

FRANCE: Four churches vandalised over the past week

– In one instance a tabernacle was broken into and its contents strewn on the ground

– Anne-Bénédicte Hoffner

HRWF (12.02.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2WZayC8>– France, over the past week, has witnessed a series of churches being vandalized and in some instances desecrated.

The vandalism took place in Nîmes, Lavaur, Houilles and finally in Dijon on Feb. 9.

In Lavaur and Houilles, the criminals only attacked objects and statues, but in Nimes and Dijon, they opened the tabernacle and threw the eucharist.

On Feb. 9 shortly after its opening, the sexton at Notre Dame Church in Dijon saw the tabernacle and the hosts scattered on the altar, a tablecloth rolled into a corner, a vase broken.

A Mass of reparation was celebrated that afternoon by Bishop Roland Minnerath of Dijon, preceded by a penitential rite, the diocese said in a statement, highlighting the “sadness” of faithful of this parish in the city center.

The series of attacks began Feb. 4 in Houilles, Yvelines. A statue of Mary was found broken in pieces on the ground, in the church of St. Nicholas.

Father Etienne Maroteaux, pastor of the parish of Houilles-Carrières-sur-Seine, again lodged a complaint, having already being subjected to violent attacks during the last two weeks that saw the altar cross thrown to the ground and the chair of

the celebrant wrecked.

The next incident took place on Feb. 5 at the Saint-Alain Cathedral in Lavaur, in the Tarn. The secretary of the parish who came to shut the cathedral found the smoking remains of the tablecloth of the altar of a side chapel, as well the nativity scene that was there, the fire had not spread, reports *La Dépêche du Midi*. A cross was also thrown down and the arm of the crucified Christ statue twisted to look like the famous gesture of the footballer Paul Pogba.

“God will forgive. Not me,” said the city’s mayor Bernard Carayon, whose town hall had just contributed to expensive renovations of the church building.

“I strongly condemn the vandalism of Lavaur Cathedral and I share the outrage aroused by this intolerable act,” said Jean Terlier, deputy of the district, while assuring the Catholic community of his support.

On Feb. 6, the police were called to the church in Nîmes.

The tabernacle was broken into and its contents strewn on the ground. Religious objects were vandalized and a cross was drawn on the wall with excrement, reports the local press.

Investigations are underway to try to find the wrongdoers.

See video on TV Channel France 2:

https://www.francetvinfo.fr/france/vandalisme-plusieurs-eglises-visees-par-des-profanations_3187009.html

Anti-Semitic acts surged by 74 percent from 311 in 2017 to 541 in 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvuY0TJBPeM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHx6ukPzb3g>