Opinion
Letters to the Editor

by NCR Staff

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December 9, 2022
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Seattle Archbishop Paul Etienne will be moving from a parish rectory into a newly purchased $2.4 million home in an upscale waterfront neighborhood. Archdiocesan officials say the relocation is necessary to better accommodate guests but the decision has also garnered criticism given Etienne's initial promise to live a "simplified life."

The newly purchased living quarters/hospitality house for the personal and public needs of Seattle's current archbishop and future bishops is definitely not the pretentious monstrosity of the previous bishop's manse which, thanks to Archbishop Paul Etienne's determined direction, fetched a handsome price shortly after the beginning of his tenure, with over $10 million of that wisely tagged by him and his consultants for various diocesan ministries.

For all practical purposes and at a reasonable purchase price, the new home for Seattle's current and future bishops is rather modest at 3,400 square feet; half the size of the former manse. Over 100 years old, it has been nicely, but not lavishly remodeled and should provide the safety, peace and homeyness befitting Seattle's spiritual leader and his ongoing ministry.



Truth be told, most start-up homes for young marrieds in the Northwest are being marketed at about a half million dollars — two-bedroom cracker boxes with little storage space on small lots. We already know good Etienne has a heart for the poor. He does not have to live in the slums of Seattle to prove it.

NANCY McGUNAGLE
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The article opens as follows:

"Seattle Archbishop Paul Etienne will be moving from a parish rectory into a newly purchased $2.4 million home in an upscale waterfront neighborhood."

That's how the article starts, and it could have ended right there as well because that sentence says it all. No clergy person should be moving into a newly purchased $2.4 million home in an upscale neighborhood. Henceforth no Catholic journalist, *no Catholic period*, should mention Etienne even in passing without also reminding us that he lives in a $2.4 million home in an upscale waterfront neighborhood. Every word he says and action he takes must be so contextualized.

JEFFREY JONES

Hamburg, New York

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Reading the article accentuates the disconnect between the article title and content. The main point being the archbishop reversed within three years his decision to live a simpler lifestyle. Didn't he think of the reasons for needing a larger residence before moving into St. Peter's rectory? If not in such a simple matter personal to him, how can his decision-making be trusted in other, more crucial matters? I would think not because he has demonstrated his vision is limited, if he has one at all.

Sadly, history teaches us each transaction by a church official, especially an ordained minister, must be viewed through a jaundiced eye. A prelate who has led a privileged life in the church is not going to voluntarily surrender it. It's just not human nature.

MICHAEL J. McDERMOTT
Tyler, Texas

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Catholics should not be surprised that bishops usually live better than the people they serve. Cardinal Timothy Dolan in New York lives in a mansion on Madison Avenue worth more than $30 million dollars. He recently added an underground garage for his limo which cost a million or more.

Bishops are princes and are entitled to palaces. Sadly, bishops rarely live in poor neighborhoods.

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