

Strong Santa Ana winds hitting fire-ravaged Los Angeles — again

“We encourage our students to respond to the needs of our time with compassion, integrity and confidence in God and in their own gifts.” MJS

Low humidity, strong winds & powerful gusts in the greater Los Angeles area, in January 2025, created the perfect environment for wildfires to spread quickly out of control. The SHCJ family there includes Sisters, Associates, Mayfield Junior & Senior Schools, and LAMP (South Central LA Ministry Project). Among them they experienced the traumas of the permanent loss of a home & everything in it, temporary evacuation & displacement, fear, and the violent disruption of ordinary life. They have been magnanimous in their outreach to family, friends, neighbors, & colleagues who have suffered every kind of loss and misery. Here are some brief stories of their vibrant spirit of compassion, integrity & confidence in God.

“Thank you, we are safe; it’s hard to know what to do next, but friends and family have been helping. We have not seen our house except in a video. Hopefully we’ll see it tomorrow. In the video we could see just a wall or two left. The whole neighborhood is gone.”

Associates, Linda & Liam Mennis

“The fire doesn’t play favorites; we are lucky to still have our home, and are anxious to go back there again. Thanks for thinking of us. It is comforting.” Susan Slater, SHCJ

“The smoke continues to be heavy & although we are only a few miles from the area that is burning, we cannot see the flames We are no longer in the Eaton fire’s “be ready” evacuation zone and we have not been in the DO NOT USE WATER area where tap water is unhealthy for drinking and cooking. The fire is now 45% contained.” France White, SHCJ



“Being part of a Holy Child community like Mayfield is a blessing, particularly in times like these. The outpouring of prayer, compassion, and support strengthens us, and with a resilient spirit, we will get through this together It is with a heavy heart that I share that the damage caused by the windstorm and wildfires has hit home. To the best of our knowledge, 11 Mayfield families and eight faculty and staff members have lost their homes as of now. Many have also been displaced, uprooted, or unable to access their property or belongings. This is a significant percentage of our school, but we will trust in the wisdom of the Lord and lean on each other to navigate this challenging time

Joe Sciuto, Head of Mayfield Junior School

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“Committed to meeting the wants of the ages, Holy Child educators developed collaboratively seven goals as principles in how students are educated in the spirit of Cornelia Connelly. With 9 schools in the US network and international presence, the goals serve as a framework for the Holy Child community” MSS



MIXED: Last week I wrote a prayer welcoming God's refining fire. Then horrifying flames began devastating Los Angeles. "When you walk through fire you shall not be burned," God says, and then some are. The baptismal flood brings beauty and devastation. Some drown in holy water. Life is a mixed bag, and we grab it because it's our only bag Ruin has its joys, and triumph its sorrows. To love God is to lose and receive

everything. Sometimes it is among ashes we become most human. After the fire they will clean up using power generated by burning something. We join the beautiful slow dance of the Beloved, man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. What does this mean? That nothing is absolute but God, who is always present, and mostly paradox. We touch each other. We trust grace, and we take what comes.

Steve Garnaaas-Holmes, "Mixed"

“Thank you for your encouraging emails, phone calls and texts over these past few days. It has meant the world to me and my team. We have been ... working nonstop to set up systems that will support Mayfield, not just now, but going forward. Their response to this crisis has been grounded in mission, and they have demonstrated extraordinary compassion, emotional intelligence and sensitivity when communicating with students and their families. The degree to which they know Mayfield students is truly remarkable. I have been in communication with the CAIS, the Pasadena Head of School group and Joe Sciuto. We are all sharing resources and are keeping each other informed of our plans. I am fortunate for Joe's partnership on this journey.

Immediately after the fire, we began to reach out to members of the MSS community to see who was affected by the fire. We ... began to compile information on families, alums and past parents. On Friday, teams of teachers and administrators reached out by phone to personally call each current student to see how she and her family were doing and inquire if they needed support from Mayfield.

We quickly established a community emergency relief fund and organized a donation center and drop off for Saturday. ...It has been uplifting to see our Holy Child family in other schools respond to our community's needs. We are overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support. Our task now is to figure out a way to distribute the gift cards and money collected to our families in a way that is equitable and makes sense. **Laura Farrell, Head of Mayfield Senior School**