

Poor parish needs a lift

By DENISE FRANKLIN
Sentinel Religion Editor

DAVENPORT — The cement walls of St. Vincent De Paul Catholic Church show signs of 72 years serving the faithful in this tiny coastal town. No number of prayers can repair the 6-inch-wide, 20-foot-long crack below the steeple.

The roof is new, donated by a group of Santa Cruz businessmen and women led by grocer Bud Beauregard. But like many of its parishioners, the church is needy. The walls need paint, the cracks need filling, the water-stained carpets need replacing, the varnish on well-used pews needs redoing.

"It is very trying when you have a parish falling all around you and no income," said Beauregard, a member of Santa Cruz's Holy Cross parish who owns land in Bonny Doon near St. Vincent's.

No money for repairs comes from the Monterey Diocese. The Sunday collection in a poor parish of 35 active families, many of them Mexican-American farmworkers, hardly covers any repair requirements. So parishioners have banded

together to raise the money.

One of their efforts will be a rummage sale this weekend at St. Joseph's Shrine, 544 West Cliff Drive. The sale will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and noon to 3 p.m. Sunday. Also, proceeds from the Davenport-Coast Road Reunion, Oct. 24 at the Elk's Lodge, will go to the church restoration fund, announced reunion organizer Alvin Gregory.

Built in 1915 from cement donated by the former Santa Cruz Portland Cement Co., the church was a mission of St. John's Church in Felton for its first 20 years, according to the Rev. Bronius Kaunas, St. Vincent's pastor since 1980.

In 1935, St. Vincent's became a parish and received its first permanent priest, the Rev. Patrick Leddy. Until then, services oc-

curred infrequently, led by visiting priests.

Also that year, the church had its first visit by a bishop and, in preparation, its first restoration. The 1935 effort cost \$200, compared to the thousands of dollars needed for the present restoration.

More upgrading occurred in 1947 under the Rev. Roger L. McCann. New steps at the altar rail and new rubber kneelers for the pews were added. The church was given a coat of paint and the area in front was paved.

Until 1946, the parish had permanent priests. Then there followed a succession of visiting priests until 1955, when the Rev. Marzio Gaioni was assigned pastor. He was responsible for replacing the original benches with pews donated by a church in Tomales Bay.

Gaioni stayed until 1961 and was followed by visiting priests until the Rev. Matthew Peraino came on the scene as pastor in 1970.

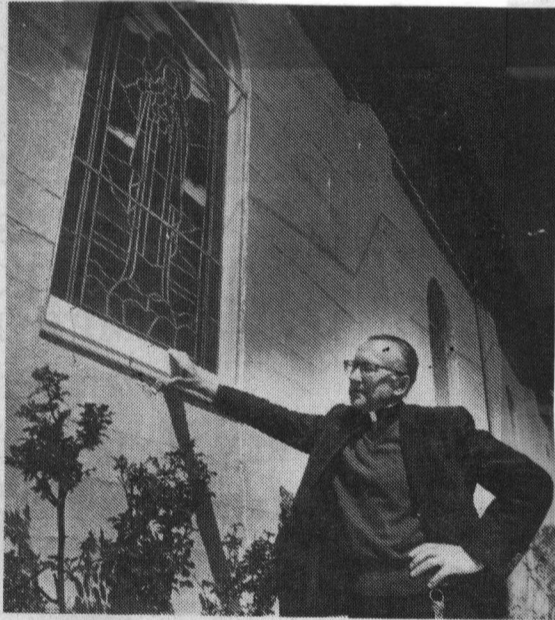
Father Matthew, as he's known to those in Davenport, stayed a decade with the parish and was responsible for many repairs, additions and upgradings of the church.

Under his guidance, the stained glass windows that add color and elegance came from the old St. Joseph's Church in Capitola when it was torn down. Two new stained glass windows were added, one in memory of Louis Poletti and the other made by a parishioner in honor of St. Matthew.

