

CHURCH VANDALISM IS NATIONWIDE

In 2020, many Catholic churches and schools were vandalized during the protests that engulfed the nation. Already this year we have recorded two dozen incidents of vandalism. Unlike last year, where the vandalism was concentrated in cities that were the site of demonstrations, this year the assaults on property are widespread, having nothing to do with ideologically driven protests.

Vandals have struck in Connecticut, Washington, D.C., Louisiana, Ohio, Indiana, Texas, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, North Dakota, California, New York, Florida, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Kentucky.

The word "Satan" and a pentagram were found on a defaced statue of St. Therese Lisieux in Abbeville, Louisiana. "Jesus is black" was inscribed on a wall at a church that was almost burned down in Toledo, Ohio. A statue of Mary outside a church in Knobs City, Indiana had the word "Harlot" written on it.

Satanic graffiti was painted on a sidewalk outside a church in our nation's capital, and other satanic symbols were found on a parish hall in Milwaukee. Fires were set in some places and in California there was a rash of incidents where the faces of statues on church property were painted in black. Windows were broken in parish facilities and obscenities were written on walls in Louisville.

In some cases, police reported these were hate crimes. The question is why only some of these incidents are labeled as such. Unless local prosecutors get tough, we are likely to see many more of these attacks. This is one more sign that our culture is in deep trouble.

We make a distinction between cases where drunken teenagers

vandalize a church and cases where something more sinister has happened. Regarding the latter, surely most of those instances should qualify as a hate crime. The police, of course, have their own yardstick. What we want is consistency, and that has not always been the case.