

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

“Therefore, I tell you: Every tree that will not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

Matthew 3: 8

Look around. Notice things. Ask yourself: What do I see that truly lasts? What do I experience that will not end? I was present as a six-year-old boy when my home parish of Saint John of the Cross was established in 1953. It was this fledgling parish that began with Masses prayed in a strip mall store that once was a beer distributor's outlet. I made my first Communion in that little chapel. Then some land was purchased. The parish grew and we had eight classrooms and an auditorium. Mass was in the auditorium. I was confirmed there, went to school there. Then more building, more classrooms. Eventually a proper Church and a Convent and a Rectory too. I served my sister's wedding Mass there. I celebrated my first Mass there and laid my father to rest there. It was a wonderful parish, full of life and love and good people.

But things do change. Fewer people participated. Leadership was not always provided. And then sixty years after its founding, in 2013, the parish was closed and consolidated to Queen of Peace, a neighboring parish that was founded in the same year but which still stands today. The closing of my home parish sad. Regrettable. But real. And we look at what lasts and does not last.

The High School I attended, Bishop McDevitt, was founded around 1959 and it served many families for many years. Wonderful esprit du corp. But last year it closed its doors forever. My friends, nothing lasts here, nothing of what we make. But all that God does abides, remains and lasts. God is the transforming power that our world so desperately needs. God is humble and often quiet, speaking in whispers, not raising the divine voice. But the Word that comes forth from the mouth of God does indeed last. And cannot be changed. It does not ever need to be changed. For God is faithful and true. What we as human persons are called upon to do is to wake up, pay attention to what is really going on and choose to embrace the truth of that which alone lasts—a relationship of friendship and intimacy with God. And to embrace the Way of the Lord. Only. We are asked to do this. We are expected to do this. It is for our best outcome. It is the way we become whom the Lord desires us to be. But if we do not, there will come a day when we too will be closed down. Like a tree that does not bear lasting fruit is cut down. Are we getting the message? The question of the week.