



+November 16, 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Peace of our Lord be with each of you!

After a month in Rome for the global synod I was energized, yet eager to return home. Sitting at tables praying and listening to people from around the world was a very intense, prayerful and exhilarating experience. What struck me most was that we were living out a synodal experience of truly listening to understand – not to respond or build upon – but to truly listen to each other and ultimately to listen for the Holy Spirit.

While I was listening for the Holy Spirit at the global synod, the people in the Archdiocese of Seattle were encountering each other and the Holy Spirit during the Partners of the Gospel public input sessions. Using a synodal listening model, these input sessions invited people to pray, listen and share their hopes, fears and ideas related to the proposed parish families.

I am incredibly grateful for the input we received – and humbled by the engagement from the people of God. In all we received over 3,000 pages of feedback from more than 700 input session reports and 800 online responses.

Despite what some may think, we are truly listening. The proposed parish families are in no way “a done deal.” In fact, the opposite is true. Your feedback was reviewed extensively. Because of your input, proposed changes emerged for 25 parish families. The parishes that have a possible change will have a second round of consultation in December on the newly proposed parish family configuration.

We pray that the Holy Spirit continues to guide our discernment so that we can follow where God is leading us in this process. Our goal is to encounter Christ, accompany each other and live the joy of the Gospel. As we restructure and renew our parishes, may we be compelled by our Baptismal dignity to live our faith more fully and carry Christ into the world.

I am grateful to everyone who played a role in this historic process – from planning the sessions, training volunteers, leading the small groups, writing the reports and more. Thank you for sharing your time and talents, which are a true gift to your parish community and the local Church.

Again, I give thanks to God for the incredible participation in the consultation process. Thank you for your engagement and continued prayers for this effort. Please keep praying for this renewal effort. As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Paul D. Etienne".

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