



For Immediate Release

Archbishop Paul D. Etienne Places Father William Harris on Leave

SEATTLE, October 24, 2020 – Archbishop Paul D. Etienne has placed Father William Harris, the pastor of the Pro-Cathedral of St. James the Greater in Vancouver, Washington, on leave after receiving an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor, which was reported to have occurred more than 20 years ago.

The Archdiocese of Seattle Abuse Helpline received the allegation this week, after which the team immediately followed standard reporting protocols. These protocols include informing law enforcement, maintaining communication with the person reporting the abuse, and placing Father Harris on a leave of absence while this allegation is under investigation.

“We take allegations of abuse very seriously and are committed to providing a safe environment for everyone in our care,” said Archbishop Etienne. “The Archdiocese of Seattle has a longstanding commitment to transparency, accountability and assistance to persons who may have been sexually abused by clergy or by anyone working on behalf of the Church. The individual who made the allegation has been offered the services of our Pastoral Outreach Coordinator, who handles care for people with allegations of childhood sexual abuse.”

Allegations are claims that have not been proven true or false. At this time, guilt or innocence should not be assumed.

Office of the Vicar for Clergy is working to find pastoral coverage for the parishioners at St. James and will provide updates to the parish community.

“I want healing for our people and our Church. We must continue to pray for everyone involved and encourage people who feel they have been harmed to come forward to receive the healing they need,” added Archbishop Etienne.

If you feel that you have been harmed by a member of the clergy or a layperson working on behalf of the Church, or know others who have, please contact law enforcement. You are also encouraged to call the archdiocesan Abuse Helpline (1-800-446-7762). To learn more about the Archdiocese of Seattle’s commitment to healing, please visit the Protect and Heal website at protectandheal.seattlearchdiocese.org.

About the Archdiocese of Seattle

The Archdiocese of Seattle encompasses all of Western Washington, stretching from Canada to Oregon and from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. There are 72 Catholic Schools, 168 parishes, missions and pastoral centers in the archdiocese, with more than 500 weekly Masses celebrated in eight languages. Archbishop Paul D. Etienne leads the archdiocese with his two auxiliary bishops, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo and Bishop Daniel Mueggenborg. For more information about the Archdiocese of Seattle, visit seattlearchdiocese.org.

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