

Bishop Vásquez: Prayer for West Memorial Service

On Thursday, April 25, Bishop Joe S. Vásquez was invited to give the Benediction at the memorial service for those who perished in fire and explosion at the West Fertilizer Company on April 17. The service was attended by more than 10,000 people including President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama and representatives from fire and EMS units across the state of Texas.

The prepared text of Bishop Vásquez' prayer follows:

Brothers and sisters: let us now place our sorrow and pain at the feet of our loving Father asking that he give us the fortitude to face the days ahead.

Let us pray.

All-powerful God,

you hear the cries of those in distress;

hear us now as we pray

for our relatives and friends.

You are

hope in our adversity,

strength in our weakness,

and comfort in our sorrow,

be merciful to your people.

For the families who have lost loved ones, we ask you to

ease their burden

increase their faith

and give them confidence and trust

in your fatherly care.

Bless those who have sustained injury,

may they receive your healing comfort;

Bless the first responders for their selfless acts of courage,

may they receive the grace of your strength.

Father, you have filled the hearts of your faithful in the community of West

with the gift of love for one another.

We raise, in prayer, the people of West,

grateful for their many acts of kindness and generosity

extended to their neighbors in the aftermath of this tragedy.

Merciful God, your holy word promises that you will be with your people always and that you "...will wipe every tear from our eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain..." and you will "make all things new." (*Revelation 21*)

Loving God,

tenderly extend your mercy on those who have died

and welcome them into your Kingdom of peace and joy.

In your compassion look upon us;

wipe away every tear from our eyes;

guide us in the days that lie ahead;

and give us strength to rebuild our lives.

We ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord.

Amen.