

Repair work completed at St. Vincent de Paul

As the scaffolding comes down around the Baltimore landmark St. Vincent de Paul, parishioners, pedestrians and motorists, as well as the homeless camped in front of the church, will see the cross replaced on the tower of one of the oldest Catholic church buildings in the city.

The roughly \$400,000 project allowed contractors to reaffix the cross that blew off of the church more than a year ago, and perform needed masonry and carpentry repairs to the 166-year-old tower, said Father Richard T. Lawrence, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul, Baltimore.

Workers from Keystone Waterproofing of Greensburg, Pa., began work on the historic-Front Street church in July and completed the repairs in early December, leaving Father Lawrence thrilled with the results.

"They did wonderful work," he said. "We should be set (with a stable tower) for another 150 to 200 years."

Father Lawrence said he was anxious to have the gold-leaf cross - which was forced off the tower by high winds - placed back on top of the church, which was built in 1841.

"Since the scaffolding costs a small fortune, we thought we should get the carpentry and masonry work done at the same time," he said. "It took several months of working with the insurance company and the archdiocese to get all of the details worked out."

Though the expenses haven't been finalized, Father Lawrence estimates the itemized costs to break down as \$100,000 for the scaffolding, \$100,000 to reconfigure and reinstall the cross and \$200,000 for the carpentry and masonry work on the tower.

About half of the project will be covered by the insurance and the rest will come from the church's historic trust, fundraising revenue and gifts that have been given

to the parish, he said.

The next major renovation project at the church will come in about two years when the south-side windows get new wood frames, Father Lawrence said.

“We were going to do that sooner,” he said. “But, we’ve put it off a little while due to financial reasons.”

The north-side wood window frames were replaced at a cost of about \$125,000 approximately 15 years ago, Father Lawrence said.

Though the current work was completed in early December, it will take about two weeks to disassemble the complex scaffolding that was bolted to the church, he said.

“We’re very happy to have this work behind us,” Father Lawrence said. “In the afternoon, when the sun hits it, that gold-leaf cross is a wonderful site for anyone coming downtown. It’s also beautiful when it’s illuminated at night.”