

Arson Attack Sets on Fire Seventh Church in St. Louis



St. Louis, October 23 (RHC)-- Another church in the U.S. city of St. Louis, Missouri, has been damaged in an arson attack, raising the tally of burnt churches in the area to seven. Suspected arsonists targeted the Shrine of St. Joseph, a historic Catholic church near downtown St. Louis, early Thursday.

The front doors of the rectory had been deliberately burned with a small amount of accelerant, according to a news release by the city's Fire Department. The rectory was empty at the time and there were no reported injuries.

St. Louis Police Chief Sam Dotson said the fire appears similar to the other recent arson attacks in the St. Louis area in which only the front doors of churches were burned.

St. Louis has been investigating the church attacks for a few days now. The attacks usually involve churches within a three mile radius from one another. The Shrine of St. Joseph, however, is located farther, than the rest of the churches in a mostly African-American neighborhood.

According to police, the first fire happened at Bethel Non-Denominational Church on Lillian Avenue on October 8th. The next attacks took place between October 10 and 14, targeting New Northside Missionary Baptist Church, St. Augustine Catholic Church, and the New Testament Church of Christ. The sixth fire was set at the Ebenezer Lutheran Church.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the St. Louis City Fire Department Investigative Unit and the St. Louis Regional Bomb and Arson Unit are working together to investigate the incidents.

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