



For Immediate Release

Archdiocese of Seattle Continues Strategic Planning Efforts

Strategic Planning Committee Reviewing Recommendations

SEATTLE, March 10, 2021 – The Archdiocese of Seattle’s Strategic Planning Committee, led by Auxiliary Bishop Daniel Mueggenborg, continues its efforts to strengthen the Church in Western Washington by building vibrant, sustainable Catholic communities that carry out the mission of the Church. The committee is supporting the active strategic planning efforts in the Pierce Deanery and is reviewing recommendations for changes from other geographic deaneries across the archdiocese.

“Strategic planning is about responding to the pope’s call for us to ‘read the signs of the times,’ while adapting both to the needs of the faithful and to historical changes,” said Bishop Mueggenborg. “We are in this extensive strategic planning process across the archdiocese to examine the needs of Catholics and determine how to provide for them so that we can all work together to accomplish the mission Jesus entrusted to us.”

Progress in Tacoma Region

The Pierce Deanery is the first to be part of this renewed strategic planning effort. The deanery began its urgent strategic planning work after Holy Rosary Parish in Tacoma was determined no longer to be viable. Following Archbishop Paul D. Etienne’s vision to foster a sustainable, thriving Catholic community in Tacoma, the Pierce Deanery continues efforts to merge Holy Rosary, Visitation, St. Rita and St. Ann parishes into one new parish, associated with the mission of St. John of the Woods.

“This is a process that takes time and relies heavily on the input of the parishioners,” said Leigh Stringfellow, director of strategic planning, who is guiding the process and supporting these parishes as they go through the transition. “We are here to accompany these parishes, acknowledging how challenging this is for many parishioners. Many times, we do not have a clear answer for parishioner questions, since the process calls on them to work together and assist in making the decisions that will shape the new parish.”

The parish communities have each hosted parish-wide meetings to share the archbishop’s vision and collect parishioner questions and concerns. This feedback is then shared with the stakeholder group composed of six to seven members from each parish. These stakeholders are working together to create a vision for the new parish and to discuss how to merge these communities over the next several months. The group is also in the process of launching joint subcommittees for specific ministries identified by parishioners as important for the new parish. Stakeholders will then discuss the timing and other recommendations for the final merger, which will be shared with the archbishop and the new pastor.

Today’s Landscape

While the strategic planning process is underway in the Pierce Deanery, other deaneries across the archdiocese are at different stages, either starting new rounds of strategic planning discussions or reviewing

recommendations from completed research and planning work. The Strategic Planning Committee is working with each deanery, but will be focusing its effort next on the South Seattle and South King Deaneries, where several parishes are located in relatively small geographic areas.

“We must have the courage to enact real changes so we can provide excellent pastoral care and effectively serve the mission of Jesus Christ,” said Bishop Mueggenborg. “We need to face today’s reality and recognize that the way our archdiocese was structured historically is less effective now than in the past. Making changes will strengthen our mission effectiveness now and in the future.”

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, 168 parishes, missions and pastoral centers in the archdiocese, with more than 500 weekly Masses celebrated in eight languages. Archbishop Paul D. Etienne leads the archdiocese with his two auxiliary bishops, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo and Bishop Daniel Mueggenborg. For more information about the Archdiocese of Seattle, visit archseattle.org.

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