

Prayer in a Pinch: Nurturing the Vision

by Jim Vogt

It has been a hectic week, and you are responsible for your community's next gathering. Here is a simple prayer service you can use.¹

Call to Prayer

As Christians and Marianists, we are called to be part of a wonderful, challenging, and humble vision. As the prophet Habakkuk said, "The vision is for its appointed time. Eager for its own fulfillment it will not disappoint; if it comes slowly, wait, for it will come, without fail (Hb 2:3). Mindful of this vision, let us listen to these words from Archbishop Oscar Romero.

Reading

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 program accomplishes the Church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

That is what we are about: We plant 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 beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing 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 God'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 workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

¹ Material taken from *Marianist Soundings*, vol. 8, no. 2 (Dayton, OH: NACMS, Spring 2004), pp. 28-30.

Reflection and Sharing

What line from the reading spoke most to you?

Response

Let us join our prayer with Mary, the woman who so quietly, yet forcefully, nurtured the life and vision of Jesus:

Leader: We believe that the call to be a sower of the Word is a privilege and blessing.

All: Breath of God, assist us.

Leader: We believe that great things can come forth from even the tiniest seed planted in love and cared for tenderly.

All: Breath of God, nourish the vision within.

Leader: We believe that usually only God knows what sprouting and greening will come from the Word planted through our effort.

All: Breath of God, empower us.

Leader: We believe that some dying of the seed has taken place before it can give itself over to life.

All: Breath of God, breathe life into us.

Leader: We believe that it often takes a long time before real fruit appears from our efforts.

All: Breath of God, increase both our patience and perseverance.

Leader: We believe that your Kingdom of peace and justice will come.

All: Breath of God, give us hope. Amen.