

Update from Deacon Dennis on his meeting with Archbishop Etienne, July 13, 2021

Thank you so much for your prayers this week for my meeting with Archbishop Etienne and Bishop Mueggenborg. The two bishops along with Strategic Planning Director Leigh Stringfellow met with me for two hours on Tuesday and allowed me to walk through all of the concerns of the community.

They agreed no decisions would be made at this week's meeting.

The Archbishop was a concerned listener and asked many questions. Bishop Mueggenborg responded to most of the questions and concerns after I presented these facts:

- our frustrations over the parish community not being a part of the overall discernment process prior to the Bishop's letter concerning our future (merger decision) and missing other steps in their own process for these matters
- the reality about the South Seattle Deanery Plan (pairing with COH and shared leadership – not closure) and frustrations of Fr. Mike Ryan about the representation that the deanery was consulted when it was not
- details of our growth over the past 18-months (15 new households)
- the THEMES from our listening session
- details of our financial stability
- the many concerns of the deaf, deaf/blind and L'Arche communities (infrastructure in place such as vibrating crosswalks leading to St. Patrick Church, L'Arche being born from the St. Patrick community, the parish community's longtime commitment to the marginalized not served in other parishes, etc.)
- concern about no permanent pastoral leader at St. Joseph's to even have a meaningful discussion about our future if we were to consider merger as a community with this parish
- Advocates' challenges with Leigh Stringfellow leading this process due to her comments about St. Pat's pending closure in May 2019

The Archbishop asked for time to discern our concerns and consider the next steps. I will talk more about the meeting after this Sunday's Mass.

If you have not sent a letter to the Archbishop, now would be a good time to do so. Please email letters to Archbishop Etienne's assistant Angela Kison (angela.kison@seattlearch.org).

My prayer is the creativity that comes from the Holy Spirit will guide the Archbishop as he discerns the proper and compassionate next steps for our community. Please continue to pray for this community and for our Archbishop and the strategic planning team that they will be guided by the creativity of the Holy Spirit in offering an acceptable resolution to our parish situation.