

U.S. priest released from hospital after attack in Nepal

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Spiritans Father William Headley in 2007. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

KATMANDU, Nepal -- An American priest was attacked and robbed in the center of the city as he made his way back to Assumption Church.

Spiritans Father William Headley, who is in his 70s, was struck from behind and robbed of his mobile phone, money and other personal effects as he approached the priest's residence next to the church Oct. 30, said Father Pius Perumana, an official of the Nepalese church.

"He had gone for dinner after the Sunday evening Mass. His companion or companions must have dropped him off near the church," Father Perumana told the Asian church news agency UCA News.

Passers-by found Father Headley lying unconscious with a gaping head wound and brought him to the church, Father Perumana said.

Police were called and the injured priest was taken to hospital. He has since been released with several stitches to his head and mouth, Father Perumana said, adding that doctors had instructed that his condition be closely monitored for 24 hours.

Police believe the motive behind the attack could be money, Father Perumana said.

Drug addicts are known to frequent some of the narrow lanes close to Assumption Church, he added.

Father Headley formerly worked with Catholic Relief Services and was founding dean of the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego.

Katmandu, considered a very safe place just a decade ago, has seen a rise in crime in recent years as its population grows rapidly.

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