

"HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED?"

As an authentic, committed disciple of Jesus Christ?

A mathematician would describe the relationship between one's physical age and thinking about one's own earthly mortality as being directly proportional. That is, the older we get, the more we think about our own death. A first grader at Lawrence Catholic Academy would seldom if ever think about dying, yet an elderly disease ridden patient at a hospice facility probably dwells on his or her own death constantly. Our recently launched "Saint Patrick Parish Legacy Society" serves to assist those who wish leave a financial gift to support the ministry of our parish.

Newspaper obituary articles attempt to summarize a decedent's life. The usual template includes date, place and cause of death; date and place of birth; parents' names; education; service in the armed forces; marriage and birth of children; work history; organization memberships; what brought enjoyment to the decedent; surviving relatives; and funeral arrangements.

"Family summer vacations at the cottage at Seabrook Beach", "playing 45's with friends" and "trips to Foxwoods" are often listed as a decedent's fondest memories.

At this point, the title of the 1969 Peggy Lee hit, "Is That All There Is?" may come to mind. Where are the accomplishments along the lines of "a loving husband or wife", "a devoted father or mother", "a self-sacrificing individual who was always ready to help his or her friends"?

Where are the "he or she was an active member of Saint Patrick Parish", "he or she volunteered at the Cor Unum Meal Center", "he or she supported Lawrence Catholic Academy", or "he or she was a daily communicant at Saint Patrick Parish"?

How do we, the living, live out the balance of our earthly lives as we aspire to be remembered as authentic, committed disciples of Jesus Christ?

As a stewardship parish, we should all be focused on sharing our particular God given gifts of time, talent and treasure in service to others. We are called to actively proclaim the Good News of Salvation, to actively heal the afflicted, and to actively care for those in need of our help.

Three quotations from the Gospels give us further direction.

"Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."
(Matthew 16:24-25)

"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
(John 13:34-35)

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me."
(Matthew 25:35-36)

So, how do you want to be remembered?

Ed Sampson
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