



April 17, 2021

Dear Parishioners of Sacred Heart of Jesus,

The Archdiocese of Seattle has been conducting Strategic Planning efforts across the archdiocese. As part of this process they informed St. Patrick's parish that they would be closing and that members will either merge with Sacred Heart parish, or with St. Joseph parish, or divide between both parishes. It is clear that St. Patrick parishioners will collaborate and decide what will be best for them moving forward.

At a confidential Zoom meeting Fr. Harry Grile and I had with Bishop Mueggenborg and Leigh Stringfellow a few weeks ago they informed us of the decision to close St. Patrick's and asked if Sacred Heart would be willing to continue the ministry for the Deaf people that was taking place at St. Patrick's. I stated **STRONGLY** that I would welcome the entire Deaf Community to Sacred Heart with **OPEN ARMS!** While I realize that as pastor the final decision is mine, I said that I also wanted to consult with the Sacred Heart Community. It is more than providing interpreters for the Deaf community but welcoming them to be part of our community. It would involve some changes in the Mass that the Deaf people would attend:

- Members of the Deaf Community would become lectors and Eucharistic Ministers. (When they are lectors we would have interpreters for the hearing!)
- There would be an invitation for the non-Deaf members of the community to learn some basic sign language so that we could do responses like 'Alleluia' and 'Amen' together.
- A member of the Deaf Community would be invited to be part of the Pastoral Council.
- All major Parish events would have interpreters.
- We might have to make some physical accommodations to our pews for Deaf/Blind people, who need a tactile interpreter sitting next to them.

The Archdiocese wants to give the parishioners of St. Patrick's sufficient time to make a decision. I want to be sensitive to the pain that the parishioners of St. Patrick's are feeling after losing a parish that many of them have called home for many years. At the same time I will be continuing to reiterate my offer that the Deaf Community would be welcome at Sacred Heart with open arms.

I ask all of you to join me in praying for the parishioners of St. Patrick's who are going through this difficult time and that the Holy Spirit guides us in this process.

Fr. Rich Luberti, C.Ss.R.  
Pastor, Sacred Heart of Jesus