

APRIL 16, 2026 FATHER PETER JAE CHOI

About five years ago, computer scientist Dr. Chris Harrison collaborated with a Lutheran pastor, Reverend Christoph Romhild, and created a remarkable computer visualization of 63,799 of the 340,000 cross-references found in the Bible.

For the visual effect, they put a bar graph across the bottom, which represented the verses in the Bible. And each of the 36,799 cross-references were depicted as an arc, with different colours and different lengths.

What they ended up with were these tens of thousands of rainbows shown across the screen, and practically no empty spaces left.

The Bible is composed of 73 books, written over the course of 1,500 years, by 40 different authors, who lived on three different continents. The entire Bible is interconnected. Certain themes and concepts recur throughout the scriptures. Consistent messages run through the entire Bible.

There are over 300 prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah that were fulfilled by Jesus. There is no doubt in my mind that the Bible is the word of God. Although the public revelation was completed with the scriptures, God continues to unfold his plan of salvation in our lives.

I remember back in 2000, I went to Mexico as a seminarian for a mission. I fell in love with the mission, and I was seriously thinking about leaving the seminary to join the Franciscans.

Then one day, after I finished the day of helping the Indigenous community, I sat down and prayed to God. And I said,

“Lord, I love being here. If you ask me to become a Franciscan, you know I would.”

I hadn't even finished the sentence, and I heard the response in my heart:

“Why do you think I brought you to Canada? Your mission is in Toronto.”

I felt confused. At first I thought my mind was playing tricks on me. And then I paused and thought about it, and I came to the realization that I didn't even finish my sentence when the response came to me.

I spent more time praying, and I realized it was God who spoke to me. I didn't know it, because that never happened to me before. It was the first time God spoke to me.

I came to the realization that God often talks to us. It's just that I'm too often busy telling God what to do, and what I want. I think Christian discipleship begins when we stop telling God what to do, and start to listen to him and obey his will.

Even though I had to spend time discerning my vocation to the priesthood, in a certain sense I knew deep in my heart that God was calling me to the priesthood.

After I was ordained a priest in the Archdiocese of Toronto, back in 2006, I remember having a small crisis. I feel like becoming a priest meant that I had arrived, and once I got there I was left bewildered. I needed to find answers to these questions:

Now what? What kind of priest am I going to be?

A few months later, I found this prayer, written by Bishop Ken Untener, and since then this prayer has become a roadmap in my priesthood. Let me share that prayer with you.

It's called Prophets of a Future Not Our Own.

“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 include everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that will one day grow.

We water the 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 realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it well.

It may be incomplete, but it is the 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.”

So the coolest thing about being a priest is when people ask me who I work for, or what I do for a living. I get to say, “I work for God.” My job is to share the good news with others. Just like what Mother Teresa once said:

“I’m not called to be successful, I’m called to be faithful.”

Being faithful to the duties God assigned to us. That’s our mission. What we find in today’s first reading is the Apostles who were once afraid and went into hiding made a comeback, and now they’re boldly preaching the good news.

All they had to do was to keep preaching the good news, and leave the rest to God. Whenever we feel alone or even abandoned, let us remind ourselves that God’s silence is not the same as him doing nothing. It takes time for the seeds to germinate. When you water the plant, it takes time to grow.

God is always working behind the scenes, preparing for our growth and for our breakthrough.

So when we are tempted to say, “Why is this happening to me?” we need to tell ourselves this is happening for a reason. I’m not the master builder. He is.

There was once a priest who was very ambitious. He wanted to change the world. He felt discouraged when he realized he couldn’t change the world. So he made it his mission to change his parish. But he couldn’t. So he became more realistic with his expectations and told himself that he was going to change just the people who were around him. But he couldn’t even do that either. He came to the realization that the only person he could change was himself. So he worked on himself and made changes in himself.

Once people noticed that he became more patient and kind to others, more attentive to the needs of others, and became more generous and forgiving, slowly people around him began to change. And then his parishioners changed too.

If you want to change the world, work on yourself first. Saint Catherine of Siena said it so well:

“Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire.”