



# Archdiocese of Detroit NEWS

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS  
305 Michigan Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan 48226  
www.AODcommunications.org  
TEL 313-237-5943  
FAX 313-237-4644

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Contact: Fr. Russ Kohler                      Ned McGrath  
          parish: 313-965-4450                work: 313-237-5943  
          cell: 313-832-4357                 home: 313-886-4114

## **Following Theft of Sacred Items Special Mass Thursday at Most Holy Trinity Church**

Following this week's theft of sacred items Detroit's Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, a *Mass of Repentance and Reparation* is planned for Thursday, September 11, at 9 a.m. Auxiliary Bishop Daniel Flores will preside at the liturgy, required by Church law (Canon 1211) after a worship space has been desecrated. Students from Most Holy Trinity School, along with parishioners and long-time parish supporters will be among the church-goers. The special Mass is open to the public.

Sometime late Monday evening or early Tuesday morning, thieves broke in to the church at Porter and Sixth Street and stole numerous metal items, including the tabernacle, chalices, ciboria (*pronounced sih-BORE-ee-ah*—containers used to hold consecrated bread), an aspergillum (*pronounced as-PER-gill-um*—used to sprinkle holy water), candelabra, brass bells, and an icon from Russia. The tabernacle contained the Holy Eucharist, which Catholics believe is the true presence of Jesus Christ.

Also taken were a brass lantern chandelier circa 1800 that was ripped from the ceiling and a corpus (a representation of the body of Jesus) that was removed from a large cross in the sanctuary. In addition, the sacristy safe was broken in to.

“Good things can come out of bad,” says Father Russ Kohler, pastor of Most Holy Trinity. With a temporary tabernacle in place, he is calling on the people of the parish and across the community to “make a commitment of adoration hours in front of the Blessed Sacrament.” Father Kohler hopes for the return of the items and calls on those who might be tempted to buy the stolen objects “to do the right thing” and contact the Detroit Police or the parish. In the meantime, he is asking that donations for repairs and replacement items be sent directly to the parish.

Founded in 1834, Most Holy Trinity will be marking its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary in January. Built originally for Detroit's Irish community, the parish now serves a multicultural community that includes Irish, Mexican, Maltese, Puerto Ricans and African-Americans. Since its founding, Most Holy Trinity has been known and appreciated for the number of outreach services it provides to the poor and marginalized in the Corktown area.

At the beginning of the *Mass of Repentance and Reparation*, the altar will not be dressed, lit, or revered. Bishop Flores will bless water and sprinkle it first on the altar, then on the walls of the church, and then on the people. The altar will be dressed at the Offertory, during the presentation of the gifts.

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