



**Statement Concerning the Burning of St George Coptic Orthodox Church
Surrey BC, CANADA**

“On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old” (Amos 9:11)

July 20, 2021

The Coptic Orthodox Metropolitan and Bishops of North America are deeply saddened to hear of the burning of St George Coptic Orthodox Church in Surrey BC in Canada early on Monday morning July 19. This parish is part of the Diocese of Mississauga, Vancouver and Western Canada and we all extend our sympathy and prayers to His Grace Bishop Mina, the bishop of the diocese and to the parish priests and all the community of this blessed church which was consecrated by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III of blessed memory in the late 1990's.

This parish served many Coptic Orthodox believers from Canada, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq and Lebanon. We pray that Our Lord Jesus Christ may strengthen the community and grant them peace and comfort during these difficult times in order to rebuild this beautiful church. The church is more than a building but in fact it is the Body of Christ, that is, the faithful believers.

We were deeply touched to see the parish priests, deacons and the faithful congregation standing in front of the burnt church and chanting triumphantly with one voice the Midnight Praise. As St Paul teaches us, “We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Corinthians 4:8-10)

There was an arson attempt on this church in the early morning of Wednesday July 14, just a few days prior to the complete destruction of this church. We request the authorities to promptly bring the investigation to a close and to find the cause of this horrific devastation. We also call upon the elected government officials to support the Coptic community of Surrey to find an alternate temporary place of worship until this church can be built as soon as possible. We also pray along other faith communities that have suffered similar incidents in the past few weeks.

May the Lord of comfort grant peace to every member of St George Parish in Surrey BC and know that you are in our prayers, and you have our full support.



Signatures:

H.E. Metropolitan Serapion

H.G. Bishop Youssef

H.G. Bishop Suriel

H.G. Bishop David

H.G. Bishop Angaelos

H.G. Bishop Mina

H.G. Bishop Karas

H.G Bishop Peter

H.G. Bishop Abraham

H.G. Bishop Kyrillos

H.G. Bishop Seraphim

H.G. Bishop Basil

H.G. Bishop Gregory

H.G. Bishop Boulos