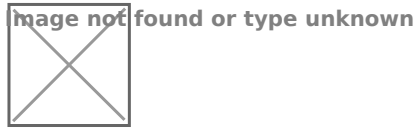


Maui Devastated By Three Concurrent Fires



The destruction of another beautiful area of our country has struck, with raging fires in Maui, Hawaii, forcing evacuations and causing widespread loss of homes and structures. There are three fires impacting various parts of Maui: Lahaina, Kula and Kihei, all of which are suffering as a result of an unprecedented meteorological event brought on by the high winds of Hurricane Dora running south of the Hawaiian islands, with the force of northeasterly trade winds multiplied by the hurricane's rotation.

Much of Lahaina has been destroyed, with people losing their homes and livelihoods. Thirty-six deaths have been reported so far, and numerous injuries. There are yet many people unaccounted for, as the speed and intensity of this fire provided little time to escape to safety. People even drove on to the beach so they could take protection in the water from the fast moving flames, and were ultimately rescued by the US Coast Guard.

Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco remarked, "I have had the opportunity to visit the mission parish in Maui on several occasions, and to see the reports of the devastation caused by these fires is truly heartbreaking. We pray for all those affected by the fires that the Lord may grant them strength and peace during these most difficult circumstances. We also pray for the first responders who are working tirelessly to contain these fires to stop this path of destruction."

Dr. Jeffrey Yopez, President of the Maui Greek Orthodox Mission Parish, is leading an effort to assemble and distribute care packages to those who have been displaced. They are providing prepackaged food, water and hygiene items as well as a message of encouragement for those suffering from loss and displacement. Parishioners are delivering these care packages to the Maui War Memorial Complex. Information on how you can donate to this effort will be forthcoming.

Since 2012, the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco has had a small but faithful mission parish, served by the clergy from Sts. Constantine and Helen Cathedral in Honolulu, Hawaii. This congregation was visited by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America in January 2020 for the Feast of Theophany

and was inspired by the beauty of the islands and zeal of the stewards who have nurtured the Orthodox Christian presence on this island. Since His Eminence's visit the mission parish has grown and still continues on this pathway.

For regular updates on the ongoing fire relief effort, please visit:
www.mauimission.org.

Photo: Maui Greek Orthodox Mission Parish

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