

As I write this message, I am struck by the devastation occurring in Paris. Watching the massive flames engulfing Notre Dame Cathedral causing massive destruction and heart break, not just for the French, but for people around the world. I cannot help but think of how devastated the Catholics of Almonte must have been when they suffered a similar fate 150 years ago. Watching their beloved church burn to the ground, the parishioners of St. Mary's (now Holy Name of Mary) must have felt devastated the Christmas Eve, wondering how they will move forward.

But just like any great tragedy, the true human spirit and generosity of love shines above all else; bringing people together to put aside their differences and help those in need. And this shows us the other side of fire that devastates, new life. Out of the ashes of destruction comes new life, new hope and new light.

At Easter we see arise new life, new hope and a new light, Jesus Christ. He comes to us out of the ashes of our penitential experiences during Lent, to give us new life. As we see the Easter Candle lit, it is a lasting sign of how our dying to our sinful inclinations lead us to a new life of service to others sharing God's abundant love for us with others.

May the new light of Jesus Christ enlighten your hearts with new life and new hope. May it give you his loving spirit of self-sacrifice and generosity towards others this Easter morning and throughout the whole year.