

HOLY CROSS CHURCH

Threatening letters follow vandalism

Police say anti-Catholic notes linked to last week's graffiti; damages estimated at \$22,000



✓ Churches - 2000
By STEPHEN BAXTER

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SANTA CRUZ — Police are investigating two threatening letters left at Holy Cross Church on Sunday that come on the heels of widespread vandalism there on May 6.

Santa Cruz police said the typed letters were found about 6:30 a.m. near the main door of the church at 126 High St. The writer used similar language to anti-Catholic graffiti left on the building earlier this month, Santa Cruz police spokesman Zach Friend said.

Police believe the letters and the vandalism are linked. The letters were given to the state Department of Justice to collect potential forensic evidence.

Warren Hoy, a spokesman for the Diocese of Monterey, said the letters were an attempt to intimidate church leaders.

"We're not changing anything in the church," Hoy said. "We're continuing to serve the community."

Church leaders estimated at least \$22,000 in damage from the May 6 incident at Holy Cross Church and Mission Santa Cruz. It included at least \$10,000 damage in shattered windows, spray-painted doors, walls, statues and sidewalks. Some anti-church slogans and symbols were painted, police said.

SEE CHURCH ON A2



5-16-12
DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

ABOVE: Workers pack up the vandalized Holy Cross Mission Chapel baptismal font dating from the late 1700s on Tuesday. A crane was needed to move the large stone font from the mission courtyard to a truck that will transport it to a restoration facility in Santa Clara Valley.

LEFT: The Holy Cross Mission Chapel baptismal font dating from the 1700s and vandalized with graffiti paint was removed by crane for restoration Tuesday.

'We're not changing anything in the church. We're continuing to serve the community.'

WARREN HOY, Diocese of Monterey spokesman



Holy Cross workers will have to add another coat of paint to cover this graffiti left on a wall behind the Santa Cruz Mission chapel which reads 'this was made by slaves.' DAN COYRO/SENTINEL FILE

CHURCH

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Someone also painted "Evil" on a baptismal font that Junipero Serra brought to Mission Santa Cruz in 1791. Chunks of its limestone also were knocked out of it.

"Everything else can be repaired or repainted, but that one feels the worst," Hoy said.

Tuesday, a crew loaded the font into a pickup so it could be restored at a shop in the Bay Area, said Toni Giovannoni, business manager for Holy Cross Church. That repair is expected to cost \$12,000 to \$15,000.

The rest of the property has been repainted or fixed except for a stained glass window on the church, which will be repaired, Giovannoni said.

After the May 6 vandalism, police released video footage from a surveillance camera damaged in the incident.

It showed a white man in his



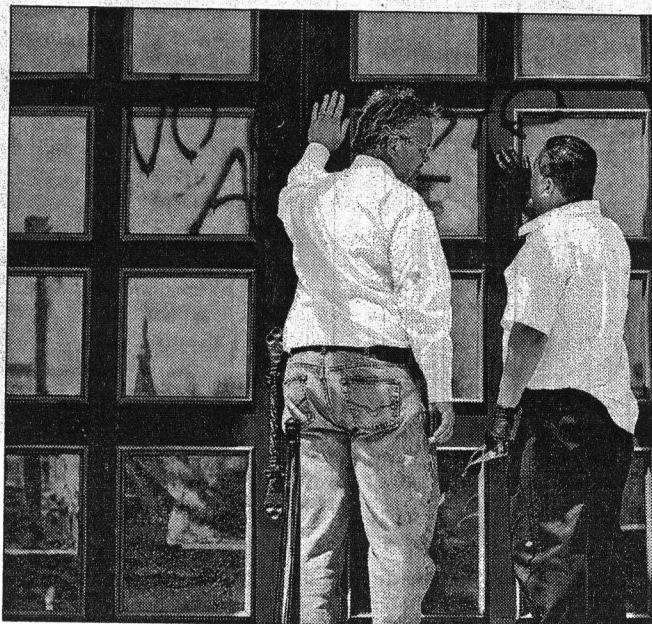
DAN COYRO/SENTINEL FILE

A Holy Cross Catholic Church worker removes paint splashed on a statue of Junipero Serra in a courtyard behind Holy Cross Mission recently.

late teens to early 20s whose height and weight could not be determined, Friend said. The man wore a light-colored shirt and a chain with a large medallion.

No one has been arrested.

Surveillance footage of the letter drop did not show



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL FILE

Holy Cross Catholic Church officials talk about how to remove the 'No Cristo Aqui' graffiti sprayed across the front doors of the church.

many identifying features of the suspect, church leaders said, because his back was to the camera.

Santa Cruz police ask anyone with information to

call the anonymous tip line at 420-5995 or leave a tip at www.santacruzpolice.com or by the mobile application at <http://m.santacruzpolice.com>.