



+ May 17, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I pray that the hope in our future proclaimed during this Easter season is alive in your hearts. The Easter season is a time to take comfort in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who dwells among us, who will wipe away every tear, who makes all things new (see Revelation 21:1-5).

With all the brokenness we see in our world today, this Easter season reminds us of how much we need Jesus in our lives. We need his love, his mercy, his forgiveness, his courage, his willingness to encounter those who feel pushed to the margins of society, who feel wounded, forgotten and undervalued.

Today my heart is specifically aching for you, my Native American brothers and sisters. As you know, last year the United States Department of the Interior announced a federal Indian boarding school initiative to review the treatment of Native Americans. The initial report revealed the cruel treatment Native American children endured at more than 400 boarding schools across the country, which sought to assimilate children by stripping them of their rich culture and heritage.

These actions are clearly shocking, and sadly, we know many institutions, including the Catholic Church, played some role in this disturbing effort. For this, I wish to express my deep sorrow and to apologize, on behalf of my spiritual ancestors in the Catholic faith, for the pain and trauma these sinful actions inflicted and for the ways this trauma continues to be felt from generation to generation.

We are undertaking our own research in the Archdiocese of Seattle, with the help of the Washington State Catholic Conference, to review all our records to uncover more of the story of Native Americans in our region. My hope is that this information can help in the path toward healing for Native peoples and our local Church.

Please know that I see you, I hear you, and I am here for you. I wish to journey with you on your long road toward healing. Please know that you have not been abandoned by our Lord and he is with you always, holding you in his heart.

Please be assured also of my continued prayers for you, especially during this most difficult time. I pray specifically for the intercession of St. Kateri Tekakwitha. I humbly ask her to help heal the wounds in our archdiocese. 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 small cross at the beginning.

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