Responses: PULSE and "A Future Not Out Own"

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In considering Patrick Byrne's "Paradigms of Justice and Love," it seems appropriate to remark that there is a substantial gap between the language of paradigms drawn from the philosophy of science and the language of metanoia drawn from biblical religion. Kuhn is, after all, attempting to describe how scientists change their explanations of physical processes, and physical science has proved alienating rather than enlightening in discussing the self and how it grows, let alone how it experiences conversion. There is in Byrne's article a considerable discontinuity as it moves from the Socratic challenging of preconceptions to Job, Romans, and the "dangerous memory" of God's saving activity.

Epistemological language describing mental events leaves us without a description of certain crucial moves in the process of conversion. If the challenge to students' paradigms helps them abandon limited ways of seeing and acting, what deeper apprehension of the self and of the significance of one's own actions takes the place of these limited approaches? What replaces the student's faith in what they believed themselves to be doing? How do they sustain failure without quitting? And what essential virtues develop in the process?

Oscar Romero expressed the limitations of human purposes in this way:

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...This is what we are about. We provide yeast that produces effects, far beyond our capabilities. We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.... We are workers, not mas- ter builders, ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own. Amen.

How do students in the PULSE program come to have confidence in this God, in His work, and come to rest in a future not their own?