



+ May 6, 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ of St. Rita of Cascia's parish,

Easter blessings of our risen Lord be with each of you!

As you know, St. Rita is part of the current parish planning process in Tacoma, which aims to develop strong, vibrant, and engaged parishes that joyfully share the Gospel and bring Christ to others, while also balancing the resources and personnel available to support them.

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish was merged with St. Ann Parish last year as an interim step after Holy Rosary ceased ministry. Now, St. Rita of Cascia Parish and Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish with its Visitation STEM Academy will merge with St. Ann Parish. As one community they will become Pope St. John XXIII Parish, with St. John of the Woods as a mission of the new parish. The new parish boundaries will encompass those of the merged parishes.

Today, I have issued the official decree to create the new parish in Tacoma that you have been working towards for the past 18 months. It gives me great joy to announce the new parish, Pope St. John XXIII, will be established on July 1, 2022. The new geographical boundaries will encompass those of all the merged parishes.

Together as one new community, Pope St. John XXIII Parish has a strong foundation to meet the pastoral needs of its people, to increase outreach efforts, to joyfully share the Gospel of the Lord with robust evangelization efforts and to help bring Christ to the people of Tacoma. The new parish also has an excellent Catholic School, which will be foundational for the parish community, since Catholic education has been a cornerstone for growth and vibrancy. The school will change its name at the same time as the parish and move when the Pope St. John XXIII campus is ready.

With the Catholic school and the phenomenal faith formation and outreach programs, among many other ministries, your new parish will be a model for evangelization and well positioned to serve and share Christ with the people of Tacoma.

Witnessing how your communities have come together has been inspiring and a clear demonstration of the Holy Spirit at work. Many discussions, research reports, consultations and listening sessions took place between parish and school leaders, various committees, the parish pastoral and finance councils, the strategic planning committee, and the Presbyteral Council. I agree with the overall recommendations of

joining the parish communities and I fully support how this has been carried out by your parish leaders and volunteer committees.

I share my sincere gratitude with everyone who has been involved in this process. Many of you have worked tirelessly to reach this milestone, and your efforts are truly a blessing. I especially want to thank the stakeholders of St. Rita's community who have been shouldering a large portion of this work. Their dedication and love for their faith and this community is inspiring. I also know that this decision has been difficult for some of you. Please know that I understand the difficulty that comes with change, and I pray that the Holy Spirit continues to fill us with grace and hope so that we may have the courage to move forward in service of the Gospel.

Please know of my continued prayers for you and your community as this journey continues. As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,

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

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