



May 4, 2016

Statement about the Wildfire in Ft McMurray

Even as we still are all in shock with the wildfire destruction and damage in Ft McMurray, let us give thanks to our Lord and God that, with some sixty to seventy thousand people evacuated from the community in a matter of hours, there has been no loss of life.

Really, this in itself, constitutes a major achievement. I want to thank and to commend all the security and firefighting services, the public authorities but especially the good people of Ft McMurray. Once again, the people of Ft McMurray have rallied together and reached out to help and protect each other. Mayor Melissa Blake is so right when she says, “We know how to ‘hunker down’”!

In the days and months to come, as we learn of the full extent of the losses and damages, we shall all be called upon to continue and extend the tradition of families helping families and communities reaching out to communities to rebuild and resettle.

It is rumoured that the St Paul Parish church on Signal Rd in the Thickwood area was lost to the flames.

With this and the many still un-identified losses of the whole Ft McMurray community I advise that this weekend at all Masses in the diocese, we shall take up a second collection as a first step for the relief effort and support of all those who lost their homes there.

This fire disaster is a ‘hard blow’ at a time when Ft McMurray is already struggling under an adverse economic situation. But with our faith, our hope and our love for each other, we shall, as a young local evacuee said on Facebook last night, build a “better Ft McMurray”.

With prayers in our Lord,

*† Paul Terrio*

†Bishop Paul Terrio  
Bishop of St Paul in Alberta