



+ February 2, 2024 – The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with each of you! Today we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. This feast commemorates a milestone in the life of Jesus and the fulfillment of the hopes of two people, Simeon and Anna, who longed to see the Messiah. We know their hope and that of all Israel was fulfilled beyond their wildest dreams.

As I write to you today, I am aware of how we are reaching a milestone in our life together in the Archdiocese of Seattle. We have embarked on our own journey of hope and renewal as partners in the Gospel, centered on the same person of Jesus Christ.

After more than a year of careful planning and broad consultation, I am pleased to announce our final parish families today. You can see the [final list](#) on the Archdiocese of Seattle's website (archseattle.org). These parish families will go into effect on July 1st under the leadership of a pastor and one or more parochial vicars. These pastors and parochial vicars will be announced this spring.

I am so grateful to the thousands of people who engaged in the consultation process by providing insights during the input phase, sharing new ideas and praying for this renewal effort. Together we are truly partners in the Gospel and this re-envisioning work could not be accomplished without you. Your input made a significant impact on how the parish families were configured. We took into consideration many factors including size, location, language needs, the presence of a school, key ministries and much more. We spent hours in deep discussions and prayer while listening to the Holy Spirit and discerning our path for the future.

The final step before promulgating these new parish families was to take the results of all the input once again to prayer. I made a retreat in early January keeping all of you in my heartfelt prayers, asking for the Lord's blessing and ongoing guidance in our efforts to carry out the mission of the Church more effectively today. I experienced a profound and sustained sense of consolation during this retreat, giving me the final confidence to make these decisions for implementation.

In baptism, the Risen Jesus shares his divine life with us, as well as a share in the responsibility for the mission of the Church – his mission. Because of the dignity of our baptism, all of us carry the responsibility to help others encounter Christ, to walk together on the journey of faith, to proclaim the Gospel and to glorify God by our lives. This mission is larger than any one of us – or any one

parish. This mission of Jesus, our mission, we fulfill together as members of the living Body of Christ, the Church.

My hope is that parish families will benefit from the shared gifts of people, time, finances, talents and more so that we, as partners in the Gospel, can truly renew parish life. We need every member of the Church to share their God-given gifts to build up the Body of Christ. Imagine more young people on fire with the faith, more people encountering Christ in the sacraments, more robust outreach ministries serving the marginalized, and churches that are full every Sunday and Holy Days to give praise and thanks to God. This is all possible, and I believe Partners in the Gospel is the key to making it happen.

Thank you for making this journey with me. I know the road ahead will have its twists and turns, and may seem long and rugged at times, but the Lord will always be there as our companion and guide.

My friends, our future is filled with hope - the same hope that filled Simeon and Anna and the Holy Family that day in the temple. I pray the Holy Spirit continues to grace us with openness, strength, and courage to live into our future together. Please be assured of my continued prayers for you, and please pray for me and for our Catholic Church in Western Washington. As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul D. Etienne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "E".

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