

Friends,

We are living in transitional times, a situation which should be comfortable to the people of God's Kingdom, the one that is both here and not here yet. We are followers of Jesus — a man who was both human and divine; the Word and one who spoke God's words. We sit at the communion table, partaking of bread and juice, all the while remembering the broken body of Jesus.

And yet, we often yearn for stability and definitives, for clear answers, and the comfort of routine. None of which is inherently problematic. After all, answers bring security.

It's just that right now it seems there are no clear-cut answers, no one right path. And that is why we're anxious, and tired, and feel like giving up. It's also why we cling so hard to the past, to the ways of doing and being church that worked 30 years ago but have steadily proved no longer viable. If only we could find that one incredible preacher out there who would just magically fill all our pews! If only we could find the one program that would bring young families like we used to have through our doors! Then we could get back to being church!

Church historians posit that every 500 years or so, the church experiences a fundamental culture shift in which all of the familiar ways of being church begin to crumble, making way for something new. Even before COVID, we were in the throes of this paradigm shift, stumbling in the dark toward the promise of resurrection. Maybe it was slow-going, but we'd get there eventually.

However, pandemic times have pushed the turbo button on our paradigm shift and what was slowly coming is now racing toward us faster than we can comprehend. The instinct to pull back and get out of the way is strong. But we cannot experience God's new vision if we're on the sidelines, huddled over the old one. We are called to use the love of Christ now to proclaim the kingdom of God tomorrow. The poem below speaks to this issue and I thought it worth sharing.

Blessings,

Pastor Heather

Prophets of a Future Not Our Own

Father Kenneth Untener

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a 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 a 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.