

## ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE

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+August 2, 2022

Mr. Paul D. Sampson  
Procurator  
8458 Tillicum Rd SW  
Seattle, WA 98136

Dear Mr. Sampson and parishioners of St. Patrick Parish in Seattle:

Thank you for your letter of July 15, 2022, regarding my decree of extinctive union merging St. Patrick Parish in Seattle into St. Joseph Parish. I note that you have been appointed procurator by many parishioners of St. Patrick Parish and I appreciate your role on their behalf. I understand that this parish merger is difficult for the people of St. Patrick.

The reality is that St. Patrick Parish has been in slow decline for many years. In the past 20 years, this is evident in the number of registered households, Mass attendance, and the decline in the sacraments, including infant baptisms per year and marriages.

This is simply an honest appraisal of the situation. This is not a judgment on the good people of St. Patrick.

In part because of the small size of the community, St. Patrick has been without a resident pastor for several periods since the early 1990's. The merger with St. Joseph Parish will allow for the community to experience more stability in this regard.

During the discernment process prior to issuing a decree, the people of St. Patrick Parish were informed of the recommendation from the Strategic Planning Committee and allowed time to provide input and feedback. I then met with a group of St. Patrick advocates here at the Chancery to listen to their hopes and concerns and I have taken them into account while making my decision. After much consultation, study, and prayer, I recognize that a just cause exists for this extinctive union. This was not a predetermined decision on my part.

I know that this decision is a challenging one, but I also know that it can become an opportunity to grow closer to Jesus, trusting in His power to transform our lives. I am certain that the spiritual gifts of the people of St. Patrick will now be used for the benefit of their new parish community.

I appreciate your request to revoke my decree of merger/extinctive union and I know you ask with the best intentions of the community in mind. However, I have decided that it is best to move forward with the merger.

With regard to your request that I suspend the effects of my decree pending a definitive outcome of the recourse process; I decline to suspend all effects. I know that the pastor of St. Joseph will be a good steward of the resources belonging to St. Patrick Parish during the recourse process.

Please be assured of my prayers for all of you during this time of change.

In the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Paul D. Etienne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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