

RELIC

ST. JOHN NEPOMUCENE NEUMANN

- ❖ The Bishop of Philadelphia lay crumpled in the snow a few blocks from his new cathedral on Logan Square. By the time a priest reached him with the holy oils, Bishop Neumann was dead. That was January 5, 1860. At his own request he was buried in the basement crypt in St. Peter's Church where he would be with his Redemptorist confreres.
- ❖ Almost immediately devout souls were drawn to his grave. They came from far and near claiming extraordinary miracles. Finally after many miracles worked through the intercession of this holy man Pope Benedict XV in 1921 declared him "Venerable". Forty-one years later Pope Paul VI named him "Blessed. The throngs of pilgrims visiting the cathedral in Philadelphia prompted the building of a lower church. His body was exhumed and his well preserved remains placed in a glass encasement. Finally in 1977 Pope Paul VI declared him a saint.
- ❖ This humble Austrian immigrant from Bohemia was loved by all. Irish Societies made pilgrimages to his tomb for what he did their forbearers. He studied enough Irish to be able to hear the confessions of those who spoke no English. For the Italians he founded the first national parish for Italians in the country. At that time there was no Italian speaking priest so since he knew Italian he preached to them in their native tongue.
- ❖ Some of Neumann's accomplishments are:
 - He organized the first diocesan schedule of the Forty Hours' Devotion in America.
 - He was the first to establish a system of parochial schools in various parts of the country. Pope Paul XII wrote that it "was mainly through his prodigious efforts that a Catholic school system came into being..."
 - He founded a religious order for women, the Third Order of St. Francis of Glen Riddle. He is looked upon as the "father in America" of the School sisters of Notre Dame.
- ❖ Neumann became a Redemptorist in 1842 in Baltimore. He became a naturalized citizen at Baltimore in 1848. In 1852, at the age of 41 he became Bishop of Philadelphia. Before he became a Redemptorist, he labored as a missionary on the Niagara Frontier, an area of several hundred square miles of swampy primeval forest. Here he administered to his German and Irish flock building churches, schools and teaching.