



# *The Diocese of Knoxville*

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MEDIA ADVISORY  
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Contact Emily Booker  
865-862-5730 ■ [ebooker@dioknox.org](mailto:ebooker@dioknox.org)

The Chancery  
805 Northshore Drive  
Knoxville, Tenn. 37919  
[www.dioknox.org](http://www.dioknox.org)

## **Bishop Richard F. Stika issues statement on Notre Dame Cathedral fire**

**KNOXVILLE** —Bishop Richard F. Stika of the Diocese of Knoxville expressed shock and disappointment today at the destructive fire that broke out in the historic Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris.

Bishop Stika said he will reach out to the Archdiocese of Paris with prayers and offers of support from the Diocese of Knoxville as France works to rebuild the centuries-old cathedral from this devastating fire.

“I was there a number of years ago. To see the news accounts of the devastating fire at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris is shocking. This cathedral dates back almost 900 years, and it is not only a place of worship but also a symbol of France itself. The Diocese of Knoxville offers prayers and support to our brothers and sisters in France. In the coming days I will send a letter to the archbishop of Paris offering words of support and affection,” Bishop Stika said.

“I am also praying for those people who are risking their lives to put out the fire and others who offer them support,” the bishop added. “I hope that, if possible, the cathedral will be repaired so it will continue to be a living symbol of our love for God through faith, and that it also will remain a symbol of France itself.”

**Bishop Stika will be available for print and broadcast interviews on Tuesday, April 16, at 11:30 a.m. EDT at the Chancery, 805 S. Northshore Drive.**

Built from the 12th through 14th centuries, the landmark cathedral in the French capital is one of the most recognizable churches in the world, receiving more than 12 million visitors each year.

The cathedral was undergoing restoration at the time the fire broke out, though it is unknown if the fire originated in the area of construction.