugene Pellicer, cousins of my host, were spiritually reclaimed and became staunch members of the parish at Moccasin. The other Catholics there at the time were Mr. James Hoey, wife and three children. Mrs. Harry Fowler, Mr. Gus Dupont, and Mrs. T. McCollum.

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**San Mateo**, a little station attached to the Palatka parish of which Rev. Patrick Barry, now Bishop, was the Pastor furnished some interesting experiences to the missionary. Here Mr. Willie Rogero, whose family of nine, were all Catholics, played host and we used the public school building for our Apostolic work. At the opening session quite a large number of people were present, including about twenty non-Catholics; three of them colored. We soon started a catechism class for the children with a membership of seventeen. Mrs. DeWitt was their teacher. The average number increased to fifty, and a great deal of good was accomplished. There were not a few attending the mission lectures, who had been baptized Catholics; some of these were instructed at this, and other missions and the majority of them are now practical Church members. Mr. Ben Turner, wife and family, Mr. DeWitt, Mr. Kite, Mrs. Pope, Mrs. Jackson, and Mrs. Williams and family showed more than a passing interest. The Solanos, of whom there were many in those days, were among the nominal Catholics already referred to, who are now doing better. Others worthy of mention were Mrs. Willis and children, Mrs. Kent, and Mrs. Wright. In all my experiences I had the first and last slur cast at me here. Its author was a drummer and a northerner, whom I encountered in a store one morning during my stay, and I had to interfere for peace sake, when the other men present, all non-Catholics, threatened to "hide" him for his remark. An amusing incident happened early in the week. I was speaking about the Holy

Bible, when a young man entered the building and seated himself in front of me. I could see that he was not entirely himself, having been kicked apparently by a "white mule". He listened as best he could for a few minutes, and then stood up and shouted: "That's right, Capt'n; that's right. Let us shake on it." He held out his hand and I shook it, telling him at the same time to sit down and keep quiet for a moment. He sat down all right and became so quiet that sleep finally got him, and peace reigned during the rest of my discourse. This was among the best missions I ever held; and, to show his appreciation, a non-Catholic, insisted on taking up a collection for me on the closing night.

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Bakersville, 12 miles from St. Augustine, has a small church, and is part of the Moccasin Branch parish. I slept in a room attached to the church. The nearest dwelling was one mile distant. That meant a nice walk before and after meals. I may add that the pathway included half a mile of plank walk over a swamp. The Catholic atmosphere here was very evident. I instructed about twenty children for the Sacraments, and Bishop Kenny came on the closing Sunday, to confirm them. The local non-Catholics attended all the lectures; one of their number, who never had professed any religion at all, applied for further instructions and eventually became a Catholic. Many careless Catholics went to their duties and Father Langlade expressed himself publicly as greatly pleased and satisfied with the mission. He afterwards told me that other conversions resulted. No less than seventy questions were answered during the week, and I believe, that was a record never broken by a country mission in Florida.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

Bayard, Diego (Palm Valley), Sampson, Moultrie

In many places, especially when the lectures drew large audiences, the local ministers were generally in evidence and many of them showed a great deal of interest. Sometimes, however, in a minority of cases, they tried to keep their people away; but they did not always prevail. I made it a rule never

to discuss other denominations, except incidentally in answering questions. I confined my lectures largely to presenting the claims of our Church.

At Bayard, December 1905, I was entertained by Mr. Charles Ponce and family, the only Catholics then in that particular neighborhood, although the parish of Loretto in charge of the Rev. Dr. James Veale was but five miles distant. The good Doctor was my constant companion and helper and even assisted in answering some of the questions presented. We occupied a hall fitted out for us in Wing's Hotel, that also comprised the corridor upstairs, the sitting room and bedrooms. Underneath us was the general and only store in the village. The hall managed to accomodate some seventy persons, who were in constant attendance every night. Mrs. Wing and family were extremely kind, and the local physician, Dr. Kennedy, who unearthed some very difficult theological questions, showed more than an ordinary interest. Others filled with a particular desire to learn more of our religion included Mr. Pope, Mr. Blunt, and Mr. Browne, who were left for further instruction. An interesting aftermath of this mission occurred some months later, whilst I was journeying with several priests on a river boat on the St. Johns. One passenger got into conversation with a companion who sat some distance away facing me. I overheard their conversation. The latter asked: "Where is that priest who recently preached at Bayard?" With a twinkle in his eye, and looking at me, Father Maher said: "Oh, I believe he went out West," which was partly true. Then I heard many things about myself I did not know before; but I was astounded to hear my historian declare that he did not agree with my opinions on the ghost question, for I could not recall having discussed that subject.

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**Diego**, now known as Palm Valley, and connected with the Loretto parish, is situated on the coast just south of Pablo or Jacksonville Beach. When I went there in December, 1905, it was a common hunting grounds especially for ducks, squirrels, turkeys, deer, and wild hogs. Mr. Yulee Michler and family, with whom I put up, were, indeed exces-

sively kind and, I may add that, notwithstanding the difficulties they had to contend with, I never knew of better Catholics. In the course of time some of the children married non-Catholics and without exception all these afterwards became zealous and fervent Catholics; another proof of the worth of good example on the part of parents. This district at that time boasted of a Catholic chapel. Because it was rather small and somewhat out of the way I used the so-called Union Church and even celebrated Mass in it on the opening Sunday. Plans were set on foot to acquire this building for our diocese; but, I believe, they were never carried out because many of our members moved elsewhere soon afterwards, while those that remained found it convenient to worship either at Loretto or Pablo. Then, too, their own chapel, succumbed to the flames. Diego, while an old mission, which, according to Father Clavreul's **Diary**, was visited in 1866 by Rev. Father Chambon, has remained but a settlement to this day. Hence the attendance at my mission was comparatively small, although it included nearly every one in the neighborhood; besides the Michler family mentioned above, the other Catholics were the Miers and the Barkoskies, stepchildren of Mr. Michler. Among the interested non-Catholics were Mr. DeGrove, Mr. Brodnax, and Mr. Sillcox together with their families; in all I left about six earnest inquirers. One of them informed me that, before my coming, his idea of God was that He was like a man but had no blood. This idea, I afterwards learned, my friend had imbibed from a Mormon elder. The mission was very successful and was also appreciated by the Baptist preacher, who was a daily listener. The sportsmen here, irrespective of creed, were bent on providing me with a good time of recreative hunting. I managed to get some ducks and squirrels as well as a good ducking in a swamp; for, one of the Michler boys, volunteering to play horse for me in order to keep dry my clothes and shoes, and, with the help of a cow track and my weight, when half way across the swamp, (incidentally) succeeded in dumping me.

As **Sampson** was also attached to the Loretto parish I have an excuse for passing over a few years and telling of

my visit to that strictly country district, in January, 1907. Marcus Papy, up to that period, only a nominal Catholic, gave me a bed to sleep in, fed me in the morning and evening, and good Tony Octagus saw to it that I got dinner, for which a pretty long walk each day whetted my appetite. I found Catholicity at a low ebb for various reasons, but I had an attendance of about forty every night, including about twenty practical Catholics. I prepared ten children for First Holy Communion, which they received in the local Catholic Chapel on the closing Sunday. That chapel has since disappeared. The faithful now residing in the district attend to



Fr. Nunan, Fr. Maher, Bishop Kenny, Fr. Beaver, S. J., Fr. Langlade, Fr. Bottolacio, Most Rev. P. Barry, Bishop of St. Augustine, Fr. O'Boyle, Most Rev. M. J. Curley, present Archbishop of Baltimore.

their religious duties in the chapel of Our Lady of Perpetual Help built in 1923 at Bayard by Rev. M. Fennell, the present pastor of Loretto. Some very interesting questions were asked and answered; but personal spite being evident in many questions, they were naturally ignored with a passing reference. The nominal Catholics promised to do better, and I had the pleasure of bringing many to their duties before leaving. The local school teacher, Miss Henderson, was among the few applying for further instruction.

I have given many missions at **Moultrie**, now a prosperous mission about six miles south of St. Augustine and attached to the Cathedral parish. The first one was held in a school building, in 1905, and resulted immediately in forming plans for a "church" which was eventually completed (1910) during the period that Rev. Father J. McGee ministered there. The "church" was dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Family quarrels, which seem betimes unavoidable,



Communion Breakfast at Moultrie, 1907

proved somewhat of a stumbling block to the congregation's peace, but the grace of God can do wonders. Mr. Dona Pellicer, Jr., and family contributed generously and hospitably to the needs of the inner and outer man during the missionary's sojourn in that neighborhood. The Mormons had there sought recruits for their Utah colonies, but they very soon vamoosed in disgust; yet, their taint displayed itself in the Question Box at that first mission. The Catholic spirit of the Ancient City, which radiated to the country around, helped the mission and from the first I was sure of success. Nine converts professed and when I returned in 1907 a few more were added to the list. Among these was the Simms family now well known in Catholic circles in and around St. Augustine. Of course, the name Pellicer also spells Catholicity.

The men of that family who were children then at Moultrie, now often lay in wait for me, when in St. Augustine, to discuss again the work of that mission. Also to rehearse the pranks we played in the woods in spite of the warnings of "Uncle Peter", the old confederate, who to his dying day found pleasure in telling us that he still retained the bullet in him presented years and years ago by a Yankee acquaintance.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Fort Pierce, Titusville, New Smyrna

At intervals, regular and irregular, I was accustomed to return to my general headquarters, the episcopal residence at St. Augustine, ostensibly for a rest, which invariably meant either to assist the local clergy in parish work or to substitute for a brother priest elsewhere in the diocese, as is evident from the sequel. I will first insert a well-remembered dialogue that occurred when I returned to the See of the diocese from my initial mission trip. "Father Bresnahan," inquired the kind and solicitous Bishop Kenny, "What do they give you to eat?" In all simplicity I replied: "I get something they call hominy in the morning, rice at dinner, and grits at night." I remember, too, how he and the older clergy with him laughed. I have since learned what grits and gravy mean. I have even learned to appreciate biscuits that could easily serve as sinkers for a fishing line, and corn bread that would answer for weather boarding; for it was apparently impervious to moisture, although I have, at times, enjoyed good fried chicken, roast, wild duck and turkey.

Christmas eve, 1905, saw me back at St. Augustine, anticipating rest and comfort, notwithstanding that I might be called on to hear confessions and preach and otherwise assist the Rector of the Cathedral, the Very Rev. Maurice P. Foley, S. T. D., who later became a bishop in the Philippines; but, alas, DeLand and missions were without a priest, and I was the only one available. There is no necessity to burden the reader with the narration of parish duties, so I simply state that my commission carried me as far south as Fort

Pierce, on the East Coast of Florida. Along the line Mr. Dreka at DeLand, the Nordmanns at New Smyrna, the Collins at Titusville, the Rossiters at Eau Gallie, and the O'Briens at Fort Pierce, did everything to make my journey enjoyable. Parish duties finished, I resolved to give a mission at **Fort Pierce**. Fondly do I recall the kindness of Mr. St. Laurence, proprietor of the local hotel. Through the generosity of the McCarthy family (non-Catholic) I was given the use of the new Town Hall for my lectures, and, although the audience was only moderately large, my efforts were crowned with some success. The mission resulted in six conversions including two that had been baptized Catholics. The local Episcopalian minister was in attendance and furnished me with so many questions that I stood and talked from the rostrum for two hours and fifteen minutes on the closing night. The questions were so interesting that even the audience did not tire of listening. I have visited Fort Pierce many times since, and given missions in the church, St. Anastatias's, built there through the generosity of a Mr. McNicholls of Philadelphia, Pa., but never with such fruit as on that first occasion. For the past thirteen years the Rev. Gabriel Rupert, O. S. B., has there made the headquarters of a parish. In the past year a beautiful new church has been erected. This great mission resort also boasts of a handsome rectory and a large concrete (?) school building, however, as yet unused. The Catholics in 1906 included Mr. Thomas C. O'Brien, wife and four children, Mr. Davis, Mrs. Head and family, Mr. St. Laurence and family of six, Mr. Farrel, Mr. Jerry Sullivan, Mrs. Hayes, and two Frenchmen, one of whom was Mr. Barranger, who had a chapel on his own home place, the first at Fort Pierce. This gentleman later moved to Miami.

