

# St. Patrick's to appeal for funds

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With a little more than a wing and a prayer, St. Patrick's Church is appealing to the Catholic community of the nation to help it rebuild the church nearly destroyed in the Oct. 17 earthquake.

And it's banking on its name-sake to pull through on a fund-raising campaign to debut on St. Patrick's Day, in which parish leaders hope to collect the \$2.5 million needed to restore the terra cotta and brick church on Main Street. The Rev. Michael Miller, pastor of St. Patrick's, announced the campaign drive at the conclusion of Ash Wednesday masses yesterday.

Beginning at 9 a.m. Saturday, parish volunteers will start stuffing the 18,600 letters going out to all the Catholic parishes in the country. They will meet every Saturday until March 17, the day their efforts will culminate in what Miller refers to as a "grand

opening appeal for funds."

The financial-appeal package will also include a green balloon and a poster of the collapsed church which is captioned, "Trust God even if the earth trembles."

"We're so lucky this parish is named St. Patrick's," Miller said this morning while reviewing campaign strategy.

For the parish community, the official launching of the drive will be capped with a multicultural mass followed by a community social.

"We normally would not dream of asking other parishes to help," Miller states in the appeal letter. "But we do consider this a situation beyond our control, so we are asking Catholics beyond our borders to help us."

An Arroyo Grande architectural firm is surveying damage to the church, which was built in 1903 by architect William Weeks. During the quake, the side walls folded and the 132-foot tower cracked. Later, the spire, and the

four turrets upon which it sat, were removed. Interior damage, which extended to the altar, was also sustained.

Since the quake, masses have been held in the gymnasium of Moreland Notre Dame School across the street.

News of the damages suffered by St. Patrick's gained international attention and donations, including a \$100,000 contribution from rock promoter Bill Graham, poured in.

Currently, the parish has \$250,000 in its church rebuilding fund.

Miller said a Jewish synagogue in New York and a Baptist Church in the Middle West have been among the contributors.

Of the effort underway, Miller said church leaders have been waiting until they had a clear picture of their financial need before soliciting funds.

"Now that that that picture is clear — we're ready to go out of the community," he said.