

WE'LL BUILD AGAIN, SAYS BURNED-OUT PARISH

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Hit with the \$500,000 loss of its church, and already \$299,000 in debt for the construction of its 16-classroom school and convent, Our Lady of Mount Carmel-St Benedicta Parish, West Brighton, will start anew. The church and hall were destroyed yesterday in a fire that police believe was set by vandals bent on looting.

The destroyed building had been a West Brighton landmark for nearly 53 years. It was originally used as a livery stable for horses and carriages that took passengers to the Port Richmond ferry. For a while, until 1919 when Our Lady of Mount Carmel took it over, it was used as a laundry. The destroyed church hall had been used at one time as a rectory and school. It was closed three years ago. Recently it had been used for parish social functions.

Plans are already underway for the construction of a new church. It isn't certain where it will be located. Two possibilities exist: on the same site, or on the church parking lot at Castleton Ave and Bodine St, the site of the old Advance building.

Bishop George Guilfoyle, episcopal vicar for Staten Island, said yesterday, "We're going to have a contractor and the insurance people look at it immediately and then we'll see what we can do." Msgr Vecchini, parish pastor, said a fund-raising campaign would begin immediately, adding that he didn't know what help he would be receiving from the Archdiocese.

The monsignor said that community response to the tragedy was excellent. "It's very gratifying in a case like this. There has been a constant flow of offers of people wanting to help me with the things I need." Msgr Stanislaus J. Malinowski, pastor of St Stanislaus Kostka RC Church, New Brighton, announced that \$1,000 from a parish fund would be given to Msgr Vecchini.

Yesterday afternoon, pedestrians and motorists slowed as they passed the ruins, some out of respect, others to watch workers shore up windows and doors of what remained. Fire inspectors declared the ruins unsafe and workers began cleaning out the two buildings.