



Father **James Corley** has no idea why someone set fire to his church

—Chris Dawson

## Fire won't halt Easter services

By **ROBERT DIGITALE**

The **Rev. James Corley** stood beneath the burned-out roof and watched as firemen extracted the charred evidence of arson.

While rain drizzled in, sheriff and fire investigators pounded out pieces of a church pew, that, they said, were coated with residue from a flammable liquid.

**Corley** and the congregation of Our Lady of Guadalupe Roman Catholic Church in Windsor will spend weeks cleaning up the debris of Monday's fire that wrecked the sanctuary.

The church, **Corley** said, still intends to hold all its scheduled Easter week services.

The minister and congregation of Windsor Community United Methodist Church offered the use of their sanctuary until the Catholic church can be rebuilt.

"I felt very good that they were that generous," **Corley** said today in accepting the offer.

The **Rev.** David Franks, minister of the Methodist church, said other denominations responded when two Methodist churches recently burned down in the Bay Area. The church's administrative board unanimously agreed it should do likewise and assist "Christian brothers and sisters in need of a place to worship."

**Corley** said he has no idea why someone would set

fire to the church, which is one of the area's few gathering places for English- and Spanish-speaking people.

In his five years as pastor, he has "never had any real hostility directed at me or at the church."

No one ever broke into the church before Monday morning, he said. There has been "a lot of petty vandalism. But this is something entirely different."

Bruce Young, a firefighter with the California Department of Forestry, said the arsonist apparently broke a window in the back of the sanctuary to get in. A flammable liquid was poured in pews near a wall, where the fire eventually burned a portion of the roof.

The fire was intense enough to scorch most of the rafter beams and to melt plastic chairs into grotesque shapes. The church interior was blackened by the smoke and flames.

Damage to the 2,000-square-foot sanctuary was estimated at \$150,000.

The building, constructed largely by church members in 1968, and contents were insured.

A golden tabernacle and other sacred vessels were saved, but the vestments may be too damaged to be salvaged.

A wooden crucifix, which was hand-carved by a 75-year-old parishioner before his death, was destroyed.

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