



+ August 6, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters at St. Patrick's,

Peace be with you! I hope you are all enjoying the sunshine and joy that the summer season brings.

As many of you know, Deacon Dennis Kelly recently met with me, as well as Bishop Mueggenborg and Leigh Stringfellow. He shared the feedback he is receiving and expressed your desires for me to change the direction that has been laid out for your beloved St. Patrick's community. I thank him for all his work and his dedication to the ministry of serving you.

Given the realities we face across the Archdiocese of Seattle, I simply cannot change the direction that has been many years in the making. There have been discussions around merging parishes in the South Seattle area for more than 40 years. It would be irresponsible of me to let the status quo continue by not following through on our Strategic Planning process, the goal of which is to help create vibrant, sustainable parishes that carry out the mission of the Church and bring people closer to Christ. It is my responsibility to ensure strong pastoral care for everyone in the archdiocese. This work is challenging but will ultimately strengthen our Catholic parish communities so that we can evangelize, form disciples and bring the love and joy of our Lord to more people.

This process requires very difficult decisions which, I am fully aware, have real and painful impacts on people and communities. I have read your letters, spoken with our team, listened to Deacon Dennis and consulted with many. While our Strategic Planning process will continue moving forward in the specified direction, I am extending the timeline for St. Patrick Parish because one of the proposed options is currently not available for discussion.

As you know, the direction for St. Patrick's is for the parishioners to discern and select their future home parish(es). The options of Sacred Heart and St. Joseph's were both presented. However, St. Joseph Parish, which is entrusted to the care of the Society of Jesus, is currently without an assigned pastor. Without a pastor in place, any discussions about a potential merger are difficult to pursue. Therefore, we will grant an extension to the process until the Jesuits assign a new pastor to that parish, which will allow the next phase of this process to continue. We do not yet have a timetable for that assignment, but once we know we will inform your stakeholder team.

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has engaged in this process. From attending listening sessions to sharing your feedback and supporting Deacon Dennis as he guides your community forward, your participation is a sign of your love for your Catholic faith and our Lord. I pray the Holy Spirit continues to guide all our efforts and gives us all grace to hear our Lord and respond to his wishes. As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Paul D. Etienne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "E".

Most Rev. Paul D. Etienne, DD, STL  
Archbishop of Seattle