



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



March 27, 2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

This Sunday in our life as the Church we read the words of Saint Paul from his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, "So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us." This corporate ambassadorship requires us as the Catholic Church especially to love our brothers and sisters in the Church's Communion and to reach out to them in time of crisis and dire need.

As you know, many people of Eastland County have suffered injury, emotional trauma, property loss, and homelessness caused by wildfires that have destroyed over 40,000 acres of land including the small town of Carbon, Texas. Last weekend, I visited and celebrated Mass at all four parishes in the area affected by the fires – St. John Parish in Strawn, St. Rita Parish in Ranger, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish in Cisco, and St. Francis Xavier Parish in Eastland. These four parishes, entrusted to the pastoral ministry of Father Vijay Mareedu, have responded to all in need by opening the parish halls at St. Rita and St. Francis Xavier for temporary shelter and as places for people to donate or receive clothing, toiletries and food.

Various organizations have joined the local parishes of Eastland County in providing immediate relief but much more support will be needed as these communities begin the journey of long-term recovery from devastation. I am asking that we as the Local Church of the Diocese of Fort Worth respond in our baptized capacity as ambassadors for Christ and assist our brothers and sisters in need of recovery. For this need, I am asking that a special collection be taken in all our parishes on April 2-3, 2022, for the compassionate, long-term recovery, and significant community needs arising from these tragedies.

Your generosity will witness to the compassionate unity of the Catholic Church and bring hope to our brothers and sisters who need it most at this time. Please respond charitably when this collection is taken in your parish or by using the secure giving links on the Diocese of Fort Worth website: <https://fwdioc.org/eastland-wildfire-disaster-relief> or bit.ly/EastlandRelief (case sensitive).

With pride in you as your bishop and gratitude for your generosity, I remain,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+ Michael F. Olson

Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, STD, MA
Bishop of Fort Worth

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