

A Brief History of the Vista

*"The Kingdom of God is like a buried treasure
which a man found in a field . . .*

*Rejoicing in his find he went and sold all he had
And bought that field." Matt. 13:44*

Fr. Joseph A. Fischer, pastor of Our Lady of Good Hope Parish in Milwaukee and founder of the Vista, discovered a "treasure" when he realized the value of taking youngsters to a place where they could be in touch with nature while learning through various activities how Christians are to bring Christ's love to others

After 21 years of busing youngsters to various campsites in northern Wisconsin and Michigan, Father Fischer set out to establish a permanent camp within the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. The Vista was established and incorporated on July 24, 1961. That same year 123 acres of farm land was purchased at Crooked Lake for \$17,500 and renovation was initiated on the two farm houses and a 30 bed dormitory. A tent was erected as a chapel and one was also used as a dining hall.

Father Fischer learned shortly after, that the State Conservation Commission intended to condemn the land and incorporate it into the state park. After two years of hearings and discussions with state officials and numerous meetings with people interested in the camp, the voices of the friends of the Vista were heard. In 1964 the 98.5 present site on Cedar Lake was offered to Father Fischer along with a payment of \$31,000. He accepted the offer and construction was begun on the new Vista.

On July 17, 1964, Vista Wee Yon Wa Untka (Sioux Indian for "Our Lady of Hope") was blessed and dedicated to Our Lady of Hope. Archbishop William E. Cousins presided at the dedication.

An adjoining 122 acre farm was purchased in 1967 for \$21,500. Father Fischer left Our Lady of Good Hope Parish in 1967 and was appointed pastor of Our Lady of Angels Parish, Armstrong, only three miles from the Vista

HISTORY OF

VISTA WEE YON WA UNTKA, INC.

- 1961 Father Joseph A. Fischer purchased 123 acres of farm land on Crooked Lake (east of Dundee) from William A. Koch for \$17,500
- 1961 July 24 - Vista Wee Yon Wa Untka (Sioux Indian for "Our Lady of Hope") was incorporated
- 1962 The Wisconsin State Conservation Commission condemned the land with the intention of incorporating it into the State Park
- 1963 98.5 acres of land on Cedar Lake (present site of the Vista) was offered to Father Fischer by the state, along with a payment of \$31,000.
- 1963-64 Six dormitory cabins, one main lodge including kitchen and dining facilities, and one 'rectory' cabin were constructed by the J.P. Jansen Co. of Milwaukee
- 1964 July 17 - Vista Wee Yon Wa Untka was blessed and dedicated to Our Lady of Hope by Archbishop William E. Cousins
- 1967 April - An adjoining 122 acre farm was purchased for \$21,500 (present site of the "St. John Vianney Home" and the "farm house".)
- 1967 June - Father Fischer left Our Lady of Good Hope Parish and was appointed pastor of Our Lady of Angels Parish, Armstrong
- 1970 August 16 - forest fire at the south end of the Vista which burned for almost a week. Water was pumped from the lake for a week before it was finally extinguished.
- 1972-73 "Our Lady of the Vista Chapel" was erected
- 1973 August 15 - "Our Lady of the Vista Chapel" was blessed and dedicated by Archbishop William E. Cousins
- 1977 A large addition to the Dining Room was constructed with showers in the lower level and a small apartment
- 1980 June - Father Fischer retired to the Vista.
- 1980 September - Father Fischer was asked to be pastor of St. Andrew Parish, LeRoy
- 1984 February - Father Fischer retired to the Vista from diocesan work after having suffered a stroke