

Holy Cross opens a special Christmas present

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Churches - 1990

EVER SINCE the Loma Prieta earthquake, it's been like a game of musical chairs for the parishioners of Holy Cross Catholic Church in Santa Cruz. First they moved church functions to the parish hall next door, and then, after a fire in the summer of 1990 destroyed that building, they held services outdoors in the quad of Holy Cross Elementary School.

In August of that same year, the last of the pavilions used to house downtown businesses after the earthquake was moved to the parking lot behind Holy Cross Convent to do church duty.

At that time, church officials said they thought it would take about four months to repair the church.

That was more than three years ago.

The biggest setback was an emergency ordinance passed by the Santa Cruz City Council that set new standards for rebuilding after the earthquake. It necessitated a whole new set of renovations the church hadn't counted on.

On Christmas Eve, the reconstructed church will house its first Masses since

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that fateful day in 1989. More than \$1.5 million — much of which came from donations — was necessary for repairs and renovations.

"There's going to be a real feeling of pride for the people in this community who have made this possible," said the Rev. Michael Marini.

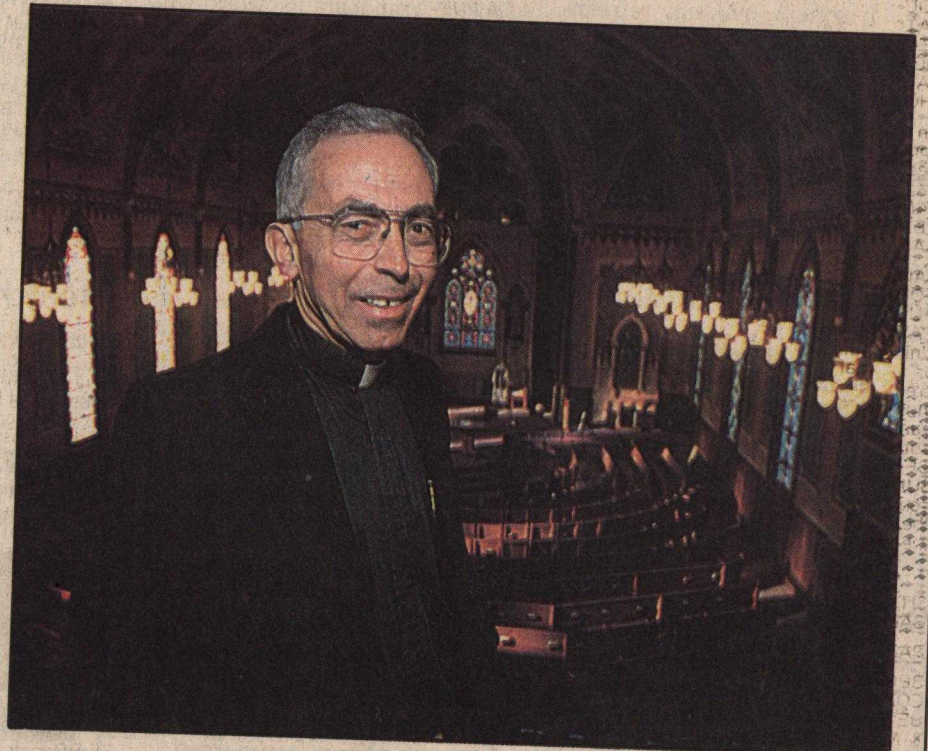
He explained that it wasn't just parishioners who donated the time, money and energy that have made the opening possible — people from all faiths pitched in.

"They've let us know in a lot of ways that we're an important part of the community," Marini said.

Although actual damage was minor, the steeple was cracked and had to be taken down and replaced. The white brick building, built in 1889, needed to be reinforced to make it structurally safe in the event of another earthquake. That retrofitting alone cost about \$875,000, Marini said.

"As it comes to the conclusion, it's really profoundly satisfying," said Marini.

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Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

The Rev. Mike Marini: rebuilding brings 'a real feeling of pride.'

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"On the personal side, it's been challenging."

And while that conclusion is definitely in sight, it's not quite in hand.

"The work will probably be going on till 3 Friday afternoon — with things like the organ getting tuned, final inspection from the city and the vestibule doors getting painted," he said. "There's always the sigh of relief that hasn't come yet because all the work isn't

done."

It's been a long road to recovery, and churchgoers have remained tolerant of the different settings they were compelled to worship in. The bilingual midnight Mass on Christmas Eve in the newly opened church will be the culmination of years of faith and hard work.

"As I walk into the church to perform the first of the Masses, I'm not sure I can make it up the aisle without tears," said Marini.