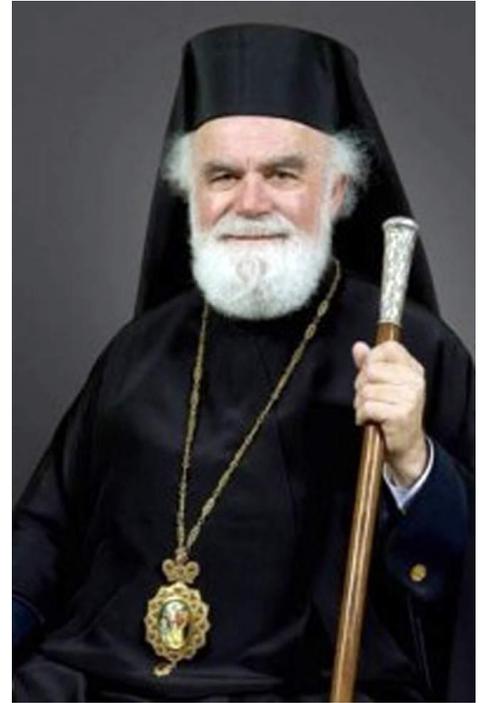


My Beloved Ones,

I greet you with love and joy in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I wish to express my sincere thoughts and prayers to the community of Baton Rouge, Louisiana which in recent days has seen terrible weather conditions: flooding, which has affected 40,000 homes, displaced 8,000 people into emergency shelters, and at present, has claimed the lives of 13 people.

As Hierarch of this Holy and God-protected Metropolis of Atlanta, my thoughts and prayers are especially with our community of Holy Trinity in Baton Rouge. I was very relieved to hear from Fr. Anthony Monteleone that while the church has suffered heavy water damage and is not fit for use at the present moment, repair costs are being assessed, a temporary facility for Divine Services is under consideration, and—most importantly—no members of Holy Trinity were injured or suffered loss of life. This indeed, is the greatest relief; facilities can be repaired, but a human life is far more precious.



With this ever present reality in our minds, my brothers and sisters in Christ, let us first pray for the repose of those thirteen souls, and for strength to be bestowed upon their families in such difficult times. Let us pray for all those who are displaced, and who are seeking temporary shelter, and are faced with the loss of their homes and business. Let us all pray especially for those first responders and aid workers who have accepted the calling to help their fellow neighbors in such difficult circumstances.

Let us pray, in spite of these reminders of the power of nature, and the impermanence of life and worldly possessions, that all of us use this as an opportunity to exhibit Christ-like charity and love towards those who are affected. And it is equally my hope that all of us shall find the strength in the midst of destruction and tragedy, to turn towards the embrace of our All-Loving and Ever Merciful God.

Amen.

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta