

Rev. Toan Do
Isaiah 5: 1-7
Philippians 4: 6-9
Matthew 21: 33-43

**TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
EPIPHANY CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Louisville KY, USA
October 4, 2026

About three decades ago, during this time, I was still a student at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Back then I had no personal transportation, so I had to rely on walking, buses, and metro or the subway. If any one of us has been to Washington D.C. and used public transportation we know that it is very convenient. One of the metro stops is called Foggy Bottom. We also recall the geology of the swain. So, when they dug for the metro, they had to dig hundreds of feet below the surface of the earth. At this Foggy Bottom, it's so obvious for anyone who visits there to see there is a big sign, a banner. It says, "No empire lasts forever." That phrase can be interpreted in many ways.

Those who are anti-government say that Americanism after World War I and World War II will end. Others who are anti-government can also say that one goes and one comes. Of course, the phrase can be interpreted in many ways. Historically speaking, going back to the time of Jesus and before, we recall, for example, the Greek Empire lasted about three hundred years, and the Roman Empire took over for several hundreds of years. Then history continued to tell us until very recently that no human structure or organization would last forever. That said, and by contrast, there is one thing and only one thing that is contrary to all human expectation and human desire. God will last forever. But how do we see God in our lives that last forever? In the gospel reading today, the same context, Jesus was in the temple speaking, in a sense both directly to the chief priest and the elders, at the same time using an allegory or parable to invite them to think differently.

Just imagine; Jesus, instead of saying to them directly, your temple will be taken away and be destroyed, be given to someone else, for example. What would they have done to Him? They would, as we saw later, they would throw Him out, kill Him, or even worse than that. But instead, Jesus used this parable as an allegory to invite them to think differently. Unless they changed their way of life, not producing good fruit, fruit that last, their temple would be destroyed. History shows us in the 70's the second Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed by Roman

armies. Jesus, through the writings of Matthew, was trying to tell us, both, in His time and in the post-Easter church time, that unless people or anyone who believes in God, continues to do the work of God, good work, then their home, their family, their church, their temple, their place of worship, even their nation or empire would be taken away from them and someone else would replace them.

That said, the second reading today from Paul's letter to the Romans, Paul speaks profoundly and brilliantly, inviting the Philippians to listen to him. He said, "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, just, pure, loving, gracious, and if there is any excellence, they are all good things. If there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things, because the longer we think about these good things, the more likely we will do them." That's why Paul goes on to say, "Keep on doing what you have heard, these good things, what you have received, heard and seen from me because God of peace will be with those people." So, contrary to any human organization, structure, or empire will be replaced, God and the good things about God will last forever. For us to see the good things that last forever in God is for us to continue as Paul advises us, continue to do what is good, what is honorable.

56 years ago, one of the questions we may have asked was how long would our church, the building, and our community last? 56 years ago, when it was founded, it was founded on the principle based on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council through the two founding priests, Father Jim Flynn, who is still alive, and Father Dick Fowler who passed away. The principle was for our parish to do social justice, to do good things that society can receive from what we are called to accomplish. The question is like the phrase at Foggy Bottom train station; will our parish last forever? Probably not. But as long as we are all here, individually and as a community we continue to do good things that God has called us to do.

Everlasting presence of God will be in us, will be with us, until that very moment.

So, in a sense, Paul advised Philippian Christians and continues to advise us today, do work which we have been called. Jesus told the chief priest and the elders that their religious practices have become stifle. Their practices no longer gave meaning to people. They are there to perform rights, but no fruit has been produced. Their temple would be taken away from them because of the Roman Empire. A couple hundred years later, that empire was replaced. To us, as long as we are called and as long as we are doing works that God has called us, as a worshipping community, that everlasting presence of God will be with us and will journey with us. This weekend, we wrapped up our stewardship journey.

Yesterday, many of us who subscribed to our parish email received an email asking all of us to spend some 15 minutes to fill out the form.

As we all know, Epiphany has dozens of ministries. Each of them, the word ministry tells us that we are here to serve and to do good things for others. There are many ministries in our parish. If you recall last year on this occasion, I dedicated my weekend homily and reflection on the one ministry, that was the Bereavement Ministry. To this point, we have about three teams. But, instead of repeating that, this year, today, or this weekend, I would like to focus or draw your attention to another, yet worthy of praise, excellence of the ministry, namely, the Homebound Ministry to people who are shut-in, in our parish. As I recall and learn, we have about 38 Homebound Eucharistic Ministers who have been trained and who have been helping for many, many years.

At this point, the number goes up and down. We are serving fifteen people; these thirty-eight ministers are serving fifteen of them. Many of them, I visit, of course, but our Homebound Eucharistic Ministers are doing work. Most of us are still healthy and we have not thought about that. But to those who are homebound and those who are watching us from afar and cannot be here, our volunteers, Homebound Eucharistic Ministers, are bringing the presence of God to their home. You recall one of our founding members, Sue Osborne, who died in late April, and her funeral was on May seventh of this year. Months leading to her death, not only did Sue lose her eyesight because of her conditions, but she was also struggled with anxiety, and depression because of not being able to see. Her personality was like someone who was very outgoing, she engaged in many things. Not being able to see was the worst thing in her life. Every time I visited her at her home, sometimes she ended up in the hospital or rehab, more than one of our Homebound Eucharistic Ministers were there with her. Sometimes they spend two or three days a week helping her. The presence and work of these ministers reminds me of the thing that is excellence, or of the thing that is worthy of praise of the work of God. In order to see God and God's presence in us and it last forever, these are the little things, but so profound in ways that we often don't think about, but they are the work of God. If Paul has anything to advise us this weekend, regarding the continuation of our stewardship at Epiphany is that there are so many things that we can do to reach out to one another in different forms, in different ways.

The Bereavement Ministry last year was what I spoke about, this year my focus is on the Homebound Eucharistic Ministry. These are the works of God. These are of excellence. These are things worthy of praise. As Paul says, as long as we keep thinking about them, and as long as we go on doing these things, my brothers and sisters, the God of peace, which is everlasting, which is eternal, will be with us.