

A reflection on the kingdom

It helps now and then to step back
and take the long view.
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.
Nothing we do is complete,
which is another way of saying
that the kingdom always lies beyond us.
No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection,
no pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No programme accomplishes the Church's mission.
That is what we are about.
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects
far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything,
and there is a sense of liberation in realising that.
This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,
a step along the way,
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter

and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference between
the master builder and the worker.

We are the workers, not the master builders,
ministers, not messiahs.

We are the prophets of a future not of our own.

Amen.

This prayer was written by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, for a homily by Cardinal John Dearden at a celebration of departed priests in 1979. The words of the prayer are attributed to Blessed Oscar Romero.