

Sacred Heart Church prepares for reopening

MATERIAL BILINGÜE

Favor ver la PÁGINA 3 para leer este artículo en Español

By DALIA DÍAZ

DALIADIAZ@RUMBONEWS.COM

The Willing Shepherds of Jesus Christ, Chapter of the Order of Saint Dominic that recently moved into the Sacred Heart Church in Lawrence opened a gift store in the Rectory with religious gifts (statues, medals, rosaries and holy water fonts, spirituals, crucifixes, etc.) and excellent books on the saints and faith.

Sr. Mary Bernadette and Sr. Tracy were greeting visitors attracted by the handmade sign on the sidewalk on S. Broadway pointing to the gift store. Saturday, May 12 was the grand opening and a constant streaming of customers kept them busy all afternoon. Sr. Bernadette, a perfect mix of hostess and sales clerk, proudly explained that some of the rosary beads for sale (already blessed) were made by her mother.

When Br. Gerard Francis offered me a tour of the church I was not prepared for the emotions that would invade me. Entering the church brought me back to my last days in Cuba when the Revolution destroyed the church where we used to go as a child, dumping the statues into a truck.

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston is in such a financial mess that they had to close it down and sold the entire property consisting of five buildings to ETC Development Corp. of Boston. In order to prevent it from being used as a church again, they destroyed the marble altars and statues. The pews and windows were taken out and it is awfully sad. This beautiful, enormous church was gutted but this time it was done by the Archdiocese. Who would have thought that the Archdiocese would destroy one of its own churches?

My heart sank as I approached the main altar with its shattered marble panels. Someone had taken a sledge hammer and crushed anything of religious significance. The statues were torn away from the walls taking with them part of the architecture.

This all happened within the past two years. Now this Dominican Order wants to restore it and bring back the old-style



El Hermano Gerard Francis mostrando la iglesia.

Brother Gerard Francis giving a tour of the empty and damaged church.

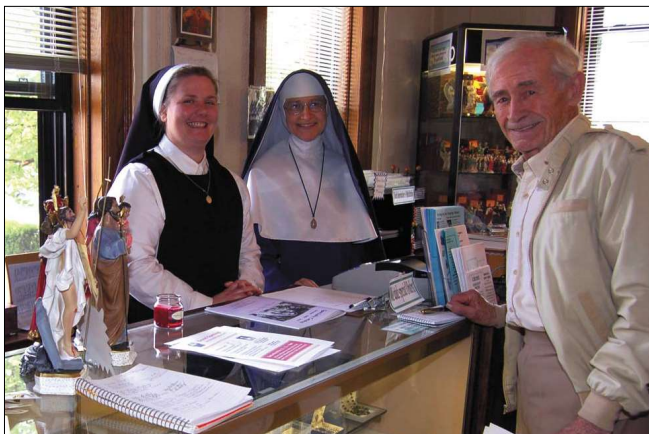


masses but the Catholic Church doesn't consider them part of it because they don't follow the changes brought on by Vatican II.

My time spent in the gift shop was well spent, watching the number of people coming in happy to have seen the sign on the sidewalk. Three old friends started a lengthy conversation not having seen each

other for a while since masses stopped at Sacred Heart. Suddenly, the mellifluous sound of the church bells began to chime and all the brothers and sisters went outside to sing in celebration. They had been trying to make them work for the past two months and finally figured it out. It was a magical moment for them that I was fortunate to capture.

The repairs are so extensive that they are not sure how long it will take for the funding to be raised and the work to be done. Meanwhile, they are happy to show anyone the conditions of the church because they need all the help they can find in order to turn it back to what that magnificent structure was meant to do: to unite us all with God.



Sr. Tracy and Sr. Bernadette with George Sipsey, a former parishioner of Sacred Heart.
Las Hermanas Tracy y Bernadette con George Sipsey, un ex miembro de la parroquia del Sagrado Corazón.



Dorothy Incropera and her daughter Kianna Roy selecting good books.