

OU procedures inquiry halted by prosecutor

Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson's office has ceased its investigation into the Oakland University Board of Trustees' procedure for selecting a new president.

"We decided it would be an obvious duplication of effort since the Attorney General's office is already investigating it (the board's procedure)," said Richard Thompson, chief assistant prosecutor.

An Oakland University professor and the editor-in-chief of the school's student newspaper have charged OU trustees with violating Michigan Open Meetings Act by holding interviews with presidential candidates behind closed doors.

Thompson said the Attorney General's office seemed the better-public agency to continue the investigation, since the professor and editor based their charges, in part, on earlier opinion from that office.

OU's trustees are looking for a successor to Donald O'Dowd, who left the Avon Township campus last December to become vice chancellor of the State University of New York.

Assistant Provost George Matthews is acting as OU's interim president.

By MIKE SCANLON

Religious artifacts stolen from a Catholic church while a Mass was apparently in progress Saturday may be the latest in a string of similar Detroit area thefts, Livonia police reported.

Stolen from a closed but unlocked safe in St. Aidan's sacristy — a theft which involved no breaking and entering and which may have occurred during a 5 p.m. Mass — were two chalices worth an estimated \$4,000.

The chalices were of gold, one bearing an ornate cross in the stem and cross and the other containing a one-half carat diamond setting with four smaller diamonds in the base.

Two other chalices of less intrinsic value but in plain view in the sacristy, a room where priests prepare for religious services, were undisturbed.

THE THEFT OF the chalices from St. Aidan's bore similarities to a number of recent thefts of chalices in Detroit, Hamtramck and Grosse Pointe.

Most of the thefts occurred while religious services were in progress.

Investigators say the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit is insured for such losses through a single agency, which reports the Livonia robbery was the 10th such incident at a metro area Catholic church since June 28.

A burglary Friday night at the Livonia Jewish Congregation appears unrelated to the string of other church robberies. Four pure silver pieces were stolen from the temple's Ark, a repository for religious texts and artifacts.

Entry to the synagogue was gained by cutting a chained outside door and prying open a glass door inside. Human feces were found on the men's room floor.

DETROIT investigators say two separate churches less than half a mile apart were robbed in that city within about 45 minutes of each other Oct. 11. Another gold chalice was stolen from a walk-in safe in the sacristy of St. Augustine Church, 13504 Justine, also apparently during a 5 p.m. Mass. Another theft was reported about 45 minutes earlier at Transfiguration Church, 5830 Simon K. St., where a gold ciborium, or

large chalice with a domed lid and two patens (flat gold plates) were stolen. That theft apparently occurred while a wedding was in progress.

A parishioner was questioned in connection with the St. Augustine robbery, but no charges were filed, Detroit investigators say.

An elaborate chalice was stolen from Our Lady Queen of Apostles church in Hamtramck during an Oct. 4 wedding ceremony. The chalice, described as 10-12 inches high, consists of four human figures holding the bowl aloft. It is inscribed in both Latin and English. A Hamtramck investigator said the chalice, stolen from a walk-in safe, was

the most elaborate of five chalices in the safe.

"The situation at St. Aidan's was not the first," said Fr. Patrick Halpenny, an Archdiocesan spokesman. "With the value of gold and silver, churches are

targets now more than ever. "It's unfortunate, because usually (the religious objects) have deep emotional attachments" for the priests, said Fr. Halpenny, who said the chalices are often gifts from family members to the priest when he is ordained.

Local artists featured

Works by six Detroit-area artists will be featured at Detroit Focus Gallery, Saturday through November 22.

The artists are Chris Hughes, James Lutomski, Shirley Parish, Nolan Poole II, Susan Raisig and Yolanda Sharpe. Artists were selected by a seven-member review committee.

The public is invited to the opening reception 6-9 p.m. Saturday. Gallery hours are noon to 6 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday.

The gallery, partially funded by grants from Michigan Council for the Arts and the Detroit Council for the Arts, is located at 743 Beaubien at Lafayette.

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