

MONASTIC AND PARISH COMMUNITIES FACING THREAT OF WILDFIRES IN CALIFORNIA



As hundreds of wildfires spread across California, consuming hundreds of thousands of acres, monastic and parish communities are in danger, and unfortunately, some Orthodox Christians have already lost everything to the fires.

The brothers of St. Herman of Alaska Monastery in Platina in northern California and the sisters of the associated St. Xenia of St. Petersburg Skete in Wildwood are under warning, but have not been ordered to evacuate.

St. Herman's Monastery was founded by Blessed Seraphim (Rose) and Fr. Herman (Podmoshensky) in the late 1960s, and is now home to the grave of Fr. Seraphim, who died at the age of 48 in 1982. The monastery has been threatened by wildfire numerous times, though it has thus far been preserved by God's grace.

The fires around the monastery are now mainly under control, and the brotherhood and sisterhood thank everyone for their prayers.

In a message on the fires published on August 22, Metropolitan Gerasimos of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco also reports on several of his parish communities.

According to the Metropolitan, some parishioners of St. John the Baptist Church in Carmel by the Sea have been evacuated, and one family with two small children has lost everything in the fires. The wife is a nurse who continues to go to work to help those who are suffering, Met. Gerasimos reports.

27 families from the Prophet Elias Church in Santa Cruz have been evacuated, and all are accounted for and safe. The parish has opened its doors to the clergy and faithful of the Sts. Peter and Paul Antiochian Orthodox Church and is housing its liturgical vessels and icons until the threat passes.

Met. Gerasimos reports that the two communities intended to worship together this past Sunday and then go on procession throughout the town carrying icons and chanting the Paraklesis to the Mother of God, seeking her intercessions for protection and comfort.

St. Lawrence Church in Felton has also been evacuated.

May the Lord have mercy upon all the Orthodox communities and all families and individuals who are in harm's way!

Update: OrthoChristian was initially informed by a member of the extended St. Herman's monastic community that the monasteries had been evacuated. However, we were later informed by the brotherhood itself that they were not evacuated, and the worst of the danger is past.

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