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Stolen from St. Andrew Church, Detroit Reward Offered for Return of Tabernacle and Contents

A \$2,250 reward is being offered for the return of a tabernacle containing the Holy Eucharist that was stolen on October 24 from St. Andrew Church, located at 7060 McGraw (at the corner of Cecil), on Detroit's west side. Anyone with information is asked to telephone Fr. Julian Chmura, pastor of St. Andrew, at 313-361-1717 or Fr. Ed Zaorski, pastor of SS. Andrew and Benedict, at 313-381-1184.

Initially, a reward of \$500 was offered by the parish. That offer was supplemented by anonymous donors. The reward now stands at \$2,250.

The gold plated tabernacle is triangular in shape and inscribed with alpha and omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The Holy Eucharist (which Catholics believe is the true presence of Jesus Christ) was inside, as were a ciborium (a gold plated vessel with a cover used for holding communion wafers) and a luna (a glass vessel used for holding a large communion wafer). Also taken from the church were candelabra, the top of the baptismal font, the paschal candle, and other items.

"We are not interested in prosecuting anyone, all we're seeking is the return of the tabernacle and its contents," said Fr. Zaorski, who also serves as vicar of the Southwest Vicariate of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

"This is the second break-in at St. Andrew in two weeks," he added. "Thieves are stripping churches throughout the area of everything that is gold or bronze and especially, copper."

A criminal or notorious act in a worship space, such as what occurred at St. Andrew, constitutes a desecration or violation of the church. While the church building can be used for devotions following such an act, it cannot be used for divine worship until and unless a *Mass of Repentance and Reparation* is celebrated.

Detroit Auxiliary Bishop Daniel Flores celebrated such a Mass on October 26 at the parish.. The bishop wore purple vestments, as would be used on Good Friday. The tone of the Mass was penitential. The altar was stripped and sprinkled with holy water and incensed before it was redressed. Bishop Flores then blessed the remainder of the church with holy water. A new tabernacle for the Blessed Sacrament was put in place.

All weekend and weekday liturgies will proceed as scheduled.

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