



March 17, 2014

Dear Friends in Christ,

A number of current and former employees and volunteers of the Archdiocese of Seattle have fallen victim to a national tax identity fraud, and I wanted to take this opportunity to offer my prayers and support. We all hear about this kind of scam, and we hope that it will never touch us personally. Now that it has, I want you to know of my care and concern. I also offer my personal assurance that we are doing all in our power to get to the bottom of this matter with the assistance of public agencies and private security experts.

After learning of the problem, we immediately notified the IRS and FBI and acted to inform employees, volunteers and the public. We also created this tax fraud resource site to provide information about steps that can be taken.

At this time, we can confirm only that some employees and volunteers of the archdiocese have been victims of tax identity fraud, and that such fraud scams are a national problem that has apparently been going on for several years and is now impacting our community. The IRS, FBI and our private security firm are each investigating and cooperating with each other. Despite that, at present we simply do not know how the problem originated, whether from systems within the archdiocese – including parishes and schools – or systems of vendors, or another outside source.

Regardless of its ultimate source, however, I am mindful that waiting for answers can cause anxiety and concern, and I want to address concerns you may have in the most effective way possible. To the extent it is advisable for us to provide further information without compromising the ongoing investigations, the Archdiocese will share appropriate information with our community and the public. Please continue to monitor this website.

In addition to checking the website, I urge all who have questions to contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1-800-908-4490, Ext. 245 for assistance. Those whose tax identity has actually been compromised are advised to take the following steps: Contact an IRS Special Agent at 206-464-4920; file a report with local law enforcement; and send an email to taxinformation@seattlearch.org, confirming that your tax identity has been compromised. Please include full name, parish or school and whether you are an employee or volunteer.

Along with our efforts to get to the bottom of this matter and provide updates, I offer my prayers to all who are employed or volunteer for the Church in Western Washington, especially those who have experienced tax identity fraud.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. Peter Sartain".

Most Rev. J. Peter Sartain
Archbishop of Seattle