

The Archdiocese of Seattle welcomes Coadjutor Archbishop Paul D. Etienne

On April 29, Archbishop J. Peter Sartain welcomed the appointment of Archbishop Paul D. Etienne, currently archbishop of Anchorage, Alaska, as coadjutor archbishop of Seattle. Archbishop Etienne was appointed by Pope Francis to eventually succeed Archbishop Sartain, who requested a coadjutor archbishop due to ongoing health challenges. He will officially join the archdiocese as coadjutor archbishop on June 7, 2019, at a “Rite of Reception” Mass in St. James Cathedral.

Introducing Archbishop Etienne

Archbishop Etienne was born to a large Catholic family in Tell City, Indiana. He is one of six children and has two brothers who are Catholic priests, as well as sister who is a Benedictine nun.

He is currently the fourth archbishop for the Archdiocese of Anchorage where he was installed November 9, 2016, after serving as bishop of the Diocese of Cheyenne, Wyoming, for seven years.

Archbishop Etienne studied at Bellarmine College in Louisville, Kentucky; the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota; and the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he earned a Licentiate of Spiritual Theology in 1995.

On June 27, 1992, he was ordained a priest in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, where he served as pastor of several parishes, vocation director and vice-rector of the Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary.

On October 19, 2009, he was appointed bishop of the Diocese of Cheyenne by Pope Benedict XVI. He served there until October 4, 2016, when he was appointed Archbishop of Anchorage by Pope Francis.

You can read more from Archbishop Etienne on his blog: www.archbishopetienne.com.

What is a coadjutor bishop?

A coadjutor bishop is appointed to a diocese or archdiocese to assist the diocesan bishop. Unlike an auxiliary bishop, he has the right of succession, meaning that he automatically becomes the new bishop when the diocesan bishop retires or dies. By canon law, he is also vicar general of the diocese. If the diocese is an archdiocese, he is called coadjutor archbishop instead of coadjutor bishop. In recent years, a growing number of U.S. bishops in larger dioceses or archdioceses have requested and received a coadjutor in their final year or two before their retirement, in order to familiarize their successor with the workings of the (arch)diocese before he has to take over the reins. This minimizes the learning curve of a new bishop and eliminates completely the possibility of the diocese being vacant following the old bishop’s retirement. (Source: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops)

