



Church sees restorative message in damaged statue

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Restoration is the message members of a local Catholic Church are taking from a damaged statue being transported from a church in New York.

Saturday, the 7 1/2-foot, 1,600-pound statue of St. Gerard lost its head, literally. Damaged in the move, the statue's head was broken at the neck.

The statue and a marble Paschal candle stand are both part of the relocation of St. Gerard's Roman Catholic Church in Buffalo to Mary Our Queen Catholic Church in Norcross. Initially, Mary Our Queen had planned to build another church on nearby land after it had outgrown its present location. However, church officials decided to buy an entire church and move it to the Norcross site.

The broken statue is the perfect message of restoration, Pat Chivers, Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta spokeswoman, told the AJC.

"People who come through Christ broken can be restored," she said. "We feel very responsible for this gift and want to make sure we restore it."

Relocating the church is quite an undertaking.

"We are moving the entire church, brick-by-brick," Chivers said. "It is not going to be an easy process we know."

The candle and stand made the trip in one piece. It may take months before the statue is restored.

-- Staff writer Sheila M. Poole contributed to this report.