



October 14, 2017

## Helping our neighbors affected by fires

As the loss of life and property mounts due to the wildfires north of our Diocese, our hearts ache for our sisters and brothers in the Santa Rosa Diocese. Please join with me in praying for the dead and for those who are suffering, whether from physical injury or from the loss of their homes and livelihoods. We also pray for the firefighters, medical personnel, social workers and others who are aiding the victims and their loved ones.

I have spoken with Bishop Robert Vasa, the bishop of Santa Rosa. He is grateful for our prayers, and is providing regular updates on his website: <http://srdiocese.org/signofhope>. He is encouraging everyone to participate in a holy hour of adoration to pray for those affected and for the fires to subside.

I ask all parishes to consider a special collection for the victims of the fires. Please select a weekend to accommodate your parish's calendar, and send the money per our usual process for special collections. We will send immediately to the Santa Rosa Diocese.

Catholic Charities of Santa Rosa (<http://www.srcharities.org/fire-recovery>) is working with other agencies to provide short-term and long-term support for victims. People who are in shelters will need to find temporary housing while their homes are being rebuilt. Monetary donations will be the most useful contribution to that work; you can find information on how to donate at their website. They are also able to accept a limited number of the following items: diapers, baby wipes, face masks, twin size blankets, toiletries, towels and warm adult coats.

Catholic Charities is also in need of bi-lingual volunteers; you may call 707.528.8712, ext. 160, for more details. Sometimes people in shelters appreciate having someone willing to listen and to pray with them. This ministry of presence is truly an act of mercy.

I am grateful for your compassion and outreach to our sisters and brothers.

Michael C. Barber, SJ

Bishop of Oakland