



+July 28, 2023

Dear Friends in Christ,

On Wednesday, July 26, 2023, the Washington State Attorney General's Office issued a subpoena for files related to how the Archdiocese of Seattle has handled allegations of sexual abuse and how we are protecting children through our safe environment program. It is our understanding that this is a state-wide investigation. Our legal team is currently reviewing the specifics of the subpoena and associated documents request.

We anticipate this news will become public shortly and it is important to me that you hear about this investigation from me and not from our local media.

I want you to know that we will cooperate with the Attorney General's request to demonstrate how the Archdiocese of Seattle has handled allegations of sexual abuse and how we are protecting children. This is an issue we take very seriously and have been proactively addressing for more than 40 years – taking many steps for preventing abuse, reporting abuse, supporting victims and their families, and publicizing our actions.

In fact, the Archdiocese of Seattle first opened confidential files for review by independent outside agencies in the 1980s. In 2016, a review was conducted by a firm led by a former FBI-agent, which resulted in the development of our public list of all clergy in the Archdiocese of Seattle for whom allegations of sexual abuse of a minor have been admitted, established, or determined to be credible. We update our Protect and Heal website with new information such as legal settlements, timeline with the number of reported incidents, and support we've provided for counseling to assist victims with their healing.

We have a good understanding of the content of our files, and we have no concern about sharing them with the Attorney General lawfully and fairly. We will collaborate with this independent outside review. We share common goals with the Attorney General, specifically preventing abuse and helping victim survivors on their path to healing and peace. Cooperating with the Attorney General demonstrates our commitment to these goals and our desire for transparency.

In addition, I remain steadfast in my commitment to protecting the privacy of victims as we do not wish to re-traumatize them by sharing their stories publicly. This would be unacceptable. We will do everything in our power to protect their rights.

Please continue to pray to the Holy Spirit for grace for everyone impacted by abuse and for the healing of our local Catholic Church. As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Paul D. Etienne". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, circular initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

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