



Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle Welcomes Coadjutor Archbishop Appointed by Pope Francis

Archbishop Paul D. Etienne of Anchorage Will Succeed Archbishop J. Peter Sartain

SEATTLE, April 29, 2019 -- Archbishop J. Peter Sartain today welcomed the appointment of Archbishop Paul D. Etienne, currently archbishop of Anchorage, Alaska, as coadjutor archbishop of Seattle. Archbishop Etienne was appointed by Pope Francis to eventually succeed Archbishop Sartain, who requested a coadjutor archbishop due to ongoing health challenges.

“To say that I am delighted by the Holy Father’s choice would be an understatement,” said Archbishop Sartain, who was installed as the archbishop of Seattle in December 2010, in a letter to the people of the archdiocese. “Archbishop Etienne is a wonderful shepherd whose love for the Lord is expressed through a deep prayer life and devotion to the sacraments, as well as contagious enthusiasm for the proclamation of the Gospel and service to those in need in the name of Jesus.”

“I am excited about the transition to the Archdiocese of Seattle,” said Archbishop Etienne, who received news of this appointment earlier this month from the papal nuncio to the United States. “While I have experience as an archbishop, stepping into a much larger archdiocese will require me to learn new skills. I have great esteem for Archbishop Sartain and look forward to working with him to serve the Lord and preach the good news of the Gospel.”

“At the same time, I have mixed emotions for leaving behind a church I’ve given my life and heart to for the past few years,” added Archbishop Etienne. “I am sad to say goodbye to the wonderful people in the Archdiocese of Anchorage who have been so welcoming. I am truly grateful for their love and support.”

A coadjutor archbishop is appointed by the pope to eventually succeed the current archbishop. He works alongside the current archbishop to become familiar with the archdiocese that he will eventually oversee. This week leaders in the Archdiocese of Seattle welcome Archbishop Etienne for tours and introductions to the people and ministries of the Catholic Church in Western Washington. He will officially join the archdiocese as coadjutor archbishop on June 7, 2019, at a “Rite of Reception” Mass in St. James Cathedral.

“Archbishop Etienne and I will finalize the date later this year on which he will formally succeed me as Archbishop of Seattle,” said Archbishop Sartain. “In the meantime we both look forward to working together to serve the Lord.”

The request for a coadjutor

Since 2012, Archbishop Sartain has experienced a succession of spinal issues, leading to three separate surgeries. While his surgeries were successful, Archbishop Sartain’s back condition has continued to be painful and to negatively impact his energy and stamina.

“About eighteen months ago, I began praying for the Lord’s guidance regarding the possibility of asking the Holy Father to appoint a coadjutor archbishop,” said Archbishop Sartain. “In late September, I wrote Pope Francis and requested the appointment of a coadjutor archbishop, with a view toward retiring much sooner than expected because of my health. Pope Francis graciously responded positively to my request.”

Archbishop Etienne

Archbishop Paul D. Etienne was born to a large Catholic family in Tell City, Indiana. He is one of six children and has two brothers who are Catholic priests, as well as sister who is a Benedictine nun.

He is currently the fourth archbishop for the Archdiocese of Anchorage where he was installed November 9, 2016, after serving as bishop of the Diocese of Cheyenne, Wyoming, for seven years.

Archbishop Etienne studied at Bellarmine College in Louisville, Kentucky; the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota; and the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he earned a Licentiate of Spiritual Theology in 1995.

On June 27, 1992, he was ordained a priest in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, where he served as pastor of several parishes, vocation director and vice-rector of the Bishop Simon Brute College Seminary.

On October 19, 2009, he was appointed bishop of the Diocese of Cheyenne by Pope Benedict XVI. He served there until October 4, 2016, when he was appointed Archbishop of Anchorage by Pope Francis.

You can read more from Archbishop Etienne on his blog: www.archbishopetienne.com.

Press conference with Archbishop Sartain and Coadjutor Archbishop Etienne

- April 29, 2019, at 11 a.m. PT
- Archdiocese of Seattle: 710 Ninth Ave. (sixth floor, Pigott Building)
- Facebook Live: @ArchdioceseofSeattle

About the Archdiocese of Seattle

The Archdiocese of Seattle encompasses all of Western Washington, stretching from the Canadian to the Oregon border and from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. There are 169 parishes, missions and pastoral centers in the archdiocese, with more than 500 weekly Masses in eight languages. The archdiocese is led by Archbishop J. Peter Sartain, who is supported by 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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