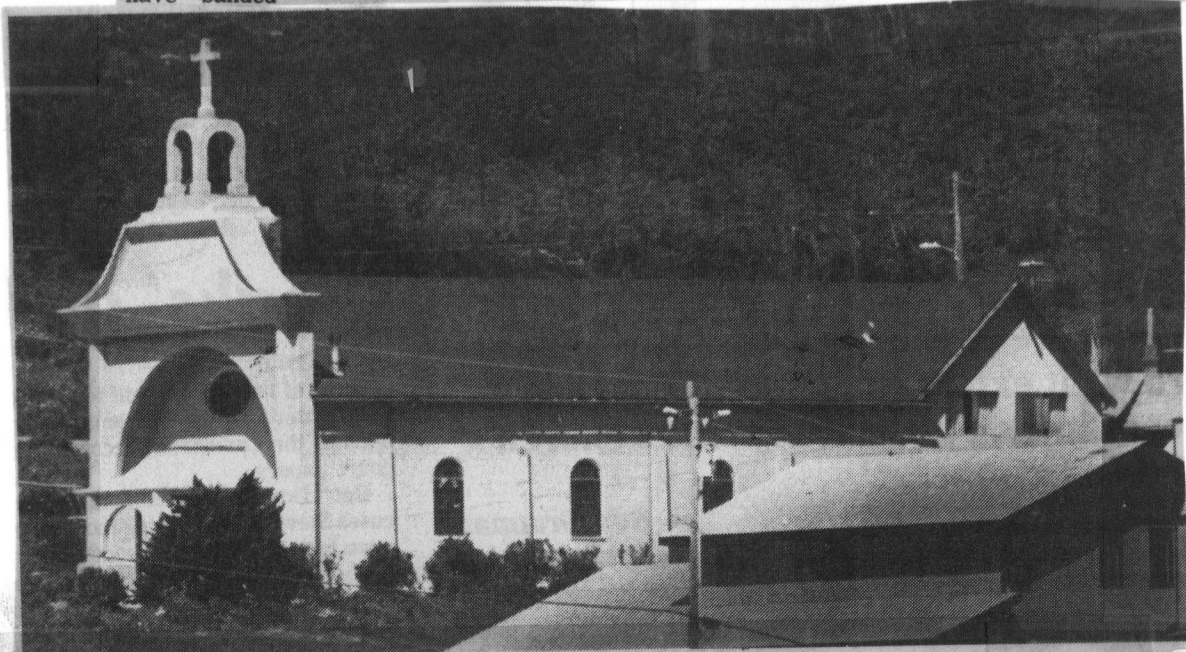
Father Matthew, a carpenter in his own right, oversaw addition of a classroom and meeting room at the back of the church. He also had a covered front porch added to protect arriving parishioners from the elements.

The cement-encrusted bell, which for years announced services with a dull thud, was replaced in 1974 with a new bell.

Gaioni, who later became rector of the Oblates of St. Joseph on West Cliff Drive, also built himself a home near the church. Land behind the church donated by Davenport resident Fred Phylfer awaits the building of a parsonage.



The Rev. Bronius Kaunas is concerned about cracks.



