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**Archdiocese of Los Angeles**

Office of the Archbishop

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My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Our beloved and Mission San Gabriel Arcángel suffered a devastating fire in the pre-dawn hours of July 11.

It is terribly sad. Thanks be to God, nobody was hurt. But the damage is extensive — the roof is destroyed and much of the old church is ruined. Thankfully, the historic paintings, the Stations of the Cross, and other artifacts had been removed from the sanctuary as part of the renovations being done to prepare for the mission's 250th anniversary next year.

Mission San Gabriel is the historic cornerstone and the spiritual heart of Los Angeles and the Catholic community here.

The family of God was born in this region when St. Junípero Serra and his brother Franciscans established the mission on September 8, 1771.

It was families from this mission, who in turn founded Los Angeles ten years later, on September 4, 1781, walking nine miles west from the mission, crossing the Los Angeles River, and establishing El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora de los Angeles de Porciuncula, named for the little chapel where St. Francis of Assisi first heard the call of Jesus Christ.

To this day, the parish at San Gabriel Mission continues to be a shining expression of the beautiful diversity that God intends for his human family.

So, join me please in praying in this sad moment for our brothers and sisters at Mission San Gabriel. May they know the comfort and consolation of our loving Father and the solidarity and care of the entire family of God here in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

We have established a special fund for the rebuilding of the mission. You can get more information on our website: <http://lacatholics.org/restoration>.

Entrusting us all to the maternal care of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I ask Our Lady's intercession and the intercession of St. Junípero Serra, for Mission San Gabriel and for our city, state, and country.

Most Reverend José H. Gomez  
Archbishop of Los Angeles