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At Titusville, where Rev. P. Radka today is pastor, St. Teresa's chapel was erected by the "senior" Rev. John F. O'Boyle, recently retired. The Collins family, who kept a boarding house and restaurant near the railroad station, attended to my physical comforts. Many things in this "burg" contributed to make the mission at least a partial disappointment; for, while it was well advertised by means of handbills

and personal invitations, the attendance during the week was slender. Yet some interested listeners were not wanting, like Mrs. Wilson, who had strayed from the Faith. The Catholics there at the time (1906) besides the Collins family were Mr. and Mrs. Ferrara, Mr. Fulton and family, the wife and daughter of Judge M. Jones, who became a staunch member years later, Mrs. Price and family, Mr. and Mrs. Max Hock, Mr. Tony Trada, and the Hanfords hitherto but nominals. Mr. Wilson with his wife continued further instruction, and I had the satisfaction of seeing all the Catholics with one exception approach the Sacraments before my departure.

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At New Smyrna I also found a chapel, likewise the creation of Father O'Boyle, and dedicated in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I made myself at home with the Nordmann family, about three miles out of town, where I certainly felt comfortable. The old patriarch with his wife, nine stalwart boys, and a devout daughter, vied with one another in making everything pleasant for the missionary. It was due to the respect the Catholics commanded among their non-Catholic neighbors that the sacred edifice was nightly crowded by about sixty, their numbers being approximately equally divided. We organized a choir here as was the custom in all the missions where possible. This was but one of a number of missions given in New Smyrna. At the second mission of one week, in March, 1907, the Rev. Michael J. Curley, S.T.D., now Archbishop of Baltimore, but then pastor of DeLand of which New Smyrna was a dependency, preached a few nights; and, as usual when he spoke, he kept his hearers spell-bound. Mrs. Holly, a non-Catholic, was then in charge of our choir; but ere long she embraced the Faith promulgated by the Apostles. A certain Mr. Meade, when I was about to leave, approached and informed me that he now had been for the first time in a Catholic Church; "but," he added, "it will not be the last." Seed of the Divine Master was sown here; and the progress witnessed since "in the land made sacred some 225 years ago by the sainted Rev. Dr. Peter Camps and his unfortunate but faithful parishioners," proves

that it was not in vain. For a future historian of our Florida missions let me give the names of the resident Catholics of New Smyrna in 1906: The Nordmann family, the McCormacks, Miss Jennie Swartangreen, the Miers, Mr. Knapp, the Ferraras, Mrs. Peter Paul and daughter, Mrs. Barber, Miss Pellicer, and Mrs. Cook; Mr. Byrd and family, six in all, were received into the Church, and Miss Long was left under instruction. Mrs. Walsh and Mrs. Holly became converts later on.

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## CHAPTER NINE

### Mayport, Green Cove Springs, Middleburg

My missionary journeys thru Florida naturally brought me at times to places where Catholics predominated; such was **Mayport** in 1906, a unique settlement of fishermen and pilots. The inhabitants were descendants of the well known Spanish settlement of St. Augustine, and many still spoke the mother-tongue, as well as English. I took up a census soon after reaching there and found within a radius of three miles no less than two hundred Catholics, including many babies in arms. Some were good and practical as regards their religious profession, but many merely nominally so. During the past decade quite a number moved away thus leaving the congregation numerically diminished. In the St. John's chapel there I found one of the most beautiful wooden altars I have ever seen. Captain John Daniels, whose family conducted the local hotel, graciously entertained me as his guest therein. Before the end of the week I had the unalloyed pleasure of receiving him back into the Church. As was expected the mission was a wonderful success. My constant companion was a Presbyterian minister, also a guest at the hotel. We fished together and he went to church every night. One day a visiting insurance agent started a friendly conversation, which ended only after a visit to the chapel where I explained to the great delight of both, everything therein, from the holy water font to the monstrance. A Miss Webb, teacher in the local public school, was our first convert at Mayport, formerly known as St. Johns Bar; and she heroically took the step,

notwithstanding the prejudice she knew existed in her family. In 1909 I gave another mission there. Mr. Warrell was the first person on that occasion to apply for instruction in the true Faith; but it was many years afterwards when I received him into the Church, and that at South Jacksonville. One of the "guardian angels" of Mayport was Mrs. Frank Floyd, or "Aunt Babe", as she was familiarly known to all. She was a good and pious soul who took a delight in playing "mother" to every visiting priest and in influencing by word and example those who came near her. She was instrumental in reclaiming many a stray sheep; a number of converts are also to her credit. Some few years ago whilst I was pastor in South Jacksonville, and in charge of Mayport, Father Langlade, to whom I have already referred in another chapter, visited me. I asked him if he had been at Mayport lately, and he responded: "Why, Father, it is over thirty-five years since I was there last." He was indeed delighted when I offered to chauffeur him thither that afternoon in my flivver. He was like a child going to a circus for the first time. He contrasted our means of travel with his of former years. As we passed by Aunt Babe's I told one of her grandchildren that I wanted to see her. She soon greeted me with the usual reverence and welcome. Before introducing her to my companion, I asked: "Aunt Babe, did you know Father Langlade?" "Father Langlade," she shouted; "why, of course, I did. It was he who married us over forty years ago in Jacksonville. But, Father, he has been dead for a number of years." I then introduced my companion and when she realized that I was not joking, it was good to hear the two of them talk. It was like a reunion of a loving brother and sister after years of separation. The guardian or care-taker of the church for years and years past was Florence Andreu, universally known as "Uncle Florence," another good and pious soul. By his personal influence and piety radiating from him unto his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren—and they were numerous, he has done a great deal for God and His Church in this favored state. I could mention others, too, and may do so before concluding this short account of my mission trips in the Land of Flowers.

The affable Rev. Bernard O'Reilly, when assistant at the church of the Immaculate Conception, Jacksonville, was the visitant to the Sacred Heart church, at **Green Cove Springs**, Clay county. He accompanied me on my first trip to this beautiful little town, thirty miles south of Jacksonville, on the left bank of the St. Johns river, and famous for its sulphur springs. The leading Catholics at the time (February, 1906), were Mr. P. J. Canova and Mr. Rice with their respective families. Among the earnest and interested inquirers at this mission was a professor by the name of Hartwell, a colored man, attached to an educational institution at Green Cove Springs for pupils of his race. I found him highly educated and apparently deeply religious. I have since lost track of him; but it would surprise me if he did not later join the Church. Others interested were Mr. and Mrs. Kilby and Mrs. Geiger and daughter. We started a catechetical class with a membership of ten. Like other places in the state Green Cove Springs has increased in population, and naturally the Catholic contingent increased in proportion.

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About ten miles northwest of Green Cove Springs is the handsome hamlet of **Middleburg** on Black Creek, where already in the sixties and in the seventies a goodly number of pioneer Catholics heard Mass and were confirmed in a wooden chapel, no longer extant. Here I had the doubtful pleasure of renting a room from a Mr. Kinnan, who insisted that he was the grandson of a Catholic priest. The Knights of Pythias obliged me with the use of their hall at a nominal rental cost. I was grieved to find that one of their leaders bore the Catholic name of Masters; he pleaded guilty to the name renegade, but insisted that I eat at his home. His wife was my first convert in that historic and romantic spot. Our lapsed Catholics that turned up for the mission included Mr. Bardin and his family. Mr. George Chalker with some other non-Catholics showed a great deal of interest and was very kind to the missionary. While no prejudice or bigotry was evinced only a limited number of questions found their way into the Question Box. Timidity and indifference were perhaps the worst enemies I discovered in this quondam thriving mission of

Apostolic men like Rev. H. Maille, Father Clavreul, and Bishop Verot.

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## CHAPTER TEN

Hawthorne, Micanopy, Waldo

One of the things that Southern missionaries have so frequently noticed and commented on is the meeting with persons bearing names that had previously in their minds been associated with Catholicity. Here in the South one finds Murphys, McCarthys, Mahoneys, O'Connors, O'Neills, Flannagans, and so forth, who profess no form of religion, or who are even preachers of Protestant sects; other such are zealous members of various denominations and undeniably bigotted, too. What's the answer? A little experience I had in one of my missions may be conducive to strengthen the solution, given by some, to the question. There were no Catholics in that particular vicinity. An old man there with whom I got into conversation, said he was of Irish descent, bore a name that always spelled Catholic to me, and he liked to mix a little "Scotch" with it. Well, he claimed no religious affiliation, and had never seen a priest before. His parents were primitive Baptists, he told me; and his grandparents, like himself, never frequented any church. "But, Captain," he continued, "I believe they were Catholics once; for I have often seen grandma with beads like that one you showed us the other night, and she would mutter something to herself when she had them in her hands." It seems that many Catholics settled in the South both after the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, far distant from Catholic settlements. Then too, priests were few and far between. These very people, oftentimes poor and illiterate, were also too timid to make an appeal that might have brought them spiritual help. Even those, who themselves remained faithful to the end of their lives, were compelled by force of circumstances to allow their children to associate with those of their neighbors in the so-called community house, which generally also served as the local "church". The children naturally drifted away.

Well do I remember the Mission in **Hawthorne**, 1906, and how Mr. Thomas Holden, whose guest I was, accompanied me faithfully every night, taking his seat nigh to the front and sitting there to the end, although he never heard a word the missionary uttered, as he was entirely deaf. And his good example was not in vain. Miss Sadie Holden, too, faithfully presided at the organ. The wholesome influence of that estimable Catholic family has been felt in our state. Father Lynch, of Gainesville, in whose territory this mission was located, helped not a little to make the efforts of the missionary successful. A number of children received their First Holy Communion before the close of the week's sermons. Although no immediate convert was received into the Church one person was left under instruction and entered later on; otherwise a great deal of good seed was sown in the community. Its Catholics included the Holdens, Carletons and Nashs. A subsequent Florida boom brought in more.

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Some more of the Carletons, also a well-known Catholic family, resided at **Micanopy**, some fifteen miles west of Hawthorne, where I visited in October, 1906. Mrs. Carleton was then postmistress and her daughters, one of whom is now a Sister of St. Joseph, ran a hotel where I was well entertained. The opening lecture was delivered in this hotel and the remainder in a local opera house; but, alas, our expectations of a large audience were not realized. Still an average of thirty attended half of whom, including the local Methodist minister, were non-Catholics. As usual in all of my missions I distributed quite a number of leaflets as well as copies of "The Faith of Our Fathers" and "The Question Box." A revival, started before my arrival, as well as an unexplained prejudice, kept many away. The evangelist of the said revival did not hesitate to spout bigotry, going so far as to decorate a leaflet that fell into his hands and leave it at the hotel where he, too, was a guest. Despite all these handicaps our mission accomplished much good. We succeeded in ignoring the unchristian attitude of our enemies and the fairminded non-Catholics were impressed by our stand. The local paper came to our assistance, too; and, let me state here that

the press of Florida was always fair, even in a community where the bigots seemed to be a power.

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Oh, never will I forget **Waldo**. Here I was taken in charge by the Bailey household. Before the end of my work here Mr. Bailey himself was professedly a practical member of the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church. But, oh! How prejudice asserted itself and succeeded even in keeping the nominal "popish" adherents away from the old theatre hall in which I preached. Of course some of my Catholic literature found its way into worthy hands and a few of the faithful adherents never missed a service, even though unusually cold weather apparently aided the motives of the indifferent and the prejudiced. It was not edifying or encouraging to see men like Mr. Hogan, the station agent, and others of his ilk, supposed to be Catholics, playing billiards in a near by hall, as we were about to say the 'Our Father' and other prayers preparatory to the lecture,—a spiritual repast for earnest souls wishing to learn to know, love, and serve God. With the knowledge of all that opposition and hindrance it is consoling to recall that men like Messrs. Attwater and Hoskes quite unconcernedly heard all my discourses. I am to tell in these pages all of my disappointments as well as all my successes and so we will excuse Waldo.

