

**For Immediate Release****Archbishop Paul D. Etienne Issues Decrees for New Parish in Tacoma**
Merging parishes become new St. John XXIII Parish

SEATTLE, May 9, 2022 – This weekend, Archbishop Paul D. Etienne issued decrees to merge three parishes in Tacoma to form the new St. John XXIII Parish, effective July 1, 2022. Father Tuan Nguyen, the current pastor of St. Ann and St. John of the Woods, will serve as pastor for the new parish.

“Together as one new community, St. John XXIII Parish has a strong foundation to meet the pastoral needs of its people, to increase outreach efforts, to joyfully share the Gospel of the Lord with robust evangelization efforts and to help bring Christ to the people of Tacoma,” Archbishop Etienne said. “The new parish also has an excellent Catholic school, which will be foundational for the parish community.”

As an interim step, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish was merged with St. Ann Parish last year after Holy Rosary ceased ministry. Now, St. Rita of Cascia Parish and Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, with its Visitation STEM Academy, will merge with St. Ann Parish. As one community they will become St. John XXIII Parish with St. John of the Woods as a mission of the new parish. The new parish boundaries will encompass those of the merged parishes. The school will change its name and eventually move when the St. John XXIII Parish campus is ready.

“Many people from each parish community have joined together to build this new community, and for that I am very grateful,” said Father Nguyen. “I wish to welcome everyone to St. John XXIII Parish. I pray that we may be a vibrant and joyful Catholic community that serves the people of Tacoma and helps them know the love of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”

Strategic Planning in Tacoma

These decrees come after a multiyear consultative planning process in the Pierce Deanery. The planning became urgent in 2019 when a piece of the ceiling in Holy Rosary Church fell into the choir loft. The estimated cost to repair the church exceeded \$18 million, and with finances and engaged parishioners dwindling, the church building was closed and parish ministry ceased.

“Instead of focusing on the pressing issues of one single parish, I asked parishes in this deanery to work together to assess the current reality at each individual parish and collectively, and then recommend a path forward,” said Archbishop Etienne.

The archdiocesan strategic planning team worked closely with the pastors, parish councils and the archdiocesan Presbyteral Council in sharing trend data and research reports. After consultation, prayer and discernment, the parish leadership and strategic planning committee recommended merging the parishes into one new parish. The five communities have been diligently working for more than a year to determine how the new parish will handle key areas of parish life like liturgy, faith formation, evangelization, community outreach, communication, finances and more.

“I am so grateful for everyone involved in this process, from parish leaders to volunteers,” said Archbishop Etienne. “It is through their dedication, the grace of the Holy Spirit and the love of our Lord that we can build a vibrant and engaged Catholic community in Tacoma.”

About the Archdiocese of Seattle

The Archdiocese of Seattle encompasses all of Western Washington, stretching from Canada to Oregon and from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. There are 72 Catholic schools, and 174 parishes, missions and pastoral centers in the archdiocese, with more than 500 weekly Masses celebrated in eight languages. Archbishop Paul D. Etienne leads the archdiocese with his auxiliary bishops, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo and Bishop Frank Schuster. For more information about the Archdiocese of Seattle, visit archseattle.org.

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