

A week and a half ago I gathered together the Finance Councils and Pastoral Councils from each of our three parishes. They are consultative bodies that I have met with periodically since my arrival, and who have meetings without me at times as well to continue their work. But I wanted to get them all together to begin meeting each other as well, and fostering relationships between our advisory bodies much as there has already been overlap between Mass goers, and within some ministries, as well, as parishioners participate more broadly in the opportunities available. I was particularly grateful for the opportunity to reflect with them on the things that they miss that are gone as a result of this Partners transition, as well as the blessings and fruits they have seen, and hopes for the future. I don't know that there were any surprises to me, but each of the members comes from their own experience, with some shared perspectives, but also some unique ones, and important to hear one another, and what the experience of others and other parishes has been. It was good to foster community and a commitment to one another and the Lord.

On July 1, 2024, we began a new epoch in life of the Archdiocese of Seattle, and within our local parishes. At that time, the local Catholic community was gathered together under one pastor, with an invitation to reexamine how we live our faith and carry out our mission as disciples of Christ. They are important questions that we are going to begin discerning together more formally this year. These last 19 months have been highly focused on survival mode for me, as normal pastor transitions are challenging, so three parishes now sharing a single pastor and parochial vicar even more so. Volunteer and staff changes have prompted some ministry changes more quickly and also required managing in the interim – something I know that has impacted the life of our individual communities to varying degrees. I am grateful for these important coworkers of mine in the vineyard. We have had nine parish staff departures and replacements, four departures without replacements due to a lack of financial capacity, and three currently open positions. Admittedly, it has taken me longer to get to Phase 2 of our Partners in the Gospel journey than I had hoped (and many of you, as well, I'm sure).

The individual parish pastoral and finance councils will continue to exist, supporting me in fostering the life of our individual parishes until the merger takes place. Last week, our Parish Family Advisory Council met for the first time. This body has three members from each of the parishes and is the group that I will work most closely with in discerning where the Lord is calling us as a new and joined together Catholic community over the next two plus years. This is something that will be informed by multiple rounds of feedback of various types. In the coming weeks, I will be sharing more information about the PFAC members, as well as the process that lies ahead. We will also be creating pages on each of the websites dedicated to posting information such as Q&A, process workflows, meeting minutes, materials compilations, etc. Thank you for your grace and patience.