



Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles A. Klauder

... 6,000 medals blessed by the Pope

Beatification Service Is Called Impressive

The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles A. Klauder, who has just returned from the beatification in Rome of Bishop John N. Neumann, CSSR., said Wednesday that attendance at the ceremonies was one of the most impressive events of his life.

Bishop Neumann was a priest here from 1836 to 1840 and later became Bishop of Philadelphia.

"Bishop Neumann has been an inspiration to me all of my life and I have tried to follow in his footsteps," said Msgr. Klauder, who is pastor of St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church, Town of Tonawanda.

"I was baptized in St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia where Bishop Neumann is buried. As a boy I prayed at his tomb. The bishop and I are the only two clergymen who have served as resident priests of this parish.

"Attending his beatification ceremonies was one of the most outstanding events of my life. I also had a long audience with Pope Paul VI. I was tremendously impressed with his kindness, geniality and conversational ability."

Brings Back Gifts

As gifts for his parishioners, Msgr. Klauder brought back 6,000 cards bearing a colorful picture of Bishop Neumann prepared for the beatification ceremonies. He also brought back 6,000 medals from the Lourdes

Cathedral in France and St. Peter's in Rome, all have been blessed by the Pope. Msgr. Klauder also brought back a gallon of Holy Water from Lourdes.

A band of Roman Catholics built a log church in 1833 in the North Bush section of Tonawanda, in the hope of getting a priest. Three years later, Bishop Neumann arrived.

Traveling by foot and on horseback the clergyman worked from dawn to dusk spreading the gospel and administering to the suffering. After he left in 1840 the church was served by missionary priests.

A new structure replaced the log church in 1850. This had been closed for 35 years when Msgr. Klauder arrived here in 1927.

"Because of my admiration for Bishop Neumann I begged the late Bishop William Turner to let me have the church," said Msgr. Klauder. "The bishop told me I would starve out here."

When Msgr. Klauder began serving the parish it consisted of 35 families. It grew to 3,000 families, was divided and now has about 2,500 families.