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## CHAPTER TEN

### Cedar Keys, High Springs, Newberry

The sad thought connected with many of the missions I have given is that in many places it was practically impossible to repeat them at regular intervals; and, priests being scarce in the diocese many of the places I mention were never visited afterwards even for irregular services. Such was the fate of **Cedar Keys**. It was not my choice that after six years of this missionary life I had to give up the work; because the Bishop needed priests for regular parish work, and I became such a fixture. There is no more fascinating, interesting, and consoling, and, let me add, healthful work within the reach of young American priests than this one of travelling

around giving missions to mixed congregations. More of it ought to be done even if its only result were instructing the Catholics in the outlying districts and thus reviving their Faith. Prejudice and bigotry exist and are always fostered in these localities; and, who can point out one in the great United States that is free from these poisons? And where is the antidote, EDUCATION, coming from except through our Catholic missionary priests and their faithful followers! The Catholic Missionary Union is not getting the support it needs and deserves, and the sooner we plead guilty and repent the better. Why are we pulling down churches to erect more costly ones and at the same time allowing our fellow citizens suffer spiritual starvation at our very doors? Excuse the degression and let us go back to Cedar Keys the Island city on the gulf of Mexico. A wood burner helped to get me there, over a trestle from the mainland. It took me some time before I located a room to rent, but I was finally accomodated by a Mrs. Hodges, and a Mr. White sold me meals. Now I tried to find some Catholics, but only two, Miss Lizzie McCumber and her sister were at first in evidence. I soon learned that a number of Poles from Baltimore were employed in an oyster canning factory near the town. I found about twenty-nine of these good people, who were delighted to see me. Many of them knew no English, but all promised to be at Mass the next day—Sunday (November 23rd, 1906.) In the mean time I had succeeded in renting an old deserted barrel factory for a temporary church. With the aid of a Mike Greeley, whom I hired, and who told me quietly that he too ought to be a Catholic, I put the place in some kind of shape for services. In the meantime the handbills were at work. An incident that occurred the following morning at Mass bid fair to spoil the attendance at the Mission. As usual I turned to the people to make announcements, and when I started to read the Gospel, I made a sign for all to rise. Immediately two Polacks left their seats and proceeded to close the door and fasten it. A number of non-Catholics, who were present, seeing what was being done registered more than surprise, and some of them made a bolt for the door and escaped. Their work finished, our two friends grabbed their hats and took up a collection. As I was soon to learn they

were but following a custom, they were used to in the old country. Sunday night I had about fifty in my audience, but none of the Poles appeared. Some Orthodox Greeks from the Sponge industry, nearby, were however, in evidence all during the week. On the whole, we had a very good mission. My friend Mike made good and Mr. McComber asked to be baptized. Such missions are always a great spiritual consolation.

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I heard of the reputation of **High Springs** before I went there. At present it is an entirely different place. Formerly no man seemed to be safe within its limits and a stranger was always looked on with suspicion. Nevertheless there were then some good Catholics in the town, and they knew of my coming beforehand. Arrangements had been made for me to stay at the "Yellow Dog", the nickname given to a local hotel. No woman went near that place except the proprietor's wife and the spouse of the negro cook. It was bachelors' quarters par excellence. Near by was the "White Elephant", a notorious restaurant, run by a man known as 'Shorty' Davidson. The room I occupied was well aired and the walls of wood were perforated by many bullet holes. The explanation given me later was to the effect that the employees of the railroad shops there were accustomed to assemble therein now and then for a "friendly" game of poker and refreshments, and when the game grew too tame the fellows would wager on their ability to shoot the moths that were amusing themselves around the electric lights. One of the first denizens to approach me introduced himself as Kelly and a Catholic. To prove the latter claim he showed me a scapular and rosary given him by Sister Mary Anne, the "Angel" of Jacksonville, and claimed that Father Kenny, too, was one of his best friends. He was one of the handsomest men I ever saw and seemingly a lovable character. I learned later that Father Kenny, whilst pastor in Jacksonville, did befriend him, when he (Kelly) was in jail there for the murder of a fellow policeman. It was in that jail that Sister Mary Anne made such a good impression on him and gave him the badges he wore and treasured. He was one of the most active boosters of the mission held in the Opera House at High Springs, and until

Thursday night he came regularly always accompanied by a large contingent of townsmen. On Thursday morning after I returned from Mass celebrated at the home of Mrs. Paul, the negro, who was serving my breakfast called my attention to the "White Elephant." In front of the door I saw sheriff Fennell of Gainesville with a pointing revolver in his hand. On both sides of the building were men, evidently deputies, also facing the door and armed with threatening rifles. A shout from the sheriff brought "Shorty" with folded arms and a sickly smile on his face to the threshold. He was soon seated in a buggy with the sheriff and the deputies began loading up a wagon with beer barrels and cases that did not appear to be "M-T's". Then the word circulated that Kelly, who, by the way, had held a responsible railroad job, was wanted also; but luckily for him, he had gone on a hunting trip that morning. When he returned about noon I was the first to apprise him of how popular he was. Immediately I saw before me a different man, and with a growl he absconded. The hotel proprietor came to tell me some time later that Kelly had barricaded himself in his room and that he had two shot guns, a rifle, and a revolver with him. However not long after hearing of this news I was relieved; for Kelly had jumped a freight train and left for parts unknown. Those enactments of that Thursday were the outcome of the fact that a railroad detective had been shot and killed in High Springs about a week before my advent there. The two men named were suspected of having a hand in the murder as well as of running a 'blind tiger' and a gambling house. Later on they were both arrested, tried, and found guilty; and, although they staged some escapes, they finally paid the penalty. That was only one incident in my young life that I am loath to experience again. Well, the mission continued but with only a small attendance. Some other boys like Mike Hogan, John Salls, and Ben Melham proved to be good Catholics. These with Mrs. Paul and her daughter, Miss Fanny Guilfoyle, Miss McWatters, a teacher in the local school, Mr. R. Sapp, wife and child, and Barney Sellers, comprised the congregation in those days. Since then, (December, 1906), High Springs has changed much for the better, as alluded to

in the beginning, and I have just learned that the Very Rev. Patrick Nolan, S.T.D., of Gainesville, has recently built a chapel there, whose dedication was witnessed by many non-Catholics, on May 24th, 1925.

My visit to Newberry was postponed for a week longer than I had intended; for I was promised that if I did so, I would be given the use of the Baptist church when the Revival, then being held, would close. However the bigots got in their work and hired the evangelist to keep on for another week. The fair-minded non-Catholics were highly indignant and led by Messrs. Kincaid (family Catholic), Avert, and Holt, they fixed up a lecture room for me known as Carter's Hall, in which I had three very large audiences on Sunday, (December, 1906). After the Sunday night lecture was at an end I went for a walk that took me by the local church and something impelled me to go in. I took a seat in the back and saw an audience smaller than the one I had left. The preacher was ranting vociferously but saying nothing. After my departure he changed his tactics and notified his listeners that he had met me at the boarding house and thought that I was a Christian gentleman, and that it would be best for all concerned if he turned over the church to me for the rest of the week. Thus closed his revival and ere leaving town the next day he bade me a fond farewell. I often ran across him afterwards always in a friendly manner; for he was no bigot. And after that first Sunday night our hall was invariably overtaxed; but I continued to use it in spite of the fact that the church was now at our disposal. A great amount of good was done. Mrs. Kincaid, a member of the well-known, reputable Catholic LaFontissee family of Gainesville, was highly respected by all who knew her and her interesting family. This was certainly more than a help to the mission. A John Sullivan turned up and acknowledged that he had not been to confession for thirty-nine years and now wished to go again. He did so. A number of Italians employed in the neighboring phosphate mines did not trouble us much although I went there amongst them, using my best Italian accent. Messrs. Curry, Lamb, and Alley, who insisted on re-

ceiving further instructions, were assigned to the benign care of Father Lynch of Gainesville.

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## CHAPTER TWELVE

### Eustis, Oviedo, Seville, Minneola

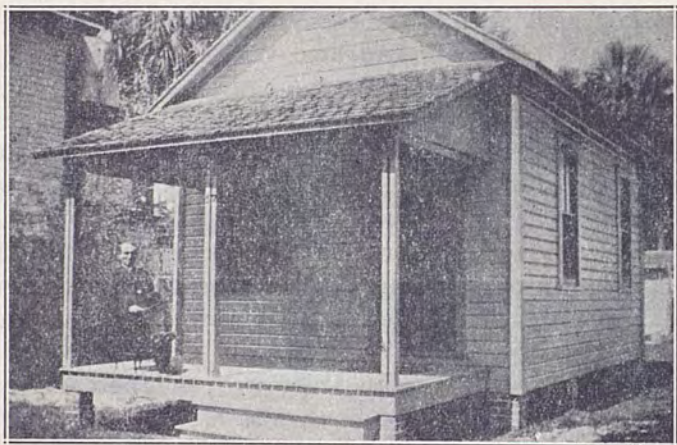
It is not my intention to dwell at any length in these pages on missions given in organized Catholic parishes. Towards the close of 1906, for instance, I gave a mission for Rev. John O'Brien, in Fernandina, where the local newspaper man reported me as a Frenchman, who could talk English quite fluently. A Mrs. Redmond was my most enthusiastic convert.

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Early in 1907 Rev. James Veale, S.T.D., persuaded me to come to Loretto where my success was marked by the return of many careless Catholics to their duties.

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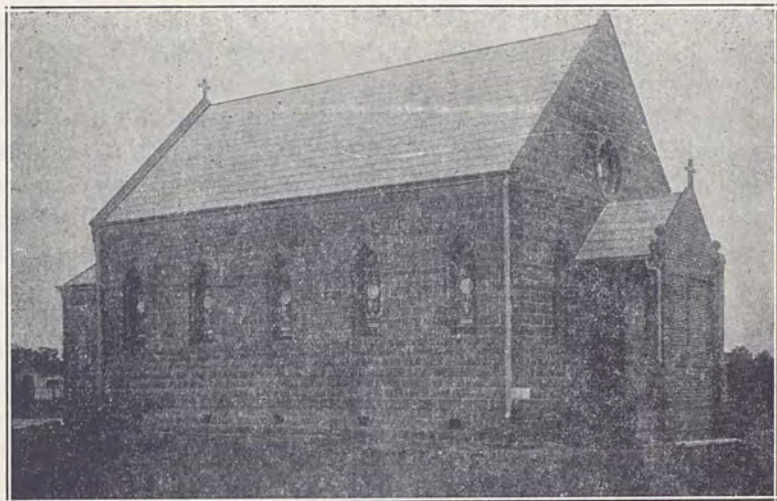
Soon afterwards I was the guest of Father O'Boyle at Daytona, where although handicapped by the absence of a



Very Rev. Father O'Boyle's home at Daytona, Florida

choir, the silence of a bell, and the lack of advertising, we had the happiness of addressing a large interested assembly including about twenty non-Catholics who were generally the first to arrive every evening.

At the station of the beautiful town, now city of Eustis, then in charge of Rev. Michael Fox, pastor of Orlando, I was most cordially greeted by Mr. Charles Megargee and Mr. Jerry Ott, both natives of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who had for me at a hotel, that, after past experiences, appeared to me like a suite, and rented Clifford's Hall, the local opera house, for a week. A revival in town and the attraction of



Church of St. Mary's of the Lakes, Eustis, Florida

a Chautauqua caused the attendance at the mission to be rather small; but curiosity again both to hear and to see a priest got the better of some few. The first convert was a certain Mr. Gillon who had been baptized sixty-two years before. The Messrs. Miller, Savage, and Colonel Hazard showed more than curiosity; for, they did not hesitate to pry me with interesting questions whose answers seemed to satisfy them. At this, the first (1906) of many missions conducted at Eustis, plans were set on foot for a little church there; but it was only years afterwards, namely whilst I was pastor at Sanford and directly in charge of Eustis, that those plans were executed by the erection of a beautiful hollow cement block edifice, St. Mary of the Lakes, which is now too small for the congregation.

Next stop, **Oviedo**; then (1906) also in charge of Father Fox as a station. The Baptist church had been promised me, but at the last moment an indignation meeting was held and I was politely told that I could not use it. So I had to content myself with the Alliance Hall. Sometimes opposition proves a blessing and a gratis wide-spread "Ad," as in this instance. The other churches shut down for the week as a mark of respect for my presence. Joseph and Andrew Leinhardt with their families, Mrs. Yonge and her sister, Miss McSweeney, a visitor from Canada were the principal Catholics. There I met a curiosity, a Mrs. Alexander, once a practical Catholic, who joined the Presbyterians and tiring of them cast her lot with the Episcopalians, yet knew all the time that she should have remained a Catholic. With her husband she was constantly in attendance at the lectures and even came to Mass on one or two occasions. No actual converts were received but many were deeply interested. I gave other missions here later on but always with indifferent success.

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**Seville**, then in the DeLand parish, afforded some thrills. Mr. Causey, who afterwards became a Catholic himself, had a splendid Catholic family that was more than a host to the missionary. His boys took me out for many a pony ride through the piney woods and prairies in that veritable country district. At the first mission given there in the public school building, I had a very fine audience, but owing to the dissemination of a pernicious, anti-Catholic book, my audience began to weaken. About twenty of those people besides the Catholics, however, were not affected by its evil influence. The other members of our Church residing in these parts were Mrs. Mesmer and Mrs. Price and children. The sundry disadvantages, that seemingly are the lot of Catholics only deter many of their neighbors, here and elsewhere from taking the step they appear convinced to take, namely the step of embracing Catholicity. Messrs. Causey and Mesmer in all sincerity and earnestness took up the study of our catechism. The former had previously in all candor disclosed to the Methodist minister, one of whose steadfast church-goers he had been, what he thought of him for acting as agent for the book referred to above.

