

Church rebuilding takes shape



Themis Poulos inspects decorative trusses, above, and statues, right, which have been removed from the earthquake-damaged church and will be used in the new one.

■ **Top story:** The new New St. Patrick's will look like the old Watsonville landmark.

BY PAULINE ZENNER
Special to the Mercury News

As Watsonville's 90-year-old St. Patrick's Catholic Church disappears day by day and brick by brick, fund-raising efforts for rebuilding a replica of the Gothic-style church are continuing.

To date, \$1.7 million has been raised for the new church, which will cost an estimated \$2.5 million, said the Rev. Michael Miller.

In April, a month-long Steeple-for-the-People Campaign raised \$70,000. Since then, fund-raisers have collected donation pledges and reorganized for the next round of events.

"We will be reaching out to the people for help again," said Miller.

The church is expected to be demolished by mid-December, and a 10-month rebuilding project is to begin in February, he said. The landmark church sustained extensive damage in the Loma Prieta quake of Oct. 17, 1989.

Original plans to retrofit the church rather than rebuild it were rejected in December when the Monterey Diocese received a bid of \$3.9 million to reinforce the existing structure.

Parishioners, who have attended services at a makeshift church at the Notre Dame Gymnasium on Brennen Street for the past three years, won't have to wait long for a glimpse of what the new church will look like.

An unveiling of an artist's rendering of the new church will be presented during a special bilingual liturgy Mass commemorating the anniversary of the earthquake at 5:04 p.m. Saturday at the convent across from the demolished church.

"Hearing that the new church is going to look like the old one is one thing," Miller said. "But seeing it is something else, and the people who have seen it are so very happy."

Miller says the makeshift parish has served the 4,000-member congregation well, but adds, "We will all be a happy bunch of people when we can pray in a more reflective place. People are very anxious to have their church back."

While much of the old St. Patrick's church has been saved for reuse, including stone doorways,

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KAREN T. BORCHERS — MERCURY NEWS

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Plans to rebuild earthquake-damaged church moving ahead

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stained-glass windows, light fixtures, and altar stone, pews and kneelers, the new church will have modern amenities as well,

including improved ventilation and a more efficient heating system.

"We're very excited to be able to save many important parts of the church and put it back together within a realistic budget," said Russ Haisley, the Monterey archi-

tect who is designing the new church.

"There's been a real spirit of cooperation between the city, the parish and the diocese."

The new St. Patrick's Church will look almost identical to the

old red brick church designed by architect William A. Weeks in 1903, said Haisley, but the new brick will be steel reinforced.

The church also will be wired for sound. "We won't be able to do this right away, but to accom-

modate an overflow of people during Mass, the church will have a video service," Miller said.

Pat. Smith, 88, a member of the church for more than 60 years, said he and many others, are eager to see the new church built.