

# CHURCH VANDALS HIT MARYLAND, ALABAMA, ALASKA

Catholic churches and Catholic religious symbols continue to be vandalized in many parts of the country.

For three years, Father Thomas Flowers, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Church in Chesapeake City, Maryland has led his church and the local chapter of the Knights of Columbus in erecting small crosses at a prominent roadside. This year they ran into trouble.

As they usually do, Father Flowers and the Knights installed a sign explaining that the crosses represent the number of abortions that occur in one day. The crosses are put on the property of a convent of the Sisters of St. Basil. But this year all 73 crosses were vandalized; the violence occurred sometime between late Friday, October 20 and early Saturday, October 21. Father Flowers reported the incident to the FBI as a hate crime. He told the Catholic League that the KKK had been quite active in the area north of his parish.

In the Diocese of Birmingham, Alabama vandals struck at Our Lady of the Valley Catholic Church in north Shelby county. Windows were broken, furniture was damaged, books were strewn about, an antique cello was destroyed and money and property were stolen.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Anchorage, Alaska was desecrated on November 10. The vandals stole the church sound system and two rugs, separated the main altar from its footing, fractured a plastic baptismal basin and smashed a wooden sacristy in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

Clifton, New Jersey was the scene of a cross burning on the property of St. Brendan Catholic Church on November 14. Joan C. Boyle was arrested and charged with desecration of

venerated objects under the state's bias crime statute. She used an accelerant to set fire to the cross, saying it was her way of publicizing the plight of the homeless.

There is no evidence that these incidents are in any way connected. As far as the Catholic League is concerned, this is all the more disturbing since it suggests a random outbreak of violent anti-Catholicism.