

# The Friendly Fisherman opens with blessings

By MARGARET RICHARD  
St. Petersburg Times Correspondent

MADEIRA BEACH — Blessing of the building and its patrons Jan. 24 highlighted the opening of The Friendly Fisherman, a new restaurant overlooking Boca Ciega Bay in John's Pass Village.

The blessing was performed by Monsignor Michael F. Dwyer of Redington Beach, retired because of ill health from the archdiocese of New York. He is a family friend of Captain Wilson Hubbard, owner of the restaurant.

In a brief "sermon," as he put it, the monsignor traced the significance of the fish in ecclesiastical history. He said in early days of persecution Christians announced worship and other gatherings by hanging a fish on the door.

He noted that fishermen were among the first Apostles, and that one, Simon, called Peter (the rock), became the first Pope. Further, that when Christ established the church, he charged all the Apostles to go forth as "fishers of men."

**IN CONCLUSION**, the monsignor presented a commemorative plaque to Captain Hubbard. Designed of polished wood, it bears a raised carving of a fish above an inscription in Greek. Translated, the letters ICHTHYS mean "Jesus Christ, son of God, Savior."

When the ceremony was concluded, Captain Hubbard was heard to comment: "This is the only place where you can get food and blessed at the same time."

Community leaders joining with the Hubbard family, well-wishers and patrons for opening day festivities included members of the board of the Madeira-Redington Beaches Chamber of Commerce and Madeira Beach city officials.

Heading the delegation was Mayor Raymond W. Hanke Jr. and commissioners J. Kenneth Jacobsen, Marlin Eldred and Saul Gitlin.

For its grand opening the restaurant advertised "free beer with all dinners and smoked-fish dinners at half-price." When the smoked fish ran out, patrons were given "rain checks" enabling them to return at another time to take advantage of this special.

**DESIGNED BY** a son-in-law, Robert McDole of St. Petersburg, the restaurant is built on pilings and constructed of cedar and cypress to make it "impervious to all bugs," Captain Hubbard said.

Located at 150 128th Ave. W, The Friendly Fisherman offers a menu of fish "brought in daily in our own boats" and served smoked, fried and steamed. Also available are steaks, sandwiches and beverages.

From 1978



Clipped By:

gelewisiv

Thu, Sep 9, 2021