Early in April, 1907, I landed in the pretty village of **Minneola**, Lake county, forty miles from Sanford. Mr. A. A. Pitt, a prominent Catholic of English descent, met me at the depot and at once proceeded to make the mission a pleasant success. He had come some years before with his family from Kentucky in search of health—and found it. Here also the school building was our temporary church, whose seats were regularly occupied by anxious souls. One night when I was answering the question, "Will only Catholics be saved?" a Mr. Stanford, a pillar of the Methodist church, stood up and protested, after I declared that there was only one true Church, by shouting: "That's not so, Sir." "One moment, please," I entreated. He sat down and waited for the conclusion of my explanation, and finally humbly apologized. Thereafter we were mutual friends. He insisted with other coreligionists that I use the Methodist church building for my subsequent missions at Minneola. Of course, I complied. We gained some converts, among whom was a Mrs. Britton, and a few for further instruction. Other Catholics of the neighborhood were Mrs. Marsh and daughter, Mr. McDonald, and, Mr. Moriarty. It is almost useless to state that chiefly ignorance of all things Catholic prevailed here as in many places prior to my visits.

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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### Osteen, Lake Helen, Woodville

Ignorance is conceded to be the root of all prejudice and bigotry, whether they be racial, political, religious, or any other kind. Catholics are not always immune, as we very well know. I recall what a hatred for instance against Masons, whom I knew not in person was engendered in me during my childhood and boyhood days. Why, time and again I heard it remarked and I believed it that fire could not burn a free-mason. And to this day I vividly remember how astonished my good father was when on one occasion after returning from college I ventured to remark that an honest Protestant had a chance to be saved. Consider how many non-Catholics there are in the United States who never saw a Knight of

Columbus, a Jesuit, or even a Catholic, nor ever read a religious book written by a Catholic author! Can we wholly blame them for being bigoted and prejudiced at times? Many of this class are not infrequently the piteous victims of unscrupulous characters who act contrary to their own convictions and play on the ignorance of the former for filthy lucre sake. What are the twenty-two millions of Catholics, who salute the stars and stripes doing to dispel this ignorance? "Faith comes by hearing," the Apostle tells us; but I doubt that, when he wrote those words, he knew how powerful the printed word would be in our day. Now, if for instance an organized effort was made to send or have sent into every home in our country the special number of "Our Sunday Visitor" newspaper issued only **once** a month, what an amount of good would result! Then, too, there is the National Catholic Daily paper established not many years ago, The Tribune, through which ignorance that we so much deplore can be dispelled; and it is the duty (whether recognized fully or not) of all Catholics, clerical and lay, to do their part in this kind of missionary work. Jealousy and envy will always get what they deserve. Let us quit blaming the other fellow and examine our conscience, and then go it knocking the staff of the Sunday Visitor and such societies as the Catholic Missionary Union, who are doing their utmost to send missionaries among our fellow citizens, who are very little better off than the pagans of other lands. We like to quote that "Charity begins at home;" but does it in this case?

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Mrs. Blauvelt, an old lady, was the individual acknowledged Catholic at Osteen when (March, 1908) I went thither to explain the Catholic doctrine and practices of which the other inhabitants naturally knew little or nothing. They were very kind, however, and tendered me the use of their Methodist church. They were delighted, too, when I requested their choir to assist me. Night after night I called out the numbers of the hymns that were selected, and we all joined in singing as best we could such hymns as: "Oh, the Good Old Time Religion is Good Enough for me," "Onward Christian Soldiers," "Lead Kindly Light," "Jesus Saviour of My

Soul." I do not think that any one in town missed the mission; and, oh! didn't they ask some interesting questions! The attendance and attention were simply wonderful. On the farewell day I was earnestly begged to come back again very soon. Mrs. Leonardi and her family, who had not been known as Catholics, were quickened in their Faith again. While no contemporaneous converts from Protestantism can be recorded, we were consoled that Messrs. Blauvelt and Osteen sought further enlightenment, and I believe their procedure bore fruit. It is gratifying even at this late hour to think over the fact that good seed was sown at Osteen and that the local natural prejudice was dissipated.

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A reaction came at **Lake Helen**, which I visited after giving a mission for the learned Father Curley in DeLand (1908). This hamlet boasted of a Spiritualist Colony, whose members excepting one, a baptized Catholic, showed their regard for the missionary by ignoring him altogether. Mrs. Nevin, who was a convert, entertained me at her hospitable home and we rented a Library Hall in the village for my spiritual work. The small audience included some non-Catholics who took in every lecture. The box at the door yielded only one question; namely: "If you were notified to leave town how long would it take you to leave?" My answer, "Try it, my friend," caused a great deal of merriment. I remained at Lake Helen, which is twenty-one miles west of New Smyrna, the full time and would even have remained over time, had I not been summoned to assist at the Holy Week services in the Cathedral, St. Augustine. After my sermon on the Divinity of Christ there on Easter Sunday evening Mr. Goodwin, a visitor from Fort Pierce, called on me at the rectory for Catholic literature. I almost failed to state that two parties at Lake Helen were left under instruction in our Religion.

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After Easter (1908) I went west once more; for I learned there might be some Catholics in a settlement called **Woodville**, south of Tallahassee. Mrs. Cooper of this parish kindly loaned me her horse and buggy, and accompanied by a Mr. Dougherty, an Irish peddler, who knew the district well,

I arrived at my destination. The trustees of the public school seemingly had no objection to my using the building, and even said so to my face; but when I reached it that evening after having carefully distributed the handbills I found its door padlocked and, strange to say, no waiting crowd. The bigots had done their work secretly and effectively. In the meantime I discovered a Mrs. Daughtry and children, all baptized Catholics, who shortly appeared on the scene. They were followed by a small but indignant crowd, who surrounded us. On seeing our predicament one non-Catholic gentleman then invited us to use his recently built, but not yet occupied, residence. We gratefully accepted the proffer and managed with borrowed chairs and hastily-made rude benches to seat all attendants. The antics of our secret opponents served only to excite the zeal of the few Catholics and to increase the interest of their neighbors who loved fair play. Catholic literature found its way to every home before we shook the sand from our shoes ere leaving the rare Cracker town of Woodville.

About that time I had resolved to establish at least a temporary headquarters at Tallahassee. With the assistance of parishioners and generous northern friends I had a badly needed rectory built there.

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## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Starke, Ocala, McIntosh, Kissimmee

Timidity, or would you call it lack of zeal on the part of Catholics, has helped mother ignorance and her child prejudice to be tolerated and live on in many communities. In 1907 Bishop Kenny sent me a letter received from a well-known Catholic family of **Starke**, the birthplace of a prominent educator, the Rt. Rev. Monsignor E. A. Pace, S.T.D., Ph.D., professor in the Catholic University, Washington, D. C., President of the American Council on Education, etc. The said letter stated that Father Lynch, of Gainesville, then an old man, was unable to travel, and as this place was one of his stations, they had no clerical visit nor seen a priest for some time. I answered the writer that I would officiate at Starke if the local Catholics would secure for me a place to

preach in. A reply came forthwith that they could not comply with my proposition, and that if I dared preach there in public I would be insulted and the living there after that would be made more intolerable for Catholics. Meantime I had an urgent appointment to fill, and also had word that good Father Lynch was able to be about. I forgot Starke until about a year later when Mrs. Davis wrote to the Bishop, asking for a priest to come to Starke. This letter his Lordship also forwarded to me advising that I make an effort to go this time. I laid down the usual conditions, and the good lady who had obviously consulted with my correspondent of the year before, repeated the latter's protest against my appearing before the public to preach; and Mr. Chas. Pace added a note to the effect that he always found it difficult to save his distinguished brother from insult whenever he came on a visit to his native town. I answered back that I would be in Starke on a certain date to celebrate Mass wherever they wished me to do so, and that I would preach on the streets if I could find no other place. My letter fell into the hands of Mr. Davis, a non-Catholic, who immediately told his wife that he would see to it that I got the courthouse to lecture in. I never saw a more surprised lot of Catholics than those when they entered the courthouse crowded for the opening session. There were no insults for anybody; but peace, joy and consolation abounded. Questions without number flowed in heavily during the week and even the preachers honored us by their constant attendance. The Darby family of which Mrs. Gaskins was a member, Mrs. Davis, and the Paces were the principal Catholics in the neighborhood at that time. The latter have since moved.

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As an exception we here record the mission conducted in 1910 at Ocala, a parish center. The zealous Rev. Dominic Bottolaccio then its pastor felt that the chapel of St. Philip Neri would be incommodious for our purpose, so he wisely secured the use of the courthouse. One of the best known Catholics in the state, Mr. L. R. Chazal, has been for years influential in this city and, also, Dr. H. C. Dozier, a convert

from Episcopalianism. I mention them not only because they were good Catholics, for there were others such, too, but because they were my principal assistants during my activities that week. They saw to it, for instance that the local newspapers published faithful and accurate reports of the lectures. On one occasion they did not hesitate to take to task one editor who had ventured to misquote my answer to the question, "Why cannot Catholics be Masons?"



Philip Neri Chapel at Ocala

Doctor Dozier was of especial help in answering questions asked privately by Episcopalians among whom was his own father. One day in looking over his library we found in the "Book of Common Prayer" a slip of paper on which he had set down years before his conversion to Catholicism, and, when he was a student for the Episcopal ministry at Suwanee, five reasons why he should be a Roman Catholic.

I lectured and preached at McIntosh, twenty miles north of Ocala, also in 1910, then one of Father Bottolaccio's stations. Nothing beyond the ordinary occurred there excepting that my Mass server during the week developed to be a priest, located on a nearby farm in search of health. He did not divulge his identity to me until long afterwards when, his health being restored, he applied for affiliation with the diocese. I remember distinctly how amazed I was at the time at his remarkable knowledge of Latin and theology. Many times since we have joked over our first meeting. He, the Rev. Walter Bernard Golden, is now the present incumbent or permanent pastor of the Holy Redeemer parish, Kissimmee. He is down in my Diary as Mr. Golden, who attended that mission faithfully from another station, Boardman, two miles farther north, where he was living with Mr. M. Schlatre, who had a regular "Cenacle" in his home. Mrs. Hoey and family of Orange Lake also came regularly to the mission at McIntosh. One night during that week an unknown comet that

appeared in the heavens thrilled us. Thanks be to God a good attendance rewarded our efforts and many like Mr. Gartskill were deeply interested.

Nearly overlooked **Kissimmee** where I held its first mission early in my missionary career or when I obtained the title of "Diocesan Missionary-at-Large". The chapel was an upstairs room in the home of Mrs. Tress, then with her children about the only Catholics in town, and, to this day that



Church of The Holy Redeemer, Kissimmee, Florida

estimable lady continues to do splendid work for God and the Church. How delighted she has always been to harbor the rare visiting priest at her hospitable home, and, oh! how spotless the Dwelling of her Divine Master! In it we began our mission which caused the return of an elderly prodigal and the conversion of his wife and several children. Most of the lectures during those three days were delivered in the old Opera House; but the citizens did not patronize them en masse.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

DeLand,      Orange Mills,      Lochart,      Fairvilla,  
Gretna,      Havana,      Chaires

The account of the mission held at DeLand, where the

most prominent figure was Father Curley, the pastor of St. Peter's church, and which was made famous by the Stetson University. I give in the words of Mr. J. F. Finerty, a tourist who was present on that occasion and wrote his impressions for his home paper in a northern city. It reads: "On Sunday, March 29, of this year (1908), Father P. J. Bresnahan, Florida's missionary to non-Catholics, opened a mission, the first ever held here. The subject of his first sermon, The Need of a Spiritual Awakening, was treated in such simple, forcible English, that his auditors went away feeling that the sermon was about the best they ever heard. That evening the seating capacity (100) was taxed, about sixty per cent of those present being non-Catholics, including many of the leading citizens. As the night was like a hot summer one north, those within the church naturally felt somewhat uncomfortable. Outside the church, the rectory porch, lawn and walks were used as an annex, and it seemed there were more auditors outside than inside the building. It was a sight to fill the Catholics with joy. Notwithstanding the intense heat of the week, a large audience was present at every service and at the closing sermon of the mission, the non-Catholic element was still in the majority." Quite a number of the Stetson U. students were earnest inquirers through the Question Box which like a sentinel always "stood" at the door."

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Early in 1910 word came to our Bishop that a missionary was needed at Orange Mills where inroads had been made by Adventist proselytizers, who were vilifying everything Catholic. Mrs. Eddy and her children and a Mr. Hazel, the only Catholics there, did all they could for my comfort. Naturally the questions asked there in one of the county's school buildings were the outcome of the Adventists' onslaught. I had quite a large crowd of listeners considering the size of the place; for Orange Mills was but one of the hundreds of short-lived Florida settlements, that rise up quickly and soon vanish. The Misses Murdock and Yancey asked for full instructions and Mr. Eddy, too, eventually became Catholic. No rabid prejudice was manifested, although I was ready for something of the sort when I arrived.

