

Bomb threat to church laid to anti-Castro group

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By PAUL MOSES

A bomb scare in a Union City church late Wednesday is apparently an effort to disrupt the parish and get rid of a controversial priest who met with Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, police said yesterday.

A 13-year-old boy working at the rectory of Holy Family Roman Catholic Church received a telephone call at 10:05 p.m. from a man who said the church would be blown up 15 minutes later, according to police. Police did not locate a bomb in the church at 35th Street and Central Avenue.

The Rev. Andres Reyes, one of 75 to meet with Castro and negotiate the release of 3,000 Cuban political prisoners, is considered a traitor and a communist agent by leaders of the Bloques Cubano, an organization of revolutionary groups.

Twenty-five members of the anti-Castro organization tried to attend a parish meeting to protest the priest's stand, but were ejected by the Rev. Francis Maione, vicar of the Spanish-speaking for the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Newark.

Maione was appointed pastor of the embattled parish last week.

Church officials have not taken a definite stand in the conflict, refusing to support demands to remove Father Reyes from the church, but refusing to make a statement of support for the priest's actions.

The Rev. Michael Russo, director of communications for the archdiocese of Newark, said yesterday the church is taking a conciliatory role, trying to bring the two sides together.

Describing the position taken by the archdiocese, the Rev. Russo said "There's a very real sensitivity to both sides on a very controverted issue."

When asked about possible danger to parish members and property, Father Russo said "To address that is to address an unknown."

The archdiocese maintains a program to help all immigrants, he said, including Vietnamese "boat people."

The Rev. Reyes could not be reached yesterday, but said earlier he is doing his best to re-unite local residents with their family members serving prison terms in Cuba.

Members of the Bloques Cubano argue that the Rev. Reyes is a hoax, and he is misleading local residents by making promises he cannot fulfill.