

Dear St Patrick Community friends,

I've been wanting to send out an update with news related to the likely canon law appeal of the expected decree from the Archbishop mandating our extinctive union with St Joseph parish. There remain some uncertainties about what will happen and when, but there are a few things that can and should be communicated now.

1. The Procurator Mandate. First, I want to let everyone know that we are still welcoming submission of signed Procurator Mandate forms in support of this appeal. This form is available on the parish website at <https://www.stpatrickseattle.org/news/important-parish-update>. I would like to reiterate two key points regarding the form: by signing the mandate you are saying (1) that you oppose the Archdiocese's decision to merge St Patrick Parish and close the church, and (2) that you wish to protect your interests in this matter by pursuing appeals in accord with Canon Law, even to final appeals before the Apostolic Signatura in Rome. If you believe that the Archbishop's decision to close St Pat's is unjust and bad for our community and the Archdiocese, we encourage you to join the almost 170 people thus far who have submitted mandate forms.

Please note that there are no immediate costs of this appeal, thanks to pro-bono consultation with canon lawyers at the St Joseph Foundation. When (or if) the appeal reaches the Apostolic Signatura, where a Procurator/Advocate in Rome must be appointed, costs of as much as \$9000 may be incurred. Note also that your signed commitment to an appeal does not conflict with any plans or interest in joining St Joseph Parish or pursuing other alternatives, as assessed on our recent survey, if St Pat's is closed.

2. The Presbyteral Council meeting and the appeal. The signed mandate forms will be submitted to the Archbishop with the appeal which will be drafted and submitted within 10 days of our receipt of the decree specifying our extinctive union. The Advocates were told that we could expect an appeal this month (which means we want as many signed mandate forms as possible submitted as soon as possible), but this can only happen after there has been an appropriate meeting of the Presbyteral Council, a council of 23 priests, including Bishops Elizondo and Schuster, and priests representing the 10 deaneries of the archdiocese. The council provides consultation to the Archbishop. An official guidance document from Rome specifies that:

“Before rendering his decision, the Bishop must seek out the necessary information and, insofar as possible, **hear those whose rights could be injured** (cf. can. 50). Before consulting the members of the Presbyteral Council, which is required for validity, he must **first provide them with all relevant information**, lawfully convoke the Council (cf. can. 127 and 166), and then he himself must consult the members regarding each individual parish modification which has been proposed. The consultation must be genuine, and should consider relevant arguments both for and against the proposed modifications.”

For this reason, in our presentation to the Archbishop on April 25 – which clearly explains our objection to the proposed extinctive union and presents counter proposals – we asked that the presentation and associated appendices be made available to the Presbyteral Council should he choose to proceed with a decree. When we contacted the Archdiocese this past week to follow-up, we were told “the meeting with St. Patrick's was discussed at the last Presbyteral Council meeting. Please know that all relevant information was shared, and they are aware of your objections to the merger proposal.” It is not clear from this that our

presentation was shared with the Council, and we are proceeding to send the presentation to all the members of the Council. In fact, based on another source it is not clear that the last Council meeting (in May) did appropriately discuss St Pat's, so we remain uncertain about the timing of a decree for St Patrick's.

3. The decree and appeal letter for St Mary's. The Archdiocese recently announced decrees for the closure of Our Lady of Mount Virgin, and the merger of St Mary's with St Therese parish. These can be found at <https://archseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Strategic-Planning-Seattle-News-Release-Final.pdf>. We highly recommend that people read especially the decree for St Mary's to see its form and begin to imagine the "just cause" arguments we can expect in a decree for St Pat's. Parishioners from St Mary's have submitted an appeal and we recommend you also read the cover letter and appeal which you can find on our parish website at <https://www.stpatrickseattle.org/news/important-parish-update>. This appeal was submitted by the person who is the Procurator representing the parishioners of St Mary's. It provides powerful rebuttal of the "just cause" arguments in the decree. It could influence how the Archdiocese attempts to write a decree for St Pat's.

You are welcome to contact me individually with questions or comments, or post these on the Connection Board.

Peace and thanks for everyone's contributions to our beloved parish community,
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P.S. A last minute thought: I want to draw your attention to the fact that we have received substantial support from the St Joseph Foundation, a non-profit organization whose services and newsletter have been paid for by the spiritual and material gifts of those good people who believe that the Foundation's work is worthy of their support. They will play a critical role going forward in the drafting of our canon law appeal. I will encourage you to consider making a donation to support their mission (<https://stjosephcanonlaw.com>). Thank you.