

# **Pepperdine University cross survives Franklin Fire: ‘Grateful to God’**

A cross overlooking Pepperdine University miraculously withstood a wildfire that came dangerously close to the Malibu, California, campus and forced students to shelter in place earlier last week.

A video shared by the campus shows a discernible hiking trail leading up to the unscathed cross surrounded by scorched dirt and vegetation.

The school shared an unattributed quote from someone who said they became "teary-eyed" and "grateful to God" as they moved closer to the cross.



The cross sits at the top of a hiking trail that extends three miles into the Santa Monica Mountains.

The original cross burned down during the Woolsey Fire in 2018. The current 20-foot cross was placed there by the brothers of the Sigma Chi fraternity, the school said in a blog post.

In the meantime, firefighters are continuing to battle the blaze – dubbed the Franklin Fire. The flames were fed by powerful winds that swept through the region at the beginning of the week, making it difficult for firefighters to control the flames.

The weather improved so much last Wednesday that meteorologists discontinued all red flag warnings, which indicate high fire danger, and crews were able to successfully push back against the flames.

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More than 3,700 Malibu residents have been allowed to return to their homes, but another 1,600 people with homes in the city remained under evacuation orders. All told, some 20,000 residents in the city and neighboring areas have been affected by mandatory evacuation orders and warnings since the fire broke out late last Monday.

Early analysis shows little to no damage to structures at Pepperdine University. Final exams were postponed or canceled, and faculty members were determining how best to complete the semester, which ended last week.