



+February 25, 2020

To the Kennedy Catholic High School family,

It is with a pastor's heart that I am writing to you. I have heard your voices and read your letters – from teachers, parents, alumni, and even an open video letter from a student representative. Voicing your care and concerns is not only a testament to how much you support your school community, but is also an important step. Pope Francis says:

“Do not be afraid of dialogue. ... It is about agreeing on proposals for forging ahead together.”
(May 30, 2016 address to Scholas Occurrentes)

Last Friday, I visited Kennedy Catholic High School, along with the Kristin Dixon, the superintendent of Catholic Schools and Father Bryan Dolejsi, former chaplain of Kennedy Catholic High School. We listened to the concerns of the teachers and staff. Hearing first-hand the hurt, frustration and confusion was both helpful and challenging. I sincerely appreciate everyone's honesty and feedback. In times like this, respectful dialogue is required so we can navigate our way forward.

It is abundantly clear to me that our Catholic schools are serving a much broader community than in the past. We as church need to understand that people in our culture are coming to our Catholic schools with various expectations. However, we must remind everyone *why* Catholic schools exist. Our primary mission is to form people with the mind and heart of Jesus Christ.

With a focus on our mission, I am creating a special task force to look at how we apply universal church teaching locally. Specifically, under the leadership of the Office for Catholic Schools, this task force will examine how we remain faithful to our mission in a dramatically changing world. We will review input from our school communities and create clarity and guidance moving forward. This will require time, and I ask for your patience as we prayerfully discern future steps. We will update you on the timeline and the process along the way.

In addition, I have appointed Father Bryan Dolejsi, as the Archbishop's special liaison and interim president to provide daily pastoral leadership and foster healing for the community. He will meet personally with various members and representatives of the community. At the same time, he will work closely with the Office for Catholic Schools and me.

As a former pastor with a Catholic school, I fully understand the day-to-day challenges inherent in running a school. For all the teachers and staff at Kennedy Catholic, I am grateful for the professional, courageous, and respectful way in which you have continued to fulfill your roles. Thank you for your efforts to focus on the daily tasks at hand during this challenging time, ministering to one another and taking care of students for the sake of your community.

Please know of my continued prayers for you. We unite the suffering of this present moment to those of Jesus Christ, with the sure and certain hope that is ours in his Resurrection. May this challenging time bring forth new life for us personally and for the Kennedy Catholic community.

In the heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul D. Etienne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning of the first name.

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