



+ May 6, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters at Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish,

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

Today I have issued the official decrees to create the new parish in Tacoma that you have been working toward 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. This is a significant milestone that gives me immense hope for the future of the Church in Western Washington.

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.

As a 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 people encounter Christ. Your present Catholic school will also 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 want to express a special thanks to the school and parish leaders who have joined together to envision a better future for the parish, the school and the community. It is through their

dedication, the grace of the Holy Spirit and the love of our Lord that we can build a vibrant and engaged Catholic community in Tacoma.

Please know of my continued prayers for you. As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul D. Etienne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "P" and "E".

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