St. Vincent De Paul's new roof came from Santa Cruz businessmen and women

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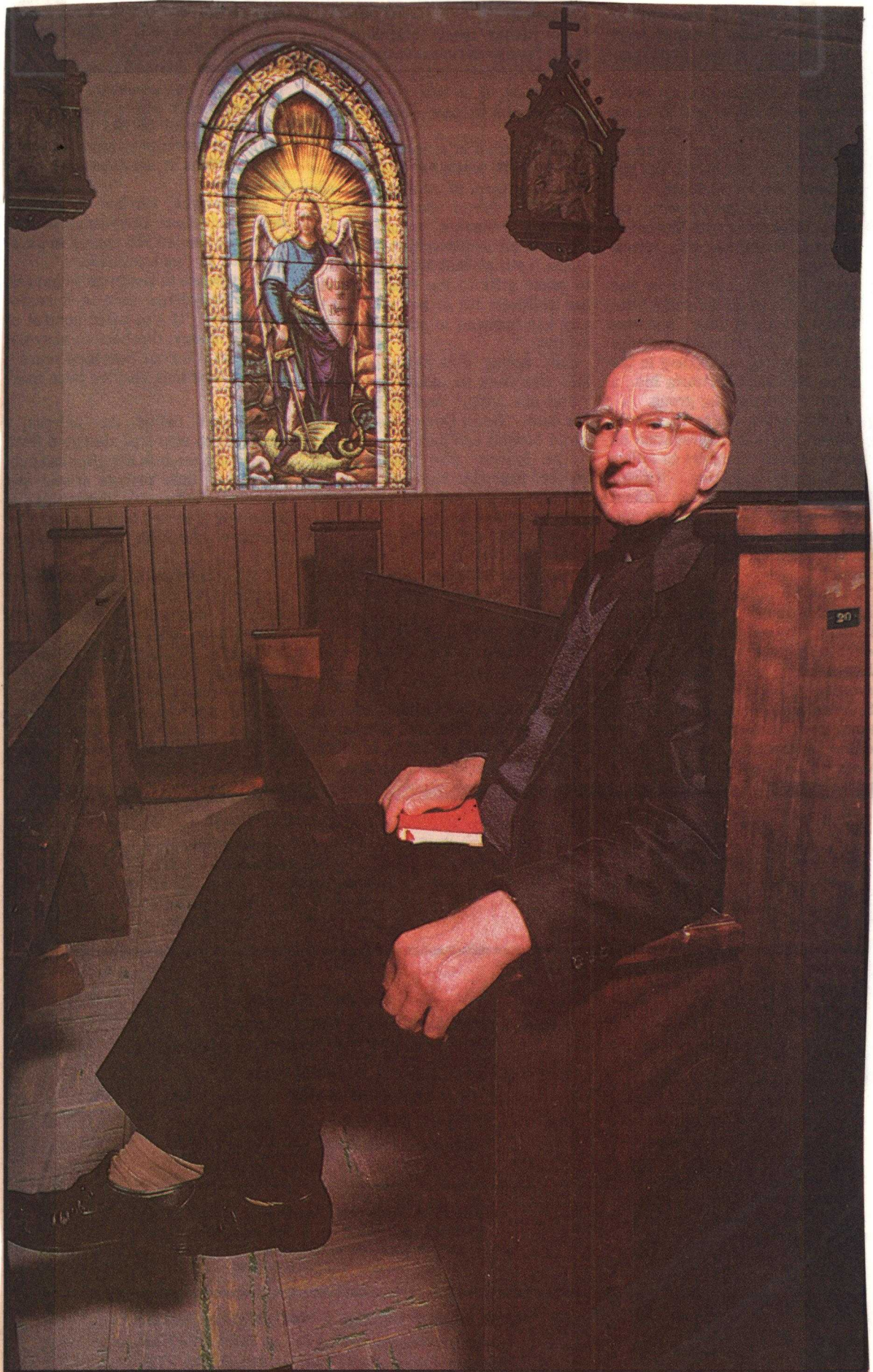
SANTA CRUZ SEN
march 27, 1987

Current pastor Kaunas is a member of the Oblates of St. Joseph's. He travels to the church for the Spanish Mass Saturday night and for Sunday morning services.

Parishioners are overjoyed with the new, rust-colored compo-

sition roof, said Kaunas. It replaced a slate roof that contained asbestos.

"If it hadn't been for Bud Beauregard's efforts, his getting in touch with his business associates, we wouldn't have a new roof. It was really a miracle," said Karine Rudnicki who, along



The pews are worn, but stained glass adds beauty to pastor Kaunas' church.

with a handful of Davenport residents, is working on the restoration.

Now that the roof's on, Kaunas has turned his concern to large

cracks in the church exterior and openings below the stained glass windows that allow water to pour in during storms.

It's a beautiful church, set be-

tween the mountains and the ocean, Kaunas said with pride. But years of use and abuse by ocean storms have faded its beauty.