That same spring (1910), after a mission given in St. James' church, Orlando, pastored by Father Fox, I set out for **Lochart**, one of his stations then and seven miles west. Here the saintly pastor had prepared the way for me by some talks on the Sabbath question, for the Adventists had already been attracted thither by the sound of the saws in this mill settlement. Two Catholics resided in the place. One was Mr. Geo. Walker, a convert, and an assistant superintendent at the mill. He gave me great help. I made my home at a boarding house where Mass was said daily and attended by Mr. Walker and some curious boarders. The splendid average of fifty regularly congregated in the school building like pupils to be taught the religion of the Roman Catholics. However the questions from this "class" were few and the condition of their soul appeared to me a matter of indifference. Two did ask for catechisms, etc., but whether they persevered or not I do not know. An echo of this mission nevertheless reached me after the lapse of some years. Mrs. Murrel, at whose house I had boarded and lodged, informed me by letter that both she and her daughter had embraced the Faith in consequence of the knowledge obtained of it at the mission and from the "Faith of Our Fathers" I presented her with ere leaving.

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Without a rest I went to **Fairvilla**, three miles nearer to Orlando, where the people, all non-Catholics, were glad to see me; for Father Fox had spoken there too. After reading the Questions they had placed in the Box I was convinced that there were many intelligent residents in this country place. Some six or eight declared their intention of joining our Church later if they could dispel their doubts after reading the books I had given them. "Too good to be true," one remarked. They had heard so much against the Church before that now they were slow and wary to accept the true state of affairs. That was a common condition in the minds of many with whom I came in contact during my missionary journeyings.

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Unconsciously I glided by some of the missions in 1909, so I will close this chapter with an extract from "The Mis-

sionary" to which I sent an account of my missionary experiences at regular intervals. "When a cold wave strikes us here in Florida it is the custom of every one to sit about the nearest stove and it would take something like a Messina Earthquake to separate them from it. But cold in Florida is neither constant nor continuous. I have just finished a mission at Gretna and Havana, Gadsden county, as well as at Monticello, Jefferson county, and a few other places where I experienced the cold wave referred to. The usual comforts were not wanting."

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"Gretna was settled by people calling themselves Scotch-Irish. The sole Catholic was Mr. Geo. LaVigne, the railroad agent. Some show company had rented the village hall and so I could preach in it only two days. The folks at that point impressed me by their attendance and questions that they were interested in religion and at my departure made me promise to return soon."

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"At Havana also the mission was just in full swing when the ubiquitous show demanded the only hall in town, and religion had to make room for minstrelsy."

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"At another place nearby, Chaires, I enjoyed the gratuitous use of the Baptist church; but on the third day, owing to scruples on the part of some of the members, I was obliged to vacate it on a technicality. But I am going back there some day very soon, and from the looks of things I have an idea that we may be able to convert the church building itself." But it never happened, and when I did return I "taught" in the school house, as will be seen in the next chapter.

Pardon. Before closing this one, however, I wish to remark that the number of converts received or the number taking further instruction at any place was not a conclusive indication of the entire success of the respective missions. The immediate result was the allaying and destroying of prejudice and bigotry. Those who did become Catholics outright deserved a martyr's crown as every sane person acquainted with the conditions under which they lived will readily admit.

The step into the Church sometimes meant the danger if not the actual breaking up of family ties; often it meant the loss of lifelong friends who could or would not try to understand the motives in question; and, again not seldom it meant the loss of temporalities like a position or patronage. Such churches as the Baptist, and the Methodist that swarm the South are only social clubs even regarded so by many of their own members, and there a mere leniency or attempted step towards Catholicity means the loss of membership in the club. For Catholicism has become synonymous with ostracism. In a Catholic atmosphere it is different and hence no wonder that when encouragement is given to it it finds permanent, satisfied adherents!

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## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### Lloyds, Lake Jackson, Chaires, A Midnight Experience

The "Missionary" is called on to tell the story of the mission at Lloyds as I told it to that magazine in 1910. "Every traveller to north-west Florida and especially every drummer knows Lloyds because of the good dinner he can get there on his way from Pensacola to Jacksonville. There are no Catholics in this village, but there are good-minded men and women who realize that they have souls to save, as I learned during my visit. I was well fed anyhow, but that is nothing to complain of. The school house was turned over to me on my arrival and I never preached to a more eager crowd anywhere than there. The musicians vied with one another for the privilege of playing on the school's organ, and it would remind one of a Methodist revival to see the number of young people gather around it to help in the singing. The questions that poured in showed the marked intelligence and interest of the audience. My last lecture over, those good people actually crowded around me, thanked me for my instructions, and extorted from me the promise to be back soon again. When I offered to pay my hotel bill I was told that it had already been settled, and, bear in mind, these generous benefactors were not even Catholics in disguise or name. Good old Mrs. Lloyd—God be good to her—I have never forgotten."

To go to and come from Lake Jackson, another country settlement near Tallahassee, I used the "pony express." Mr. Kavanaugh kindly loaned me his nag for the week. My legs being long I managed to keep them safe near the ground, and the pony although spirited was not vicious. Success did not greet me there as I had expected, and the attendance at the school building was not large at any time; but as usual we did have some faithful auditors. The Catholics there were Mrs. Cooper, her sister, Mrs. White with her daughter, and her brother Mr. John Kavanaugh. Mr. Beroud and family came some distance to be with us also. All of these were loyal members of the Blessed Sacrament church, Tallahassee. I had made the mistake of choosing a week without a moon for this mission, as I fully realized before it closed; for, one night, having lost both my whip and match box, we had to retrace our steps as far as Mrs. Cooper's for a lantern in order to light the way to the Capital.

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Let us now return to Chaires, where according to appearances we had indulged in wonderful but illusive expectations. But, alas! The Baptist church was denied us so we occupied the school, some distance from the village. The attendance was small in the beginning and remained so to the bitter end. I stuck it out for the sake of the few present and also for the sake of the Dutton children, at whose home I was entertained. Here I encountered the notorious Josh D for the second time and I had reason to remember him although he did not recognize me for reasons that will become apparent as I tell my tale.

The Christmas preceding I celebrated midnight Mass at Tallahassee so that I could favor the Catholics at Lake City 111 miles eastward with a Mass on Christmas morning, and say a third Mass that forenoon at Live Oak 23 miles back again. After the midnight Mass my colored hackman promptly carried me to the railroad depot about a mile from the rectory. En route through the silent town we were hailed from a side street and from the shadows approached the figure of a man. As he got near us I noticed that one of his arms was missing but the other held a shotgun, and seeing his condition I promptly took possession of the gun, placed it by my side as far from him as possible and then helped him into

the buggy. He also carried on a strap hung over his shoulder on the armless side a satchel from which he promptly drew a bottle half-filled with some kind of liquor. He extracted the cork with his teeth, retaining it there until he had poured out a quantity of the red liquor. "Have a drink, Cap," he muttered holding the bottle towards me. "No, thank you," I declined, "not now." "Alright," he shouted; "that leaves me all the more," and again helped himself. "Got a knife, Cap?" as he pulled out a tobacco plug and replaced the bottle. But before I could answer he had a large knife in his hand that opened with a spring, and the way he held it seemed dangerously near my ribs, but I turned it away and he then used it to cut a quid from the plug that he was gripping with his teeth. "You seem pretty well armed," I remarked to keep down my nervousness. "Yes-ser-ree, boss," he said, and to prove it he showed me a revolver. I did not wait to see the entire contents of the bag; for I grabbed my suitcase, threw the gun on the buggy, and jumped before the conveyance came to a stop at the depot. I was soon under a sheltering roof where I recognized among those in waiting an old acquaintance, a drummer. Soon my one armed pal entered, whereupon I inquired from my friend who the fellow was. "Why, Father, don't you know that old soldier, Josh D—." I narrated my last experience and he laughed heartily. "Why," he continued, "that's nothing. A short time ago I saw Josh corner a drummer over there and force him with that revolver to drink almost a half pint of liquor." But Josh, sober, was a different man. During that mission at Chaires he confidently told me that he had reason to believe that he had been baptized a Catholic.

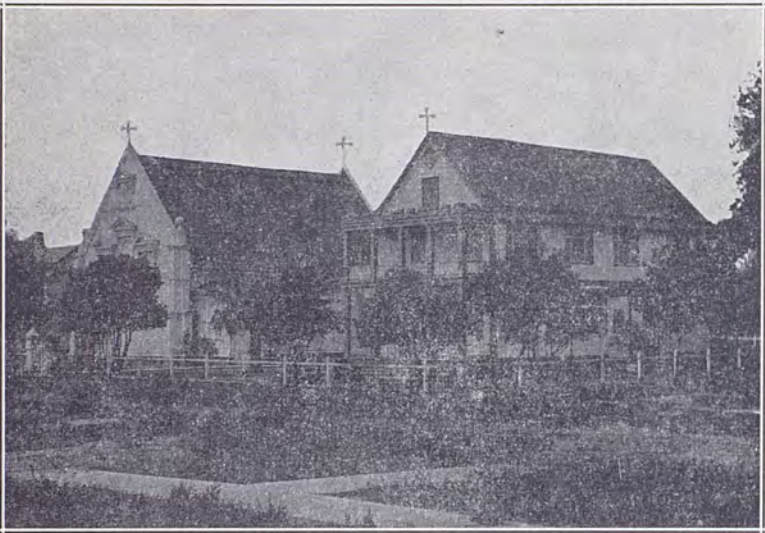
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## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### Parish Work. Interesting Missions at Monroe, Springdale and Carbur

My contract with the Catholic Missionary Union came to an end in 1909, but at the earnest solicitation of my Bishop and Father Elliott, the missionary par excellence, it was renewed for one more year. At the close of 1910 Bishop Kenny

said to me: "I am sorry, but I need more men for parish work and I want you to start a **parish in Sanford.**" On my arrival there I found a church wrecked by a recent storm but no rectory. So I had my hands full, but penniless. Thanks to the zeal of the resident Catholics, as well as to the Catholic Church Extension Society and faithful northern friends, who assisted financially and otherwise, within two years there



All Souls Church and School at Sanford, Florida

were erected on the church property a commodious frame rectory and a two-story convent-school house, also of frame, in charge of two Sisters of Mercy and a novice from a New York community.

In my district as pastor of Sanford were missions and stations that were scenes of some of my former activities as missionary-at-large. I was now able to follow up previous successes, and it was then that we built the small concrete church of St. Mary of the Lakes at Eustis. During my five years on the road "drumming for the Church," as some one described it, I had the pleasure of giving eighty-five missions, of which at least twenty-five took place where no priest is recorded to have visited previously and not a few of those fields have not seen a priest since.

I managed at times after everything was running smoothly at Sanford to break away from the unaccountable so-called dull monotony of a small parish in order to continue preaching among non-Catholics. This was the case at **Monroe**, only five miles from Sanford, and being the proud possessor of a flivver I could easily make the trip both ways each evening. There the community hall, which served as the recreation hall, school and church, was tendered for my use; and as some of my parishioners lived in the neighborhood I had a mixed audience. It seemed that all adults within a radius of two miles came during that first week; but when I tried again about six months later in answer to earnest invitations to "return soon" things began to happen. An effort was made to keep me out of the hall; but the trustee who held the key was my friend, and defying his associates he unlocked the door and even lighted up the building for me. Wednesday night following, the Methodists were to hold their regular prayer meeting. A notice to that effect had been posted on the door of the hall with an additional notice that a Mr. Johnson, another trustee, would tell on that occasion why he was opposed to Romanism. Mr. John Bell, a local merchant, whose wife ought to have been a Catholic, asked me if I would come to prayer meeting. "Sure, Mike," I responded. Well, amongst other announcements on Tuesday night I stated that I would lecture also the next evening after the prayer meeting. True to my promise I attended the meeting, but alone; for I told the altar boy, who usually accompanied me, to stay at home. The prayer meeting began in the usual manner with a ready-made prayer and a hymn. Then Mr. Johnson went forward and this was about all he said: "I am very sorry I cannot speak on the subject tonight, as announced, as I do not feel very well, and besides, there is some bad feeling in this community, so let us sing a hymn and close with prayer," and tremblingly he reached for a book. Right in front of him sat Mr. Bell and myself, and whilst I am no pygmy Bell was somewhat larger than I. A smile passed over Mr. Bell's face and he nudged me as Mr. Johnson and his clients vacated the hall. The vast majority remained. I donned my missionary's Cross, walked to the rostrum, knelt in prayer, and then

lectured on Confession, as if nothing had happened to mar the success of the mission. As I began I heard a woman down the road shout: "Ah, if I were a man he would never preach in that hall." Whether she meant Johnson or me never induced me to investigate. Every night during that week I noticed that two of the Catholic men took a seat in my Ford after I left it, instead of in the hall. When all was over, one of them, Joe Murphy, offered the explanation that they heard that some threats had been made. "But, Father," continued Joe, "it is well no stunts were attempted," and then he showed me his revolver and his young companion brandished a black-jack. It was a great mission and very fruitful. I parted with those friendly neighbors conscious that I had done nothing to stir up strife.

