

The Prayer of Oscar Romero

The following prayer was composed by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, Michigan, USA for a homily by Cardinal John Dearden in 1979 at a celebration of departed priests. The words of the prayer are often attributed to Oscar Romero, perhaps because they beautifully summarise his philosophy, but they were never spoken by him.



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 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.

This 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 far 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 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 workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.