

Catholic Center For Negroes In Baldwin County Dedicated

Holy Cross Shrine Blessed By Bishop; Conducted By Fr. Vicent Warren, SSI

DAHPNE—Last Sunday more than 1,000 persons gathered near Daphne for the blessing and formal dedication of the Shrine of the Holy Cross, a new Catholic center for Negroes of Baldwin County.

Two years ago a 10-acre tract of land near Daphne was purchased by the Diocese with a view to establishing a Catholic mission for local Negroes. Father Vicent Warren, S.S.J., director of the Bl. Martin de Porres Hospital in Mobile, was appointed pastor in charge of this missionary work.

The first job was to provide a church. Father Warren had a

quonset building erected on the site and then had it finished with Spanish-type front and tile and stucco exterior. The altar and pews were installed and so the new St. Michael's Chapel was in existence. Regular Sunday Mass and other church services have been held in the chapel since June.

BISHOP WILLIAM D. O'BRIEN, Auxiliary of Chicago, and president of Extension Society, aided in the financing of the chapel, and it is named in memory of a mutual friend of the Bishop and Father Warren. Next came the school. Father Warren purchased a nearby building which had been used as a dance hall and tavern, and had it moved to the site. There it was remodeled into a three-room school. It is conducted by Franciscan Sisters from Baltimore, Md.

The Sisters needed a convent. This problem was solved by remodeling a house which was on

the tract of land bought. Up to the coming of the Sisters, Father Warren had been using that house as living quarters. He is now busily remodeling a barn on the site which is destined to serve as the new rectory.

THE DEDICATION CEREMONIES last Sunday opened with the celebration of Mass, attended by His Excellency, the Most Reverend Bishop. His Excellency also preached the dedicatory sermon, emphasizing his praise for the members of the new parish in their efforts to build the shrine. He expressed gratitude for the contributions of friends of the shrine.

Centering his address on the need for religion in education, the Most Reverend Bishop lauded the Franciscan Sisters for their self-sacrificing dedication in the work of educating the poor.

THE CELEBRANT of the Mass was the Very Rev. Thomas J. McNamara, S.S.J., Baltimore, Md., and Superior General of the Josephite Fathers. Mass music was provided by the Pure Heart of Mary High School choir from Mobile.

The Holy Cross Shrine is so called because a relic of the True Cross sent from Europe reposes in the chapel.

On Sunday afternoon special devotion was held in honor of this precious relic. A public procession was held, with Rev. Edward Youngkin, S.S.J., pastor of St. Peter Claver's parish, Mobile, as relic-bearer.

The Rev. Charles B. Winckler, S.S.J., pastor of Pure Heart of Mary Church, preached the sermon on Catholic devotion to the Crucified Christ on the Cross.

The afternoon service was concluded with Benediction of the

Most Blessed Sacrament, with the Rev. Joseph Smutz, S.S.J., pastor of Mother of Mercy parish, Mobile, as celebrant. A girls' choir from Bishop Toolen High School, Mobile, sang the Benediction.

THE GIRLS FROM BISHOP TOOLEN HIGH SCHOOL have been very active in the foundation and establishment of the new parish in Baldwin County. These girls, as members of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, have done volunteer missionary work since Father Warren decided on the new mission.

Last year nearly 90 of these girls, aided by members of the National Council of Catholic Women, taught classes in religion at the Shrine. They also supervised outdoor recreation for the children. This year more than 100 strong they have expanded their work and have added instruction music.