



+ May 1, 2021, +St. Joseph the Worker

Dear Colleen, John and Terry,

Easter blessings to you and yours. Today I write to follow up on our March 24, 2021, in-person meeting. I felt the meeting was an important step in establishing an authentic and respectful dialog – and I hope you feel the same way.

As I mentioned in the meeting, there is much that we share as common ground. Like you, I love the Lord, our Catholic faith and our Church. Like you, I desire transparency and accountability. Like you, I am committed to the healing of our victim survivors and the protection of those in our care today. We share many things in common, and I also believe we have some different ideas about how we should move forward.

We have been actively addressing this situation for almost 40 years, so the suggestion that we need to start addressing this topic was discouraging. We have worked hard to respond to victim survivors to assist them in their process of healing, developed and consistently evaluated and updated a strong and effective Safe Environment program, worked closely with our Review Board comprised of highly competent subject matter lay experts, shared publicly the list of credibly accused clergy and religious, developed a website dedicated to this crisis, launched the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting tool, shared the financials associated with settlements, and much more. We have apologized to victim survivors many times, and we will continue to do so because we need to. These apologies often consist of in-person meetings with my predecessors and me, and I am committed to continuing these. We will continue to accompany them and find ways to help them heal.

This list of our efforts does not mean that we have done enough. I share it to demonstrate that we have been actively working towards healing and accountability in the Church – and we will certainly continue to do so. With everything we do, and with each visit with a survivor, I learn more about how we can improve our efforts.

As I indicated when we met, we have conducted more than 90 listening sessions as part of our Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning Process over the last several months. This topic certainly came up in those sessions along with other ideas and suggestions that we will further explore with our Review Board and Presbyteral Council and Archdiocesan Pastoral Council.

During our meeting, you shared a few ideas around new ways to present information. These suggestions were helpful and will become part of our considerations going forward. Finally, I acknowledge your request to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to give serious consideration to additional file review. With such creative suggestions, seeds are planted from which 'something more' will grow to promote healing in our Church.

I would like to continue our dialog and suggest that we do so after the launch of our Pastoral Plan, which is scheduled to be made public on Pentecost. I will ask Angela to be in contact with you to arrange a follow-up meeting this summer.

I ask that we all continue to pray for the continued protection of all children, everywhere. I also pray that the Holy Spirit brings healing and grace to all survivors and their families. Please know of my continued prayers for you and for the healing of our Church. As always, 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 style with a large initial "P" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

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