



+ April 10-11, 2021

Dear Parishioners of St. Rita of Cascia Parish,

Blessing of this Easter Season upon you!

Today I am writing to you regarding the current Strategic Planning efforts in the Pierce Deanery. I am grateful you have participated in the parish-wide sessions and have shared your feedback. It is clear there is great love for your St. Rita parish community, its history, and your Catholic faith.

While I set the vision to create a vibrant, sustainable Catholic community in Tacoma with the creation of one new parish, the way in which this vision will be realized is determined in partnership with you and the parishioners of the other parishes. As part of this process, the Strategic Planning team has shared detailed information, requested your feedback and listened to your concerns.

During this listening period, several parishioners asked if St. Rita's could be merged with St. Leo parish or St. Charles Borromeo. These were ideas the Strategic Planning team considered at one point but ultimately did not recommend. However, based on your feedback, the team revisited these options.

Because the geographic boundaries of St. Rita's are not contiguous with St. Charles Borromeo, creating one geographic parish is not an option. St. Leo, however, could be an option. This led to further discussion on St. Rita's behalf with the Jesuit Province, which currently operates St. Leo's. The Jesuit Provincial, Father Scott Santarosa, recently wrote me indicating that merging St. Rita's with St. Leo's is not feasible.

At this time, I ask that you continue to participate in the strategic planning process by joining the sub-committees and actively working to create your new parish community in the Tacoma area. Your St. Rita community has rich traditions and a deep love of the faith to bring to the new parish community. While changes like this are undoubtedly challenging, I pray that you embrace the opportunity to build a new parish that serves the community and helps others know and experience the joy of our Savior.

I continue to pray for you and all those involved in this journey. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide you and give you the strength and grace to share the Good News of our Lord.

As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,

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