

Priest is shot

Wounded fending off 2 muggers

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Daily News Staff Writers

A Catholic priest dedicated to helping drug addicts and the homeless routed two robbers in Brooklyn yesterday by flailing at them with his briefcase, but he was shot in both legs as the muggers fled empty-handed.

The Rev. Charles Plock, 45, known as Father Charlie in his Bedford-Stuyvesant parish, was in stable condition in Kings County Hospital.

Mayor Dinkins visited the wounded priest at the hospital and received his blessing. Francis Mugavero, outgoing

bishop of Brooklyn, sent his prayers.

"I didn't even know they were following me," Plock told the Daily News in the surgery recovery room at Kings County. "I cut through a lot and they were there on Willoughby Ave. We struggled. The blond guy told his friend, 'Shoot him!'"

"They pointed the gun at my legs and they fired!" Plock said.

According to Deputy Inspector Thomas Coyne of Brooklyn North detectives, Plock was shot in the left thigh, the slug passing through both legs. The slug was not found. A second shot went wild.

Plock, who had spent Easter in Philadelphia counseling a man in drug rehabilitation, got off the BMT subway at Myrtle Ave. and Broadway and was walking to the recto-



Rev. Charles Plock

ry of St. John the Baptist Church at 75 Lewis Ave. At Lewis and Willoughby Aves., just after midnight yesterday, he was attacked by two men.

"They yelled, 'Give it up,'" the inspector said.

"One went to his rear while the second stood in front of him and tried to grab his attache case, which he flailed about him," Coyne said. Two shots rang out and the robbers fled.

"He was in civilian clothes and the muggers may not have realized he was a priest," said Coyne.

Found on sidewalk

The priest did not get a good look at the man behind him, but he described the second as black, in his 20s, about 5-feet-8 and 130 pounds, with tinted blond hair. The mugger was wearing a small gold earring in his left ear.

Coyle urged anyone with information to call (718) 574-0409.

The Rev. Thomas Hynes, the pastor, rushed out to find Plock bleeding on the sidewalk.

"He works with the real down-and-outers," Hynes said of Plock, who was a missionary in Panama for 10 years and speaks fluent Spanish. "He's the best-known and most popular priest in the parish."

Plock told The News he would continue his work.

"Someone has to work with the homeless," he said. Plock said he was mugged eight years ago when he first came to St. John's, but was not injured then.

John Vasquez, whose mother, Maria Hernandez, was shot dead by drug dealers last year, said of Plock, who officiated at her funeral, "It's sad. They don't have respect for anyone any more, priest or police. It's a shame."