



Partners in the Gospel Parish Family Feedback Report Published

Based on input changes to 25 proposed parish families emerged

SEATTLE, Nov. 16, 2023 – Today, the Archdiocese of Seattle published the [Parish Family Feedback Report](#) summarizing the input gathered during the consultation about the proposed parish families – a key milestone of [Partners in the Gospel](#), an effort aimed at restructuring and renewing parish life.

“I am incredibly grateful for the input we received – and humbled by the engagement from the people of God,” wrote Archbishop Paul D. Etienne in a letter accompanying the report. “Despite what some may think, we are truly listening.”

As part of this effort, most parishes will be placed into a family with two or more parishes under the leadership of one pastor and one or more parochial vicars to share resources and re-envision new ways to carry out the mission of the Church.

“The proposed parish families are in no way ‘a done deal.’ In fact, the opposite is true,” he added. “Because of your input, proposed changes emerged for 25 parish families. The parishes that have a possible change will have a second round of consultation on the newly proposed parish family configuration.”

The Process

The recent consultation began in August 2023 when parish staff and leadership groups hosted in-person feedback sessions followed by three weeks of public consultation. Most parishes hosted in-person, small-group listening sessions. Across the Archdiocese of Seattle, sessions were offered in multiple languages, including Spanish, Vietnamese and Q’anjob’al (an indigenous Mayan language native to Guatemala), as well as special consultations with the Swinomish, Lummi, Tulalip, Swahili and Chuukese communities.

People who were unable to join an in-person session shared feedback online. In total, more than 700 input parish session reports were submitted, along with over 800 individual online responses, resulting in more than 3,000 pages of input.

This feedback was read by dozens of Chancery staff and Partners in the Gospel team members, who, working in teams, spent more than 200 hours reviewing and synthesizing common themes and specific input from the parishes within the draft family. The synthesis reports were then combined into the larger Parish Family Feedback Report published today.

Common Themes

Overall, most people appreciated the consultation process, with comments such as, “We should all feel more secure in the knowledge that this is a well-discerned, open-ended process, not just another temporary fix. That, to me, is the biggest positive in this whole scenario.”

Several common themes emerged from the recent consultation:

- They love the Catholic Church, their parishes, their communities, and their priests.
- They want to spread the faith, fill the pews, focus on youth and young families, and invite people into their parish communities.
- Most broadly accept that the Partners in the Gospel renewal effort is needed and expressed a willingness to help make it work.
- Many are curious about what Partners in the Gospel will entail in the future, specifically asking logistical questions about how finances and staff will be shared, the impact on schools and the future of buildings.
- There were many comments about the distance between parishes as a hardship, especially for elderly parishioners and priests.
- People are worried about losing more parishioners due to these potential changes.
- Many expressed a desire to keep Mass times the same.
- There is a desire to ensure the needs of multicultural, Spanish-speaking, Native American and small rural communities are addressed.
- There is support for lay leaders to assume administrative and other parish responsibilities.
- Some people felt this work is too drastic, while others felt it was not enough.

This input was used by the Oversight Committee, the Presbyteral Council and the Partners in the Gospel team to inform the discernment around the next draft of proposed parish families. Specifically, of the proposed parish families, 25 were recommended for changes based on this recent consultation. The 78 parishes and missions in these 25 proposed parish families will be invited to host a second round of consultation with staff and parishioners to gather input on the new changes before a final recommendation is submitted to Archbishop Etienne at the end of the year for his discernment. The final parish families are expected to be announced in early 2024.

About Partners in the Gospel

To proactively address the need for change, the Archdiocese of Seattle began the Partners in the Gospel effort aimed at reinvigorating parish life in 2022. The goal of Partners in the Gospel is to engage more people in their faith life, strengthen local communities of faith and help Catholic parishes advance their mission of bringing the Gospel to everyone. To learn more, please visit archseattle.org/partners.

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 and 136 parishes, with more than 500 weekly Masses celebrated in eight languages. Archbishop Paul D. Etienne leads the archdiocese with his auxiliary bishops, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo and Bishop Frank Schuster. For more information about the Archdiocese of Seattle, visit archseattle.org.

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