Rev's Reflections

Firestorms

One morning in the fall of 2007, I looked out of the window of my little apartment in Long Beach, California, looking at my "view:" a wooden fence and stucco wall. I was curious why the building next door was orange. Had they painted it during the previous afternoon and I hadn't noticed?

I stepped outside for my morning run and realized the building hadn't been painted. The sky was orange. The *whole* sky was orange because of the fires burning to the south, propelled by the notorious Santa Ana winds. By the end of the day, there was so much ash in that orange sky that it began falling like snow.

For the next seven years, wherever I was living and serving in California, there would be a period during which nearby wildfires had the feeling of a weather event. A storm. And all those fires were made worse, year after year, because of drought.

Other than an incredibly rainy ten days back in September, there's been so little precipitation in New England — especially in Eastern Massachusetts where I live — that wildfires sprang up all around us in the late summer. That's not supposed to happen here, or in Canada where it's been even worse. Meanwhile, a tornado in San Francisco, and mild winters in Ohio.

Now these huge fires in Los Angeles, looking like a hellscape as people crowd the narrow, winding streets of the canyons trying to get out while they can.

The news has been full of stories of the people who defied evacuation orders, choosing to stay and save their homes, and the homes of their neighbors, by dousing everything with water. Of course, there isn't much water in the region, and they're using up some of the water pressure, impacting professional rescue efforts.

While it's all terrifying to watch, the real firestorms will come about the time the flames are under control. Will the incoming president refuse federal aid because California didn't vote for him? Or any other state after a disaster? Will insurance companies drop homeowners in fire-prone regions? Or any

region with a history of natural disasters? What could this mean for the future of our Republic? The future of the American Dream?

I’m just trying to stay in the here and now, hoping that the fires end soon, and that everyone in California is safe, especially the people we know.

In Peace,
Rev Denis