

Parish eyes move from local theater

CASCADE, Idaho (CNS) — On Saturday nights, the Roxy Theater in Cascade draws moviegoers for the latest box-office hit.

But on Sunday mornings, amid the lingering smells of buttery popcorn, the theater welcomes Catholics as they make their way down the sticky aisles for Mass.

Members of St. John the Baptist Parish in Cascade — which is a station, or mission, of Our Lady of the Lake Church in McCall in the Boise Diocese — file into the 67-year-old theater each Sunday where a pine altar is rolled out and the projection room serves as a makeshift sacristy.

Use of the theater has been donated rent free by a local family to the parish, which has endured hard economic times and is saving money to build a permanent home for worship.

Through bake sales, dinners, collections and a building fund-drive, parishioners have raised \$250,000 — about a third of the money they need to fund their new church.

So, the Cascade church turned to Chicago-based Catholic Extension, the largest supporter of Catholic missionary work in America, for a \$75,000 building grant.

Father Donald Fraser, pastor of Our Lady of the Lake, and Bishop Michael P. Driscoll of Boise hope to start construction during the summer months.

Cascade endures heavy snows, accompanied by a wind chill and temperatures in double digits below zero.

ro, up to six months out of the year.

Located in the Boise National Forest, Cascade was once a logging home to the former Boise-Cascade Corp., which employed one out of three of the central Idaho town's population. But two years ago the lumber business dried up as Congress passed legislation that curtailed logging in national forests. The industry also has been hurt by the ability of tree-growers in Canada and the South to produce faster-growing and less-expensive trees.

According to parish leaders, the loss of the logging industry dealt a devastating blow to what is an isolated community; the population fell by a third. Yet, despite the population decline, the parishioners of St. John the Baptist have outgrown their previous church because of an influx of Catholics who make Cascade their summer home.

The parish already has a blueprint for a new church, which is to be named for St. Katharine Drexel.

Located on a plot of land donated by a family in St. John the Baptist Parish, the church will serve a 2,000-square-mile area.

"This truly is a worthwhile and urgent need, and we look forward to helping the parishioners of St. John the Baptist realize their dream," said retired Bishop William R. Houck of Jackson, Miss., president of Catholic Extension, in a statement.

"We have the opportunity to give them a proper spiritual home," he added.



James Bowey/CNS

A worker posts "Catholic Mass" to the playbill of the Roxy Theater in Cascade, Idaho, where parishioners of St. John the Baptist Church celebrate Sunday Mass.

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4/03

Muslim makes bike trek for peace

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — With her chador tucked into her tracksuit and topped with a red visor, Poupeh Mahdvinader rode her bicycle out of St. Peter's Square, on a journey she hopes will end in Mecca, birthplace of Mohammed, in one year.

Mahdvinader, a 29-year-old Muslim who works with orphans as a social worker in her native Iran, began her journey April 15 to promote peace and interreligious dialogue.

She planned to walk and ride north through Italy and France, take a boat to England, ride and walk across the country, then fly to the United States for another cross-country trip under her own steam.

Japan, New Zealand, China, India and Oman were also on her itinerary en route to Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

The first moments of her trip were witnessed by Archbishop Re-

nato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and by Mostafa Boroujerdi, Iranian ambassador to the Vatican.

"In the name of God, I hope my trip will have a positive impact on young people and awake in them feelings of solidarity" and a desire to respect all religions, she said through an interpreter before setting off.

In addition to meeting and speaking with young people all over the world, Mahdvinader is hoping to raise money for the orphans of war, including those in Iraq.

Archbishop Martino described her trip as "a gesture of peace, dialogue and understanding between religions."

"Every contribution to building a culture of peace begins with a small gesture," he said.