

# Mass Will Be Annual Affair

GOETZVILLE (UPI) — The first Roman Catholic mass for snowmobiles went so well, they're going to make it an annual affair.

The Rev. Fr. Anthony J. Polakowski hit on the idea of holding a religious service for his snowmobiling parishioners a week ago. It's really not so strange, he says, since mass has been said for cars, boats and ships.

And besides most of his parishioners traveled by snowmobile to church in this little Upper Peninsula community. Sometimes it was the only way.

So Fr. Polakowski put on his crash helmet and extra

clothing under his cleric garb, and said mass before an altar carved out of snow outside the St. Stanislaus Kostka Church.

A hundred or more Catholics came from miles around. About half of them sat in their snowmobiles.

At the conclusion of the service, the snowmobilers brought their vehicles before the 34-year-old pastor to be blessed with holy water.

It was the first time Fr. Polakowski or probably anyone else had said such a service. But because of its success, he now plans to make an annual event of it, if only "to keep something going in wintertime for our small parish here.

Fr. Polakowski, who left his birthplace of Lubonin, Poland in 1950 to come to the United States, has been pastor of the only church in this northern Michigan farming community some 50 miles southeast of Sault Ste. Marie, since August of last year.

Previous to that, he served as chaplain at a veteran's hospital in the Upper Peninsula community of Iron Mountain.

"I love winter," he explained when asked why he chose the cold and often snowbound northern reaches of Michigan for his home.

The day he held his "snowmobile mass," four feet of snow lay on the ground. The altar was carved out of an eight-foot snowbank by some of his young parishioners. It has since melted.

Fr. Polakowski, who drives a snowmobile in the winter and rides a motorbike during the summer, said he doesn't consider blessing snowmobiles any more unusual than blessing any other vehicle.

"The idea of blessing any vehicle," he said, "is to make people use it according to God's wishes — safely."



**SNOWMOBILES BLESSED** — The Rev. Fr. Anthony J. Polakowski, wearing a crash helmet in addition to his cleric garb, blesses snowmobiles with holy water at St. Stanislaus Kostka Catholic Church at Goetzville, in eastern Chippewa County of the Upper Peninsula. Fr. Polakowski said the first mass for snowmobiles went so well the church plans to make it an annual event. UPI Telephoto.