



+August 13, 2020

Dear Holy Rosary parishioners,

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the consolation of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. It is in the same Jesus Christ, after months of prayerful discernment through the Holy Spirit, that I write to inform you of a decision regarding the future of Holy Rosary Parish in Tacoma.

As you may recall, late last year I met with your pastoral and finance councils. My goal was to listen and hear directly from your parish leadership about the pressing issues and challenges your parish community faces. It was a very fruitful discussion. With renewed focus on the mission of the Church, namely to authentically proclaim the Gospel in the world and draw people into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ, I asked your team to consider what it means to “be church,” and more specifically, what this means for Holy Rosary Parish.

Your parish leaders have worked incredibly hard on your behalf. They’ve spent countless hours reviewing data, discussing, praying and working with archdiocesan leaders to discern the future for the parish. While a few members were focused only on the church building, many members concluded that Holy Rosary Parish is not capable of existing on its own.

After months of review, speaking with the parish community leadership, consulting the deanery priests, and praying, I agree with the majority of your leadership’s assessment that Holy Rosary is unable to exist on its own. It became clear prior to the pandemic that the parish was no longer viable. It is even clearer now, and most parishioners have already become affiliated with other parishes.

This is a very sad reality. It is also one that is not unique to Holy Rosary. Several other parishes across the archdiocese are in similar fragile states, and we can no longer ignore this painful reality.

I do not want this news to dampen your relationship with the Lord or weaken your participation in the beauty of the Catholic faith. You are all members of the Body of Christ and our Catholic Church.

Practically, this decision now requires Holy Rosary parishioners who have not already done so to affiliate with another local Catholic community.

So what happens next? As you know, the church building has been closed since October 2018 due to its safety issues. Meanwhile, Holy Rosary Bilingual Academy relocated to the campus of St. Martin of Tours in Fife, where the parish has warmly welcomed them.

Moving forward, there will be no services or ministries taking place at Holy Rosary. The sacramental and pastoral ministries at Holy Rosary Parish will be discontinued as of Monday, August 31, 2020. A future date will be identified for parishioners to gather at Mass one last time. Pastoral care for the people will be provided by neighboring parishes.

At this point, we will begin to determine the next phase for your community of faith. We will not embark on this in isolation. Our goal is to ensure Catholics in this region have a vibrant, thriving Catholic community.

Our planning process will now involve parishioners and leadership of Holy Rosary Parish and neighboring parishes to discern and form decisions about the future. I am directing nearby parishes in this deanery to work together to assess the current reality at each individual parish and collectively, and then recommend a path forward. This work will require much faith, good will, creative thinking, collaboration, problem solving, and the hope that is ours in Jesus Christ. It will also necessitate merging parish communities, thus forming a new and vibrant parish that ensures mission effectiveness. The buildings at Holy Rosary will remain intact during this process.

I recognize how difficult this decision is for everyone involved with Holy Rosary. Thank you for your patience and continued prayers. I ask that we continue to journey together in prayerful communion. As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul D. Etienne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning of the first name.

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

# HOLY ROSARY FAQ

- August 2020 -

**Q: What does “no longer viable” mean?**

**A:** This means that the parish is no longer able to effectively fulfill its mission of helping people grow closer to Christ with thriving ministries, regular celebration of the sacraments, works of charity and more. Additionally, since its parishioner population has been shrinking over time, the parish is also unable to fund its own operations, including staffing and maintenance.

**Q: Why aren't we ready and when will we be ready to discuss the church building?**

**A:** Based on the Archbishop's request for the parishes in the deanery to work together to build a thriving Catholic community, Holy Rosary parish will most likely merge with another parish or group of parishes in the future. It will be up to the new parish leadership to make decisions about the building.

**Q: What are the next steps?**

**A:** Archbishop has asked that neighboring parishes work together to assess the larger context in the Pierce deanery and work together to build thriving Catholic communities. We want to ensure all our parishes are effectively fulfilling the mission of helping people grow closer to Christ. The timing and details of this will be forthcoming.

**Q: Will parish boundaries be changed?**

**A:** That is yet to be determined. For now, the Archbishop has made it clear that he will ask parishes in the Pierce deanery to work together to create a thriving Catholic communities in the region. Once this work is complete, parish boundaries will most likely change.

**Q: What will happen to existing staff?**

**A:** The existing staff will be laid off, with the exception of a part-time maintenance role and caretaker, who will remain to ensure a safe campus.

**Q: Who will be responsible for church buildings in the interim?**

**A:** The Archdiocese of Seattle will step in to ensure key elements like fencing, insurance and maintenance are handled while the future of the parish is determined.

**Q: What happens to the parish finances?**

**A:** All the parish finances, including cash and debt, will be allocated based on the outcome of the future planning process.

**Q: What will happen to our St. Vincent de Paul food bank?**

**A:** We connected with several neighboring parishes to take on this ministry. Unfortunately, during this pandemic it is not possible to move it. Therefore, this ministry will close and all the remaining funds will go back to the regional St. Vincent de Paul.

**Q: How do we find a new parish to attend Mass?**

**A:** During COVID, we encourage you to tune in to the livestream services offered by the parishes in the Pierce Deanery. This will help you get to know the pastors as you listen to their Sunday homilies. Once you've selected a new parish, please reach out to the parish office to register so that the parish may communicate with you and assure that you are updated about local and archdiocesan news.