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When I had been stationed almost five years at Sanford word was circulated that anti-Catholic bills were to come up before the State Legislature and so Bishop Curley requested me to go to Tallahassee again which was then bereft of a resident pastor. Thanks to Senator Johnson we won out and silenced to this day the cheap politicians who made capital out of the ignorance of their non-Catholic citizens. The guardians of bigotry had come and gone solely having served the progress of the Church in Florida; and so are the members of the K. K. K. doing today, if zealots will only allow them to continue to play the game the Kilkenny cats are supposed to have played years ago. Truth must and will prevail.

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In the Tallahassee district I was again amongst old scenes and it was in that district I built my seventh chapel. I had tried for years to get an excuse to "do" Taylor county; but I could not locate even one Catholic in that neighborhood where was posted occasionally on trees the impressive sign: "Nigger, don't let the sun go down whilst you are here." At last a letter from a French Creole from Louisiana brought the intelligence that a number of his people working in a mill at Perry were anxious to see a priest. In a few days nearly all of them received holy Communion during the first Mass I said in that town at four o'clock in the morning and by six

they were at their work in the mill. In the course of the same day I arranged for the mission conducted the following week in the courthouse, but the curtailed statement, that all the Catholics and only a "mighty" few of their separated brethren attended, will here suffice.

Fortunately for the salvation of souls, soon after leaving Perry, I made the acquaintance of another Catholic, Mr. O'Rourke, superintendent of the sawmill at **Springdale**, two or three miles away in another direction, where there was a Union church. He assured me that I could use it at any time. The narration of the consequence of this acquaintance, because of its interest, will be rather lengthy. Now, as I had at last learned that when a mission was advertised days in advance the enemy beat me to it by some show or revival to withhold people from attending it, I determined that this would not happen in Springdale and told Mr. O'Rourke to "Expect me some Monday." Two weeks afterwards I was in Springdale early on a Monday, but my friend was absent. So Mr. J. T. Bohen, the master mechanic and a splendid Catholic, advised me to see the assistant superintendent, whom I found to be an Episcopalian and very agreeable. "We have three trustees, all Methodists," he said, "and they are in charge of the Union church building, so you had better see them. If they say it's alright, it will be alright with me; and," he added with a smile, "if they say it's not alright, go ahead and use it anyhow." I thought it good policy, however, to consult the trustees, and after notifying them of Mr. O'Rourke's promise to me, I received the keys. The handbills soon circulated. That night every available space was taken. These good people had nowhere else to spend the evening. The dance halls and movies were far away. The local choir furnished excellent music, and I called out the hymns whenever I needed a rest from talking. Three were put under instruction in the beginning, namely Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and the robust blacksmith. On Wednesday afternoon, one of the trustees told me that he 'phoned to their preacher at Fenholloway Springs that there would be no prayer meeting that week; and that "he may be down to hear you." Indeed, the next night he came accompanied by his wife. I think he was

somewhat disappointed when I did not ask him to come with me on the rostrum. However both of them joined the choir, and if I must say it to myself, he heard a good Methodist sermon that night for I preached on hell. Many of the questions remained unanswered that week for lack of time; moreover I knew that I would be back soon again and I told them so to their great delight.

The following week I received a note from the preacher to the effect that if I wished to use the church at Springdale again I must obtain permission from his presiding elder, who lived in Tallahassee. I answered on a postal card that I was preaching for the people of Springdale who owned the building. I had hoped to repeat the visit there without his knowledge. Some one obviously watched for my reappearance, for, when I came again the church door was discovered securely locked and the preacher with the key absent from his charge. Some of the non-Catholics wanted to break in but the Catholics with me condemned such an action. Little advertising was needed this time and the crowd came to the school house instead. My preacher friend entertained three including his wife at his prayer meeting on Wednesday. After his return to the boarding house he complained to the mistress that I no doubt said some hard things about him. "Brother," she snapped, "that man seems to have other things to talk about than you and your actions. He never even mentioned the mean way you treated him." Thenceforth she ceased to be a member of his flock, and that also was the reason that he got a change of air after lodging an unjust accusation against Mr. O'Rourke and attempting his dismissal from the mill. A few weeks later I met Mr. Roch, the president of the sawmill, at Live Oak. "So, Father," he began jokingly, "you are the man who made all that trouble in Springdale." What trouble?" I inquired. "Oh, never mind; I know all about it now." Then he went on to tell me that they had made a mistake by erecting the church unknowingly on the property owned by the Methodists. "How about putting up a church of your own? I will give an acre of ground and \$500 toward the building." "But not at Springdale," I objected; "I want a church at Perry." For I knew that in

a few years when the timber was exhausted there would be no Springdale. "All right!" agreed Mr. Roch, and after the lapse of only three weeks we worshipped in a Catholic "church" at Perry. Our benefactor in spite of his name was a Canadian of French descent who had no religious affiliations.



Church of Immaculate Conception, Perry, Florida. Erected by Fr. Bresnahan, 1918  
Perry then became the most important mission attached to Tallahassee, and the converts of Springdale as regards their fidelity are compeers to those any where else. Mr. Frank Hiers always harbored the priest at his home and became a Catholic; Mrs. McKenna, known for her piety, was the faithful guardian and decorator of the sacred edifice which she kept scrupulously clean. Moreover, in spite of her years, she never failed to attend to every Catechetical instruction in the absence of the priest.

I also gave a little mission at Carbur, seventeen miles south of Perry, but nothing startling awaited us there; and the same is true of one given in the neighboring county of Lafayette where the Staffords then lived, except that the hall there used was blown from its pillared foundation by a storm and that the small interested crowd was perturbed.

The missionary then being obliged to depart he left for Live Oak amid thunder, lightning, and rain, and had the unspeakable delight of seeing the bolts playing pranks with the pine trees that lined the sand roads he was travelling. For, be it known, the hard surfaced roads that now honeycomb Florida were hardly dreamed of in those good old days.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### Parish Work in South Jacksonville and Tillman

In 1917 I was ordered to fill the vacancy at South Jacksonville and try to build up the recently established parish there. My predecessor, the Rev. Patrick Barry, now Bishop Barry, had done fine work there and with the help of friends in Jacksonville and donations from the Catholic Church Extension Society he succeeded in building a church and rectory.



K. of C. Parade in South Jacksonville, 1918

The blessing or satisfaction of a salary was never his, however, and the parish labored under a debt. I introduced myself with a mission of a week and at its close I declared my

policy. My appeal to the parishioners was not in vain. The debt was soon under control and the pastor comfortably supported. Converts began to come in after the mission, one of them being my housekeeper; and during the six and one half years I spent there I was scarcely ever without some kind of an instruction class. Although South Jacksonville had the reputation of being the headquarters of the "gardeens", and afterwards, of the three K's, these deluded ones never bothered me. Once an attempt was made to burn the church; but it was soon evident that it was the work of an outsider whose object was robbery. All he got was my watch and chain. Eventually one-third of the congregation consisted of converts and splendid Catholics. A magnificent school build-



Parochial School at South Jacksonville

ing was erected in 1923 and put in charge of the Sisters of St. Joseph. That same year 110 pupils were enrolled.

In 1924 I was compelled to resign my pastorate in South Jacksonville owing to ill health. After a six months' leave of absence, Bishop Barry thought I was again able to start a new parish and so he sent me to **Tillman** with Rockledge as a mission and Malabar and Melbourne as stations. Tillman, soon to be known as Palm Bay, was merely a flag station of the Florida East Coast Railway. It had no telephone or

telegraph office and no electric light nearer than three miles; but I certainly found it Catholic. The inhabitants were mostly Germans and Bohemians. The evening services drew as many worshippers as the morning Mass although quite a contingent of them have to come eight or ten miles. My home was a room over a garage built some years before by Father Gabriel, O.S.B., of Fort Pierce, who then claimed this as one of his numerous missions. There being no restaurant, nor even a boarding house nearby I have to "fare" as best I can; nevertheless my sojourn here is most enjoyable and then, too, "my people" were with me from the beginning. The few non-Catholics of Tillman join their neighbors in coming to church. Two of them became Catholics shortly after my arrival here and even the school teachers in the public school nearby were taking instructions until the school closed. In the regular Catechism class we had sixty children and in April of this year, 1925, Bishop Barry confirmed a class of seventy-two, including thirty adults, in our St. Joseph's church. The Holy Name Society, recently established, numbers fifty and the Altar Society is even larger. The Sodality of the Blessed Virgin consists of only fifteen, but active workers, and many of the young ladies join the Sisterhoods.

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## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### Some Sick Calls

It is not my intention to weary the reader with an account of calls that are ordinarily made by a priest in the discharge of his pastoral duties. But I will record a few rare cases to give the lay reader an idea of what a missionary priest is sometimes called upon to do. The Tallahassee or northwestern district of the Diocese of St. Augustine was for some years without a resident priest and hence one of the Clergy at the Ancient City or Jacksonville visited there at intervals. During that period a call came in that old Pat Conniff was dangerously ill and wished to see a priest. As indicated in another chapter (5) Pat and his family lived some miles from Aucilla. This native of Ireland was a veteran Confederate soldier well respected for his bravery

which he once displayed when his commanding officer had been wounded, by carrying him on his back to a place of safety. Though very poor and illiterate he was seemingly strong in his faith; his three sons had been baptized and his good wife had become a Catholic. Now, as I was supposed to be well acquainted with the district and Pat, the call was turned over to me. It meant a journey of 160 miles from St. Augustine, 110 of them behind a slow woodburner over the Seaboard Air Line railroad.

Passing through Jacksonville I borrowed a revolver as I expected to stay in the woods that night after reaching Aucilla at one A.M., and wild cats are not always agreeable companions. Fortunately, after alighting from the tiresome train, I sighted a lone negro and approaching him I found him afraid of me when I pulled out a silver match box. But he answered my questions and kindly lead me to a house wherein, after much knocking, I secured lodging, and arranged for conveyance for five o'clock. A mule team was promptly in readiness and the driver after sizing me up as an honest looking person, became an agreeable companion. To my great surprise he told me that Pat had joined the Baptist church during a recent revival, and to convince me he also said that he was present when my friend was dipped. About six o'clock we reached Pat's. He was the only one awake in the house and ready to start fire for breakfast. He was glad to see me and told me of the bad spell of vertigo he had the other day, but that it passed away and he felt much better. I then broached the subject of his apostacy. Admitting that he allowed himself to be immersed, he protested that he had any intention of leaving the Catholic Church. "You see, Father, it was this way; these folks have been reading me the Bible, how Christ went into the water and came out again; but I am still a Catholic; and I do be telling these people around here how Jackaria (Zachary) was a Catholic priest who was killed between the temple and the altar, and that the people used to go to him to learn like we go to you, and he had a sort of ointment that he rubbed on them like you priests do to the sick. Ain't I right, Father?" Everything was soon ready for Mass at which Betty and her son, Tom, re-

ceived holy Communion. Another son, John, who lived nearby, also had been called in. I soon learned that he was an ignorant cracker, who knew everything. The ever-present quid was between his jaws; now and then I heard the sizzle from the fireplace as he sprinkled it with effusions of juice. His great ambition was to become a preacher, for he disliked hard work. I remained several days at Pat's, setting everything right and discoursing for the family and neighbors in Pat's kitchen every evening. Tom's wife applied for special instructions.

It has been stated without fear of contradiction that even the wildest animals will protect their young and guard their bodies even in death; but when you have read my next account of another sick call, you will wonder if there was not something of the truth in an account recently given by a humorist of a monkey conference in the African jungles, in which the members unanimously put a vote of confidence in a well known American, who is combatting the theory of evolution.

