



+ June 9, 2020

Colleen Kinerk
On behalf of Heal Our Church
Davidson, Kilpatric and Krislock, PLLC
P.O. Box 817
Kirkland, WA 98083-0817

Dear Colleen and Terrence,

Thank you for your recent letter. I share your disappointment that the pandemic forced us to cancel our face-to-face meeting. A relationship-building meeting focused on true dialogue is best accomplished in person. I look forward to the time when an in-person meeting can be safely scheduled.

I want to be clear that I am not able to sign your joint statement because of our very different perspectives of the past, the present reality, and the best means to address these concerns moving forward.

Providing healing for victims of abuse is our top priority. We openly invite anyone who believes they have been harmed to please come forward so we can help provide healing and support. We have received letters from past victim survivors and their families imploring us not to share their confidential records with anyone. They do not want records, even if redacted, to be published. They told us that doing so would cause them trauma by leading them to relive past experiences. While some victim survivors urge publication of the records, others have very strong objections, which I must respect. I believe all our efforts should be aimed at promoting the healing of victim survivors and the healing of our Church.

We have an Archdiocesan Review Board comprised of lay experts who give professional advice for how to develop policies and procedures, review our files to determine how to handle allegations of abuse, and make recommendations as to whether to include names of accused on our published list. In addition, all files regarding allegations of abuse were reviewed by an independent third party. This firm then conferred with the Archdiocesan Review Board in determining which names of those accused should be on our list. Further information about all of this is on the [Protect & Heal](#) website. Today, these lay experts continue to volunteer their time to review any allegation and ensure we have substantial reporting procedures and cooperate with law enforcement. I am tremendously grateful for their service giving victims a voice. It is not prudent or necessary to duplicate the work of this body.

Like you, I wish to “listen and give voice to the concerns of the laity.” Within months of becoming Archbishop, I launched a new pastoral planning process. As part of this, we are also reestablishing a new Archdiocesan Pastoral Council with lay members who reflect the diversity of our archdiocese. This consultative body will listen to the concerns and ideas of the faithful, advise on matters regarding the life of the Church, and ultimately help shape the Pastoral Plan for the future of the Archdiocese of Seattle.

While we may share the same goals, I pray you will understand that the efforts underway to support victims and listen to the laity are substantial and legitimate – even if they do not match your demands. I respectfully decline your invitation to join your July 10th online event.

With assurance of prayer and good will, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul D. Etienne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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