

Churches  
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# St. Patrick's will be saved; Holy Cross is on mend

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WATSONVILLE — St. Patrick's Church members cheered when they learned from diocesan leadership that the church will not only be saved and restored, but probably expanded as well.

"At this time no demolition is being considered," Bishop Thaddeus Shubsda said in a message read to worshipers during several Masses Sunday.

The bishop announced that two architects and their structural engineers "are exploring the possibility for the restoration of St. Patrick's Church in its original Gothic style, with modifications."

The modifications will include expanding the seating capacity and renovating the interior to allow for greater participation in the Masses, as the Vatican now calls for, said the Rev. Michael Miller, pastor of the church.

Meanwhile, the Rev. Jim Henry of Holy Cross Church said removal of the steeple down to the roof line should be finished this week.

After that, the rest of the church should remain standing, he said. However, the back wall of the church needs to be reattached to the main frame of the church, he said, and the gap where the steeple has been removed must be closed off before the building is habitable. Holy Cross also needs some "cosmetic repairs" such as plastering of cracks and repainting.

"It was never an issue here whether the church would be repaired," Henry said.

Henry said he hopes the church will be open for services by Christmas, even if work is still continuing. But Holy Cross can't be reoccupied until it is cleared by inspectors.

Diocesan and city engineers were also involved in the inspection of Holy Cross, and formulated the plan to carefully remove the cracked steeple. Plans are now being drawn for how to replace it, the priest said. Planners and church leaders hope to build a faithful copy of the steeple, but

with lighter materials so it will be more sound.

Members who attended Sunday Mass at St. Patrick's greeted the news with applause, "in some of the Masses with thunderous applause," St. Patrick's pastor Miller said. "You know it has to be something special to get that kind of reaction, because people just don't applaud in a Catholic service, usually."

Miller said no estimate has been made yet of what it might cost to restore St. Patrick's. But, he said, the bill will be paid by "the parish of St. Patrick's and our friends."

Because of the publicity the church received after the Oct. 17 earthquake, Miller said some benefactors have already donated money for the church's renovation. But he declined to say how much has been sent for that purpose. It will be announced at a later date, he said.

"A huge amount was sent for earthquake relief, and a smaller amount was sent for the rebuilding of the church," he said.