I had just returned to headquarters from a mission when word reached me that a certain man was very ill. I knew him well as one steadfastly professing the Catholic Faith; he had his child baptized and promised to come to his duties. His wife however was of no faith. I obeyed immediately and found him in the last stages of malignant typhoid fever, lying on the strings of a cot and without a net to keep off the flies, that seemed to devour him. Not far from his side was a little coffin containing the corpse of the baptized infant. The place was otherwise deserted. Finally the wife and mother, who had been visiting neighbors appeared at the door and said: "How dee!" "Well", I said; but your husband is very sick." "Yes, sirree," she agreed readily. "The doctor says he is dying." "Let us put him in that bed," I suggested pointing to a comfortable one in the room. "Oh, no! he'd spoil that bed," was the curt reply and she left us. I prepared the man to meet his God. He was conscious yet for a long time, and with the help of friends we made his short stay with us as comfortable as possible. He died that night. When the undertaker with his assistant, the altar boy

and myself reached the house the next afternoon, we were followed by the mother and wife returning from a visit. Whilst I read the prayers she swept the kitchen, having closed the door dividing us. We had two autos at the door, but our kind invitation to take her to the cemetery was spurned and so we four were the only attendants at the funeral of her husband and child. In its next issue the newspaper announced her marriage to another.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY

### Some Politicians We Have Met

I was at my headquarters, Tallahassee, when Mr. Catts was elected governor of our Sunny State. Nearly everybody in the United States has heard of Catts. Some, who knew him not, took delight in telling their neighbors that he was an ignoramus. I am here to tell that Catts was not an ignoramus and that, of all the men I have heard speak in public, he was one of the best (to use a trite phrase) to size up an audience. During his campaign I took the opportunity a few times to hear him: Not one tirade was heard against the Catholics; for, either he felt that he was addressing an intelligent and public spirited audience, or he dreaded interruptions from yours-truly whom he could not fail to recognize in the crowd. I recall especially one of his efforts in the school auditorium at Tallahassee, where he found it difficult to procure some one even to introduce him. He began by telling us that he realized that not one present would give him a first choice vote at the primary, and so begged for a second choice vote, explaining that he expected to live with us and wanted to be friends with his neighbors, and then gave his reasons why he knew that he would be elected. He further informed us how he had been in places where the sound of a railroad whistle had never been heard by voters, who were ignorant of the names of his opposing candidates; that he slept in the beds used by crackers and bedbugs. that he had ploughed with these country folk and having noticed that they wore no shoes he also went barefoot; and, that he kissed their babies when they were clean, and patted the others. "These

people," he concluded, "know Sidney J. Catts and they will vote for him only and they will elect him." Well, he was right, and, a political clique that then had everything its own way in the state and had to be ousted, influenced many public spirited citizens to choose Catts for a change.

On the morning after the primary that decided the election I went as usual for breakfast at the hotel. Next to my regular table I saw a non-Catholic friend of mine from Jacksonville whom I greeted with a handshake as I jokingly questioned: "Well, Judge; how do you like our new Governor?" The smile left the judge's face. Then I beheld my friend Catts close by, facing me. He was about to leave, but over he came with outstretched hand and introduced himself even calling me by name prefixed with "brother." I reciprocated unhesitatingly and remarked that I would like to have a little chat with him some time. "Any time you wish, brother," and he was gone. As I left a little later I met him alone on the veranda, and immediately assured him that personally I had nothing against him, and that I never heard him attack the Church; but that, on the other hand, I have been informed by non-Catholic friends of mine and political friends of his, that in places where Catholics were unknown, he had told his audiences things about the Pope and Catholics in general, he knew to be false. "Now," I said, "How can you, a Baptist preacher, on whom these country people look as a teacher of the truth, reconcile your conscience?" "But, brother," he smiled, "it was all politics. Didn't Broward tell the people during his campaign that he would drain the Everglades and give them land for nothing if they elected him; and he was elected on that issue!" "God pity you!" I said and left him in disgust. But, after all, was Mr. Catts much worse than some other unscrupulous politicians, even some called Catholic, who at intervals silence their conscience for political preferment? Many of the calumnies attributed to him were really not his, but the vomitings of a polecat that had been imported into this fair State from the oil region camps of Pennsylvania and who wanted easy money from poor dupes!

During this Catts campaign word reached me that some

of his lieutenants lead by a man named Swearingen of Jacksonville were coming to Tallahassee to speak in behalf of Catts and that I might expect some trouble. But I always liked a little trouble even if concomitant with a fight and so, although advised by venerable professor Sheats, State Superintendent of Public Instruction and other notable friends not to heed them, I went to the campaign hall. The speaking had already begun so I seated myself in the rear. The orator was a local "rat" by the name of M— S— who obviously did not see me enter; for, the first thing I heard him say was that he knew for a fact that the Archbishops of the United States had called upon the Catholics to vote against Woodrow Wilson and the Democratic ticket. I immediately arose, slowly walked up the aisle, stood for a moment, and looked at M— S—, whom I knew well. He paused; and then changed the tenor of his speech. While pausing, as a country man afterwards remarked, he looked as if he wanted a hole to crawl through. Having taken a front seat I noticed two or three gentlemen approach and whisper something to Swearingen, the principal speaker of the evening. As such he ignored the Church, which did not surprise me. He did venture a joke that fell flat, and this made me laugh more heartily than my co-auditors some of whom did not even catch the point of the joke. There were few Catholics in the audience; but I knew the Tallahasseeans—truly Southern, chivalrous, hospitable and fair-minded. Not long afterwards I had occasion to make M— S—, who was an editor, (save the mark), retract some false statements about the Church that appeared in his sheet and that, he audaciously claimed, were published without his knowledge. Politics are not always crooked, but then, too, they are not always straight; and it would be well for people in glass houses to remember the rule about throwing stones.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### Among The Negroes

Soon after the church at Madison had been built (1908) and before it was blessed a delegation of colored folks in town,

one of whom was Catholic, called on me to give them a mission. They had heard of the success of the mission for the whites, recorded in Chapter Two. I agreed to do what I could for them and that was to preach to them for a week in the new church. Madison county was by no means an agreeable place at that time for negroes to live. Their own race had furnished a tough element; then, too, there was a sprinkling of white trash, as they called them. Lynchings were by no means infrequent either. Hoping to do good, however, I took the risk and faced a dreaded danger. The lectures were daily more and more attended. I exhorted them to bring their own hymn books and congregational singing resulted. Everything looked promising; but one morning towards the middle of the week, as I had reached the church to say Mass, I found an unsigned notice on the door to the effect that if I wished to live I must leave town or else give up preaching to the negroes. I took the notice to the mayor and he became more indignant than I was. At first he counselled me to discontinue the lectures; but considering the placard an act of a coward, he advised me to the contrary, and assured me that in his opinion no one would do me any personal harm. He finally cautioned: "Don't sleep in the room (sacristy) behind the church and look out that they do not shoot out the lights while you are preaching. Our night policeman will be close at hand." I kept on with all my services, with a newly secured revolver, ever ready but screened from the view of the hearers. Mr. John Wadsworth, armed, guarded the front door, Mr. J. L. Johnson, my first convert, toted his gun in the sacristy, and the policeman was in sight, but nothing happened, and the colored folks in blissful ignorance came faithfully to the end of the week never suspecting that any thing was threatening. The editors of the two weekly papers then at Madison agreed to publish whatever articles I would write. That the author or authors of that unwarranted notice were cowards was plainly evident from the fact that they did not come forward after reading the scathing article I put in the newspapers, and I am here to say that I did not spare those caitiffs. I fear, however, that the negroes got scared; for, never after that did they darken the door of our church.

When I first came to Florida I had the idea of many Northerners that the negro was not treated with proper consideration in the South. That idea was erroneous and now I am convinced that the Southern gentleman understands what is best for his colored neighbor and accordingly does treat him justly. Take for instance in the counties of Leon and Jefferson, and in and around the towns of Tallahassee and Monticello, where you find the Southern gentlemen, you find the negroes prosperous and successful, ever and always keeping their place, and always showing the highest respect to their gentle neighbors. The negro will invariably respect any white who treats him with consideration, and the captains and colonels of Dixie land, who have studied him, know that as well as they and give him his due. Anent religion the negro is yet a puzzle to many of us. We find many of them good, practical Catholics when living in a community where Catholics prevail, like at St. Augustine. There they have a splendid church of their own and support their pastor. Secret societies are a dominating feature that debar many from embracing the Faith of our Savior; and then, too, the lax state marriage laws make so many of them adhere to the sects that utterly fail in enforcing or even inculcating Christian morality.

During the time I was making my home at Sanford I determined to attempt once more, to preach among my negro neighbors. I went amongst them in their own section of the town, told them of my plans, rented one of their churches for a week, and with the assistance of an exemplary colored Catholic of the parish church, I advertised the proposed mission quite extensively. Besides the limited number of the members of the rented church, but a handful of "outsiders" responded to the invitation, and these latter even labored under the impression the whole week that, like the so-called evangelist, I had come to encourage them to membership of the church in which they had been listening. Well, I never bothered them in the future. As a "peroration" I will now report the novel experience I had the first night of that mission. Wishing to encourage congregational singing, as usual, I called out the number of a hymn; silence reigned while the large white eyes of the assembled darkies stared at me. Then a man they called "deacon" observing my per-

plexity accosted me with: "Brother, read the first line of that hymn for us," which I did. Then the "music" started without an instrument. One good sister leading, the congregation took up the first word of that hymn and carried it through the scale backward and forward and upward and downward. Then they invented new notes, and I believe, took up the individual letters of that word and sang them in like fashion. This was a matter of at least five minutes. I sat down and pondered and began to surmise that they were planning to get rid of me in a painless manner. But I waited on and when they were about to start on the fourth word my patience was exhausted. I stood up and gently told them that will suffice, made the sign of the Cross, and then preached the sermon. To this day I can see the deacon nodding continuously and the good sisters swaying to and fro as they occasionally muttered: "Amen, Lord!" "That's right, brother," and so on. That was similar to other experiences that occurred during some missions given in outlying districts of the State. I confess it helped to encourage the preacher to become eloquent if not oratorical. Thenceforth I limited the singing to one word and perhaps that was another reason why the crowd diminished before the close of certain missions.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### The Rush to Florida, Bigotry, Pinecastle and Zellwood

Doubtless many of my readers, who have persevered thus far, are wondering why I have not indulged in some remarks about what some style the Florida boom. Well this little book was not written to advertise Florida from a material standpoint. The daily papers have said enough and magazine articles have done their part well. To us, who have lived in Florida for many years and enjoyed it's incomparable climate, it looks as if Florida had just been discovered. Pastors are at their wits end to accommodate the crowds that now throng their churches and new parishes are springing up throughout the State. People come in the summer, as well as in the winter, and the majority seem to be anxious to make their home here. What's the answer? The wonderful climate is

the principle cause. American prosperity has made it possible for many, to own winter and summer homes. At least three crops can be raised during the year by Florida farmers, for like all states we have good land as well as bad in Florida. During the past year I have visited farmers in Florida, who never clear less than a thousand dollars an acre on one crop alone each year. Settlers must be on their guard on selecting farming sites for as a friend of mine remarked, there are sections so poor that if a community wished a cemetery, they ought to see the place well fenced and then highly fertilized if they expect the dead to rise on the last day.

Cities and towns are being born weekly in this state at the present writing. Former villages are now flourishing cities since the new discovery of Florida. To me it is not strange to see that the communities that have flourished the most are those that formerly showed very little bigotry and no narrow mindedness. Elsewhere I have stated that bigotry generally springs from ignorance and I am loth to admit its source in demoniac possession. Yet I have met a few bigots who could not plead ignorance and in whom the diabolical influence is the only explanation.

Oh yes, there is a town in Florida called Pinecastle. It is five miles from Orlando on the Kissimmee road. During my stay at Sanford, Father Fox of Orlando invited me to give a mission there. The good Father accompanied me to the scene of my labors and we started work Sunday night in the auditorium of the school building. The attendance was surprisingly large and the interest shown was remarkable. Accompanied by some of my altar boys including James Higgins, now a prominent resident of Haines City, I motored to Pinecastle every evening whilst the mission lasted. Questions of interest poured in. They were about as usual and easily answered, and the audience increased. Wednesday evening, however, I had a surprise that upset all of us. On my way through Orlando I called on Father Fox, to take him along and I found him down indeed. He had received a telegram from a friend of ours, Mr. Phillips, a non-Catholic and member of the local school board telling him that we would find the auditorium closed to us. Father Fox advised my return

to Sanford, but the boys with me were as enthusiastic about going on as I was, so we went. In the school yard there was assembled a goodly crowd but the building was in darkness. Then Mr. Phillips (I hope he sees this) came to me with tears in his eyes and told me what happened. It seems that some good ladies of the community in a fit of mistaken zeal, thought it necessary to get up a petition protesting against our use of the school building. A majority of the citizens were persuaded to sign "Principally out of fear of the zealots" as our friend expressed it, and the school committee had no alternative left. At the request of my audience I ascended the steps at the school door and answered the questions left over from the preceding nights. With a few words of thanks for their reception I left them to the mercy of the Catholic literature I always carried for distribution. Very few Catholics ever lived in Pinecastle and it is noticeable that it has not shared to any great extent in the prosperity that has come since to other communities in Florida.

