



+ September 23, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ in the Pierce Deanery,

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus promises, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” The risen Christ is truly in our midst! He invites each of us into a deeper relationship with him. I pray that each of you experiences his love and hears how he is speaking to you. Developing a relationship with Christ and helping others know his love is how we form disciples, which is the mission of our Catholic Church.

It is this mission that is the foundation for the new parish you are forming in Tacoma. As we move forward in our strategic planning process, I’d like to share my immense gratitude with you. The progress the five parishes have made working together to form the new parish is extraordinary.

Nearly 30 stakeholders lead efforts within each parish (St. Ann, St. Rita of Cascia, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John of the Woods mission) and jointly with Father Tuan and the strategic planning committee. There are 10 parishioner-led subcommittees dedicated to vital areas of pastoral life including communication, liturgy, faith formation, archives, facilities, school, community outreach, diversity, internal ministries and stewardship. Many of these subcommittees have developed and presented recommendations. Father Tuan has asked several of the joint subcommittees to continue their work and become the first committees of the new parish, including a recently formed Welcome & Hospitality committee.

In all, more than 80 volunteers have stepped up to share their time and talents for the betterment of the entire community. That is a visible sign of the Holy Spirit’s presence among you!

In addition to my gratitude, I wish to share that I’ve appointed Bishop Eusebio Elizondo as the new lead of strategic planning. He has been involved along the way and has been transitioning with Bishop Daniel Mueggenborg who left us this month for his new appointment as the Bishop of Reno. Bishop Elizondo has already started this new role and is working closely with the Director of Strategic Planning, Leigh Stringfellow, as well as many of you.

My sincere hope is that you continue to respond to the Holy Spirit and listen to our Lord. Be assured of my continued prayers for you, your community and the hope for the future that will be the fruit of this effort. As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Paul D. Etienne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a distinct "D" in the middle.

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