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His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco issues message concerning West Coast fires



Dark orange skies covered northern California as the aftermath of the fires penetrated the air. Pictured here is the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in San Francisco, CA on the morning of September 9, 2020. (Photo courtesy of Annunciation Cathedral - San Francisco, CA).

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“O Lord, to You I cry out; for fire has devoured the open pastures, and a flame has burned all the trees of the field.” Joel 1:19

Words cannot adequately describe the rapidly changing conditions throughout the west coast brought on by hundreds of raging fires in California, Oregon and Washington. Sadly, the fire season is still in its early stages and there is justified concern that the coming months will bring more devastation, loss of life and the destruction of homes and livelihoods. In the past few days, we have personally witnessed dark orange and red skies from morning until night. Our cars, homes and lawns appear to be covered in snow, but it is actually ash from the fires that is pouring down from the sky.

We are aware of parishioners whose homes have been lost, and several others who are evacuated. The clergy in our Metropolis are keeping us updated with information on their parishes, their parishioners and the general health and well-being of their respective communities. As more information is shared with us, we will convey it to you. It is also important to recognize the firefighters who are truly heroic in their efforts. We beseech the Lord to keep them under His watchful care and protection as they risk their lives for the safety of others.

At their recent Convention, the National Philoptochos Society approved a generous donation in the amount of \$25,000 to support the needs of those most impacted by the fires. The outpouring of love and support has been uplifting during these dark days, and we know that even as we continue to journey through the uncertainty of the pandemic, the generous hearts of our faithful come shining through as luminaries of love and hope.

In response to many inquiries offering financial assistance, [a special donation link](#) is available on the Metropolis website for those who wish to make a contribution to aid in this relief effort. The Metropolis has formed a special committee which will determine the best and most effective way to direct [your donations](#) to ensure they reach those who have been most impacted by the fires.

It is difficult to comprehend the magnitude of these fires and the generations that it will take to rebuild and reconstitute our land and forests. What a beautiful world God has granted us, and our carelessness, coupled with adverse weather conditions and the damaging effects of climate change, have led to this incredible devastation.

Please continue to pray – for calm winds, for rain, for the firefighters, and for all those who are suffering. May the Lord stretch forth His mighty hand, sending forth dew from the heavens so that this world – His beautiful creation – may once again be resplendent in glory.

With Love in Christ,

+ G E R A S I M O S

Metropolitan of San Francisco

[Source](#)