The cathedral in our work

Read the story and the Tom Wright quote below and then choose one of the options for reflection that follow overleaf.

***The stone-chippers***

Three men are chipping rock in a quarry. The first man is asked what he is doing and replies that he is chipping rock. The second man is asked the same question and replies that he is providing for his family. The final man, doing identical work, says that he is building a cathedral. If you’re just chipping rock, you make yourself a common labourer and, while providing for your family gives you a personal purpose, finding the cathedral in your work can generate inspiration and motivation.

***Building for the cathedral***

“Think of the positive: of the calling, in the present, to share in the surprising hope of God’s whole new creation. The image I have often used, in trying to explain this strange but important idea, is that of the stonemason working on part of a great cathedral. The architect has already got the whole plan in mind, and has passed on instructions to the team of masons as to which stones need carving in what way. The foreman distributes these tasks among the team. One will shape stones for a particular tower or turret; another will carve the delicate pattern that breaks up the otherwise forbidding straight lines; another will work on gargoyles or coats of arms; another will be making statues of saints, martyrs, kings or queens. They will be vaguely aware that the others are getting on with their tasks; and they will know, of course, that many other entire departments are busy about different tasks as well. When they’ve finished with their stones and their statues they will hand them over, without necessarily knowing very much about where, in the eventual building, their work will find its home. They may not have seen the complete architect’s drawing of the whole building with ‘their bit’ identified in its proper place. Nor may they live to see the completed building, with their work at last where it belongs. But they will trust the architect that the work they have done in following instructions will not be wasted. They are not, themselves, building the cathedral; but they are building*for* the cathedral, and when the cathedral is complete their work will be enhanced, ennobled, will mean much more than it could have meant as they were chiselling it and shaping it down on the stonemasons’ yard.”

Tom Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, (London: SPCK, 2007), pp. 220-1.

**Option 1**

Reflect on the following questions. You may want to jot down some thoughts in a journal or elsewhere.

* How does the role of the stone-chippers in thestory compare with your role of lay leadership?
* What might be the cathedral in *your* work be? Can you name what is beautiful, inspirational, creative, pleasing and wonderful about the role?

**Option 2**

Using a sketch-pad, modelling clay, pipe cleaners or other art materials, take time to reflect on the story and, working with the art materials, produce a visual/physical response to the second question above.

Take some time to pray and ask God to turn your work into something beautiful.