



Your Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, our beloved brother and concelebrant in the Lord: May God's grace, mercy and peace be upon you.

We have watched over the last months as the devastating wildfires spread throughout the beautiful State of California, previously across the north and now – in what has escalated into one of the worst cases on record – across the south.

We have also witnessed the panic and pain that this has created in communities throughout the region with extensive loss of human life, displacement of innumerable residents, and heartbreaking destruction of wildlife.

We have paid special attention to our own faithful in the sacred Metropolis of San Francisco, whose dearest family and friends – and whose precious places of residence and houses of worship – are impacted by this unimaginable disaster.

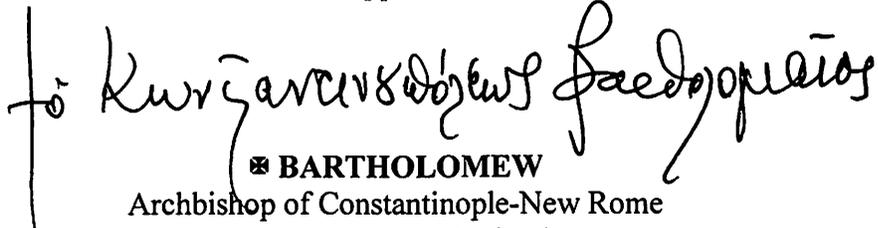
Finally, we have observed the inspirational acts of rescue and aid – by countless firefighters and volunteers – that always characterize the people of your State and Nation as they rally to respond to those in crisis and hardship.

May God bless and keep them all safe and sound in His loving-kindness and abiding compassion!

Beloved brother, we express to you and, through you, to all our faithful as well as all the people of California our wholehearted solidarity and support in prayer and love. We assure you that our heart and mind are with you at this difficult time. Today, we commemorate the Prophet Daniel and the three holy children, who were preserved unharmed in the flames of the fire. Therefore, we pray that “the Father of mercies and God of all consolation may comfort you in this affliction, so that you may in turn comfort those who are in trouble with the consolation with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (2 Corinthians 1.3-4)

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the 17th of December, 2017

Your fervent supplicant before God,


✠ BARTHOLOMEW
Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch