

Lasallian solidarity in the face of US wildfires

During the month of January 2025, California, an American state famous throughout the world for its cultural diversity, mild climate, natural beauty and dynamic economy, was severely affected by a series of fires that damaged and devastated several areas, including Altadena, Pasadena, Pacific Palisades and other surrounding areas, involving thousands of acres of land.

The havoc was immense: to homes, with many houses damaged or destroyed by the flames; to infrastructure, with major damage to power lines and consequent power outages and communication problems; and to the environment, with severe air pollution, necessitating the closure of schools and outdoor activities.

In addition, thousands of people were evacuated from their homes due to the advancing flames. The fire had a significant impact on the lives of the affected communities, causing material losses, distress and emotional distress.

The Lasallian District San Francisco New Orleans

The leadership of the Lasallian District of San Francisco New Orleans (SFNO) has been closely monitoring the evolving situation with regard to its schools, students and their families, providing information on the development of the fires that are still burning in the Pasadena and Los Angeles areas.

A District release reported that the fire in Eaton, on the northern outskirts of Pasadena, was relatively contained, although power outages, interrupted cell phone service and contaminated water were reported.

The school president of De La Salle College Preparatory, Perry Martin, reports, 'the school is in a fire warning zone with the surrounding areas under a mandatory evacuation. The air quality surrounding the school building is also at unhealthy rating and is having direct adverse impacts on those outside and inside the school building'. Of course, school and educational activities on campus, including sports activities, will continue to be suspended and the school will continue to provide updates.

The families of De La Salle College (LSCP) who have lost their homes or have

been forced to evacuate, have received the help and support of the school administration, which is collaborating in trying to facilitate contact between those who have made their homes available and families in need of immediate shelter. An official donation page, the Lancer Support Fund, has also been set up.

The Palisades fire, west of Santa Monica, is itself partially contained. According to the CalFire website, it covers over 23,000 acres in the Pacific Palisades area. Extensive damage and loss of utilities occurred.

From Cathedral High School in Los Angeles, President Martin Farfan reports that 'due to the ongoing fires and poor air quality throughout Los Angeles County, classes were cancelled last week, allowing the school's maintenance department to clean up the campus and facilitate a safe and welcoming return for students.

For any updates, to follow the development of the fire situation, and to support all families in need, please visit the District SFNO website <https://delasalle.org/2025/01/update-on-los-angeles-fires-and-area-sfno-schools>