**Zellwood** was an aftermath of the reception at Pinecastle, for a short time afterwards an important meeting of the county school board was held and the matter of Catholics using a school building was brought up. It was pointed out that school buildings in small communities were also social centers and that other churches used them for their religious gatherings. One member of the board protested very strongly against the use by Catholics: "for" he said as I learned later, "my fathers in Scotland fought and bled because of Catholic persecution". The chairman of the board, Mr. Edwards, himself of Scotch descent and then a resident of Zellwood, called the attention of this member to his mistake. The school history was referred to and our friend showed them that the persecution of the Presbyterians was engineered by the Church of England, and not by the Catholics. The County Board of Orange County then went on record by conceding that the Catholics had just as good a right as any other denomination to use the school buildings in that county. Mr. Edwards not only told Father Fox of the decision of the board, but also invited me to come and use the school building at Zellwood.

I gladly accepted the invitation and no Catholic could have treated me more hospitably than did this good Presbyterian. I put up at a small hotel there, and as there were no Catholics in the immediate neighborhood every morning I traveled five or six miles to offer Mass at a Catholic home. From the very beginning the attendance taxed the school building and under the leadership of Mr. Edwards a choir was organized, made up mostly of the men of the Community. This good friend went me even one better for on Friday of that week when he invited me to dinner at his home he insisted that all the family eat fish, which was procured especially in my honor.

Florida's Everglades seem to touch this little hamlet, for nearby there something that looks like an Irish bog. The black peat therein seemed to be very fertile and vegetables raised there by some of the gardeners were amongst the finest I have ever seen. I remember especially the immense cabbages that I saw carried away. The mission was a success insofar as it helped to dispel prejudice, at least for the time being. The pity is that such missions are not being followed up, for the harvest has not always time to ripen before the enemy comes and again sows some cockle.

Now I am almost finished with my narrative. Designedly I have omitted the accounts of some missions as they are referred to in the "Brief History of the Churches of the Diocese of Saint Augustine, Florida," which is being compiled by one of the Benedictine Fathers of St. Leo Abbey, Saint Leo, Florida.

The reader may thank him and the Rt. Rev. Abbot Francis, O.S.B., D.D., if he derives any profit from the perusal of my experiences; for they have been almost alone in encouraging me to pen them,—and I am doing so whilst enjoying the hospitality of St. Leo's.

My last word is to the young levite, about to leave the seminary. His superiors have encouraged him to cultivate a hobby, that he may be helped through the monotony of

parish work. I know of none better than to lecture occasionally to non-Catholics in the country places around his future parish. The country people are naturally religiously inclined and he can always secure some building, even if it is only a home or barn for the noble work. He will find it most fascinating, meritorious and beneficial for all concerned.

"THEY WHO INSTRUCT OTHERS TO JUSTICE  
SHALL SHINE LIKE STARS FOR ALL ETERNITY."

The end.

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## APPENDIX

### St. Petersburg and the Knights of Columbus

In the year 1913 I visited St. Petersburg for the first time. I was then on my way from Sanford to take up headquarters in Tallahassee for the second time. Our Capital city had been without a resident priest for some years, and soon an important Session of our State Legislature, to which I have already referred, would open. Bishop Curley asked me to make the change after a short holiday. From the first visit, St. Petersburg caught my fancy and it has never lost it. A new Church, dedicated to God under the title of Our Lady of Grace had just been erected at Fourth Street and Third Avenue South, by the Jesuit Fathers of Tampa, who attended the town still small, as one of their many missions. Father Tyrell, S.J., one of Florida's best known missionaries lent me his key. I slept in the sacristy of the Church since known



St. Mary's Church, St. Petersburg, Fla.

as St. Mary's, offered Mass the next morning, and had breakfast at the old Detroit Hotel.

In 1925 Bishop Barry said, "No more mission-giving for you" and sent me to St. Petersburg to assist in a parish started about four years before. Father O'Riordan gave me a hearty welcome, and pointed out a school building with auditorium at Nineteenth Avenue and Twelfth Street North. St. Petersburg was putting on the appearance of a real modern city and Christmas Day I read Mass for the first time in the auditorium, now called St. Paul's Church, and looked upon it as my special charge and so it continued to be for four years thereafter.

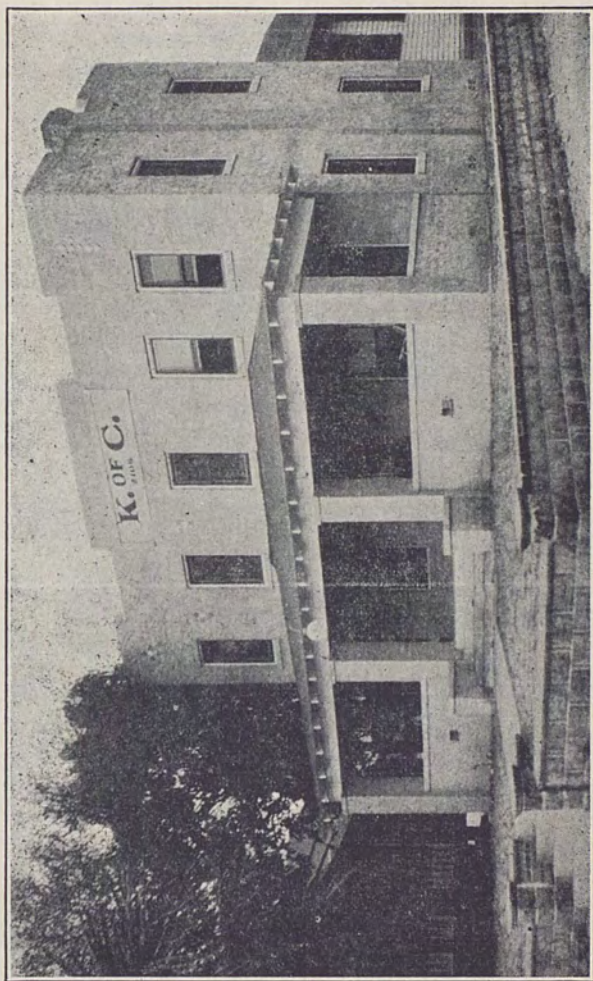
A few incidents deserve mention here as illustrating the value of an organization like the Knights of Columbus.

On my arrival in St. Pete I was honored by appointment as Chaplain of the local Council, which was hard pressed for existence and in danger of losing the charter, that was theirs, even before St. Petersburg had been raised to the dignity of a parish. Helped by the "boom", then in Florida, we took on new life. At a well attended meeting, one of the brothers reminded us that the Veterans of the Spanish American War would soon convene in our city, and he had been told that the Catholics were not invited to entertain the delegates, because Spain was a Catholic country. Our members were truly aroused that night, and a committee was immediately appointed to call on the "bigots." Bigots however they were not, as we soon found out, but simply misinformed by a man, who ought to have known better. He apologized to the Convention Welcome Committee and to the K. of C. who were given a very important part to play, when the Veterans arrived. Our hall was thrown open for services and we had the pleasure and honor one evening of entertaining among others the distinguished Governor Brandon of Alabama, who finished a very entertaining speech by giving the yell that made him famous in the Democratic Convention of 1924, when he persisted, to the very end, every time Alabama was called, in shouting "Alabama casts—votes for Underwood".

November the eleventh was not far off, and a motion was made in the council room, that the K. of C. take part in

the Armistice Day parade. Quite a number of the members at first refused to consider it, and the reasons they gave may be summed up briefly. It seems that in 1924 a large number of men, wearing pillow cases over their heads, and wrapped in winding sheets had marched on Central Ave., scaring children and other timid persons. Our men did not want to be seen in the company of such. They were branded by some as men of evil design, but if the onlookers at that parade had taken their eyes from the pillow cases and fixed them on the shoes, they would see that the majority of the marchers were honest country men, who had become the victims of unscrupulous politicians and grafters. Visiting knights, who were in the hall that evening, asked for permission to speak, and thanks to them my motion prevailed. Brother White of Baltimore, Md., deserves special mention here, for his work in organizing, caused two hundred and twenty five men (some non-Catholics) to march on November 11th under the banner of the Cross, the Nation's Flag, and the K. of C. insignia. The pillow case brigade did not appear and the ghost was laid. St. Petersburg Council owns its own hall and thus stands alone among the councils in the State and perhaps in the South. It has served many purposes, and has been given rent free for church festivals. It had often been used for Mass, when old St. Mary's could not accommodate the crowds, and when this Church (that was new in 1913), was torn down in 1928, the K. of C. hall had all the appearance of a parish Church, for daily Mass was offered there and there was never a word of charging rent even though it was at that time heavily mortgaged.

With the opening of St. Paul's Church towards the end of 1925, I again felt the mission urge, so I started an independent unit with altar society separate from St. Mary's, daily Mass and Confession at regular hours, and Benediction on Sundays and other festivals. The afternoons' being sometimes irksome, I experimented in a way, that I suggest to other priests. I announced that in future I would instruct the school children, who had been confirmed, every afternoon from three o'clock until all were attended to. They came according to their grades and the venture was most successful. This was mission work that counted, for almost all the Cath-



Knights of Columbus Hall, St. Petersburg, Fla.

olic children attended, and very often other children came with them to listen, and join in the games we played to relieve the monotony of study. For four years this went on until a young priest, Father Enright, was sent to take charge of St. Paul's as a separate parish. With the ardour of youth which "must be served" he went to work and as our "boom" had burst and "depression" threatened his first year was not easy in a financial way. In 1930 came the Sisters of St. Francis to use the school rooms, and their self-sacrifice worked a notable change for the better, and as I write over three hundred children are under their care in the only Catholic school in St. Petersburg.

My opportunity for work was becoming less, but there was still the partly built Church of St. Joseph, on Lakeview Avenue and Twenty-First Street South. I had the honor of reading Mass there for the first time in February, 1928, and during the tourist seasons with the help of visiting priests we were able to have services there on Sundays.

Towards the end of 1929 St. Joseph's went through some changes and soon it had all the appearance of a parish unit. Daily Mass, Confessions, etc., as we had at St. Paul's. The afternoon instruction class was again a successful feature, and to keep me from walking, the Catholics of St. Petersburg gave me an Oldsmobile that was and is still a great help. In the fall of 1930 I was relieved of St. Joseph's by the appointment of Father Clasby to make it an independent parish. After twenty seven years in the priesthood, I find myself a full fledged assistant for the first time. Other priests have waited about as long to become pastors. What a change, no more financial responsibilities, nor sermons always touching on money. So many young men trying at least to meet the interest payment, due on a seemingly impossible debt, that resulted generally from a lack of foresight on the part of someone, who was really ordained to offer Mass, administer the sacraments, and preach the Word of God.

In 1928 I celebrated my silver jubilee as a priest and now in 1931 I am enjoying a real jubilee rejoicing that I have more time to attend to my own soul; my preaching means instruction for the people, and they need it everywhere, for too

often we discover many have forgotten what they learned in childhood. Instructing converts is always interesting and so are the other real priestly duties.

St. Petersburg now has seven priests and three parishes where before we were only two, and of course the ever increasing population has more attention. There are a few things that I regret. The Catholic Boy Scout Troop, once the best in Pinellas County, under the auspices of the K. of C. council has been disbanded, and we have also found it nigh impossible to organize a basketball team, like the teams we won city championships with in former years.

With all this I manage to keep busy even though I miss



S.S.A.A. Basketball Champs of '28-'29, St. Petersburg, Fla.

the instruction classes in the afternoon. My pen is busier than it has been for some years past. Years back I wrote some tales of the missions for "Extension Magazine" and "The Missionary" that bore fruit. Now I have published a booklet entitled "Who and What is a Catholic"? a complete summary of Catholic belief and practice within sixty-six pages containing no apologies, excuses or arguments. Many a time on my missionary journey I wished for such a booklet.

It is divided into three parts: First, the Apostle's Creed or the Christian's Declaration of Independence; Second, the Ten Commandments or the Christian Constitution, and the Six Precepts of the Church, which we may call the Amendments to Our Constitution; Third, the Christian Treasury containing the Graces of God and explaining how by prayer and the seven keys of the Sacraments we can obtain effective entrance into that Treasury. The Sacramentals are also explained and their place in the plan of salvation is clearly set forth.

Now my book giving at least an outline of my missionary experiences is coming towards its end and I hope my object in writing it has not been misunderstood. The need of missionary preaching in our land is very evident on all sides.

I was one of the first two Missionaries to Non Catholics in Florida. My co-worker Father Aloysius Delabar, O.S.B., was called to his reward many years ago. I am the last thus far, who has held the title of "Diocesan Missionary to Non Catholics" and for that I am truly sorry.

The end.









