



+ May 15, 2021

To my Brothers and Sisters at Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Mary, St. Ann, St. Rita of Cascia, and St. John of the Woods,

Easter Blessings of our Lord on each of you!

As many of you know, the strategic planning process is well underway in the Pierce Deanery. I want to personally thank everyone who is actively participating by praying, attending meetings or volunteering your time and talents on this journey to build a new vibrant Catholic community in Tacoma.

Together we are forming a new mission-focused parish with “a spirit of communion and collaboration, of encounter and closeness, of mercy and solicitude for the proclamation of the Gospel,” as outlined in the Congregation for Clergy’s Instruction on the pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church. ([Full document here.](#))

We recognize that the strategic planning process will take time and so we will be taking several steps along the way towards the formation of the new parish. While the overall vision remains: to form a new parish, with St. John of the Woods as its mission, we recognize that each parish community is unique with its own specific realities. We want to recognize these realities and as a result the timing for merging all parishes together will not be the same. Factors that impact timing include administrative and leadership needs, financial status, facility requirements, level and nature of ministerial activities, and consultative group and parishioner input.

With this in mind, there will be several interim steps for each parish on this longer journey:

- *Our Lady of the Holy Rosary*
Holy Rosary parishioners have been in limbo since it was determined that the parish was no longer viable. Given the feedback from the Stakeholders, Holy Rosary will be merged with St. Ann’s parish on July 1, 2021 as an interim step towards building the new parish. Holy Rosary parishioners will have a home where they can receive pastoral care under the current pastor, Father Tuan. This move will also hopefully help alleviate the

communication challenges that Holy Rosary parishioners currently face. Holy Rosary parishioners will continue as Stakeholders and subcommittee group members.

- *St. Rita of Cascia*
Given current realities, feedback from parishioners and as the next step for St. Rita's to move forward, all regular ministries at St. Rita's will cease as of July 1, 2021. Father David Mulholland will remain as pastor. St. Rita parishioners will continue to retain their positions as Stakeholders and as members of the subcommittees to ensure the richness and beauty of St. Rita, its Italian heritage, and its deep roots in the community are represented and infused into the new parish.
- *St. John of the Woods*
Starting July 1, 2021, St. John of the Woods will take an interim step and will become a mission of St. Ann's parish. Father Tuan will remain the pastor and Mass and sacramental celebrations will continue. St. John of the Woods will have representation in the Stakeholder group and on the subcommittees, which is important as we continue to work together to form the new parish.
- *Visitation of the Blessed Mary*
Through the Stakeholder meetings and parish meetings, it became clear that Visitation wants to ensure the entire parish community, including Visitation STEM Academy moves over together at one time. The extent of the building and construction work that is needed prior to the school's move, suggests that Visitation will most likely not move until some time in 2022. Please note this is a target date, which may change depending on the results of building and ministry need studies.
- *St. Ann*
St. Ann will officially merge with Holy Rosary and have St. John of the Woods as a mission starting on July 1, 2021. This means that the boundaries for St. Ann parish will be redrawn and that Father Tuan will have pastoral care for this new merged community. St. Ann parishioners will continue to participate in the Stakeholder and subcommittee meetings.

Given these interim steps and the timing associated with them, we believe that the new parish will not be officially formed until after Visitation moves over, which at this time is estimated for sometime in mid-2022. In the meantime, Archbishop Etienne has asked Father Tuan to shepherd this merger. He will play an active role with the joint Stakeholder group reviewing the recommendations from the 10 subcommittees and making decisions on how to move forward. Subcommittees are actively meeting and developing work plans. Some complete work quickly, while others require more time given the nature of the work. Together we will ensure all the parishes are not only represented, but actively engaged in bringing the new parish to fruition.

Please ask the Holy Spirit to guide us and give us the grace to work together building a stronger Catholic community committed to the mission of the Church. I encourage each of you to pray the transition prayer to keep us all focused on the true purpose of our work: to develop a relationship with Jesus and help others know his love. With every best wish and an assurance of prayer, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

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Most Rev. Daniel H. Mueggenborg

Transition Prayer

Prepared by the Communications Sub-committee

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for gathering us together and calling us
to serve as your disciples.

You have charged us through Your Son, Jesus, and his shepherds, with the great
mission of evangelizing and witnessing your love to the world.

Send your Holy Spirit to guide us as we discern Your will
for the spiritual renewal of our parish communities.

Give us strength, courage, and clear vision
as we use our gifts to serve You.

We entrust our parish families to the care of Mary, our Mother
and ask for her intercession and guidance as we strive to bear
witness to the Gospel,
celebrating the qualities of each faith filled community
and together building an engaging parish.

Amen