



+ March 13, 2023 – Anniversary of Pope Francis' papacy

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May the joy of our Lord fill your hearts today! Despite the challenges and trauma in our world, we remain grateful to God for all the gifts he has given us. The gift of life, of family, of friendship, of community, of health, of humor, of generosity, of hope – and much more. Recognizing that all we have is truly a gift from God helps remind us of his great love for us.

It is with this gratitude and love for our Lord that I write today. Today we celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pope Francis' papacy, during which Pope Francis has called us to live the joy of the Gospel, with each person, and all of God's creation, our common home.

Here in our own archdiocese, we are sharing Christ's love. Together we are caring for the sick, welcoming the stranger, clothing the poor, accompanying one another and sharing the joy of the Gospel – all in an effort to respond to the mission Jesus gave us to “go make disciples.”

The past year was incredibly fruitful. As Archbishop, I had the blessing and opportunity to engage thousands of people as I was able to venture out more in this post-pandemic era. I celebrated Mass in many parishes, visited with pastoral ministers, teachers and students at numerous Catholic schools, listened to heartbreaking stories of individuals who have been harmed through their experience of Church, visited and prayed with men and women who spend months at a time at sea, and spent countless hours in collaboration with the many men and women who serve the Church in various roles of leadership.

This past year was also grounded in synodality, as Pope Francis invited everyone to participate in the global synod – a communal time for prayerful discernment and listening. More than 11,000 people in the archdiocese participated, sharing their thoughts, concerns and hopes. You can read the [full report here](#). We are participating in the next phases of the synod, while prayerfully considering our local feedback and amplifying the existing ministries and work to address the needs identified in the synod process.

We also began long-term planning for the archdiocese to re-envision and reinvigorate parish life to refocus on our mission while balancing our finite resources – volunteers, clergy, finances and more. These prayerful discussions led to the development of [Partners in the Gospel](#), the strategic pastoral planning effort that is underway across the whole archdiocese.

I'd like to share a few additional milestones from this past year that demonstrate how our Catholic Church is living today:

- In 2021, auxiliary Bishop Daniel Mueggenborg was appointed the Bishop of Reno, and last year, we were blessed to welcome a new auxiliary bishop: Bishop Frank Schuster, who grew up in our archdiocese and continues to serve as the pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Federal Way.
- The St. Joseph Foundation, a new Catholic foundation dedicated to connecting faith with charitable giving, was established with a generous gift from Theiline “Ty” P. Scheumann. The St. Joseph Foundation will raise funds to provide long-term support for efforts that address the spiritual, educational and ministerial needs of our local Catholic community.
- In May, we launched the [Catholic Healthcare Collaboration](#), an innovative partnership to transform the way Catholic organizations respond to the cry of the poor and those on the margins. Specifically, the Archdiocese of Seattle, Catholic Community Services/Catholic Housing Services of Western Washington, PeaceHealth, Providence Health Services and Virginia Mason Franciscan Health joined with the idea that together we can provide more services and assist more people in meaningful ways than each entity could do on its own.
- The Archdiocese of Seattle is featured in [“The Chair” TV series](#), which highlights the fascinating history of our local Catholic Church. I recommend everyone watch this short documentary that describes the richness, beauty and creativity of our early Catholics.
- We moved the official archdiocesan Archbishop’s residence, selling Connolly House for \$13.5 million and purchasing a new, much smaller residence, Bethany House, in a nearby neighborhood for \$2.4 million. Although this has upset some people, please know I truly believe this move not only provides a more hospitable location to carry out my ministry and responsibilities, but also demonstrates prudent stewardship as we are now able to invest more than \$11 million into Catholic ministries.

This year has been challenging, fruitful and filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. It is a privilege to serve as your archbishop, and I humbly ask for your continued prayers. Please be assured of my constant prayer for all of you and all of those who serve in our many Catholic parishes, schools and institutions in Western Washington. As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,



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