



BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

In December 2021, Typhoon Odette devastated the Philippines, unleashing ferocious winds and torrential rains that flattened entire communities and left countless families homeless. In the coastal town of Lapu-Lapu, Cebu, a young teacher named Margie lost everything overnight when the storm destroyed her small home and the school where she was teaching. Despite her losses, Margie was determined to rebuild. She set up a makeshift classroom, salvaged what books she could, and gathered the children, offering them not only lessons but also a sense of normalcy and hope amid the ruins. When asked why she was doing this despite her hardships, Margie replied, “We’ve lost so much, but I want the children to see that there’s still a future to hope for. God hasn’t left us; we must be in his hands and keep going. We still have each other, and God will see us through. It is not the storm that decides our blessings—it is who holds our hearts through it, for God is good.”

Margie’s quiet resilience and faith echo the teachings of Jesus, particularly the Beatitudes, which promise that those who are poor in spirit, those who mourn, and those who are meek are not abandoned but profoundly blessed. In her small town, the Beatitudes came alive—not as mere words, but as a way of life. Margie’s humble strength exemplifies what it means to hold on to hope in the face of utter loss.

This spirit of resilience resonates with the words from the prophet Jeremiah: “Cursed is the man who trusts in human beings,

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who makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD... Blessed are those who trust in the LORD; the LORD will be their trust” (Jer 17:5, 7). Margie’s unwavering trust in God during her trials illustrates the blessed life of dependence on a higher power that remains steadfast in times of trouble and loss.

Psalm 1 further articulates this contrast between those who anchor themselves in the Lord’s ways and those who do not: “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked... Rather, the law of the LORD is his joy; and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted near streams of water, that yields its fruit in season; its leaves never wither.” Like the tree nourished by water, Margie flourished amid her struggles, bearing fruit and providing shade to the children she taught, nurturing their hope and resilience.

The Apostle Paul encapsulates this message in his first letter to the Corinthians (15:12, 16-20), emphasizing the importance of Christ’s resurrection as the foundation of our hope. If Christ has been raised, then our efforts are not in vain. Margie’s work in the wake of devastation reflects the living hope that believers share—that even in the darkest circumstances, new life and resurrection are possible. The Beatitudes remind us that true blessing is found not in what was

lost but in what can be rebuilt anew.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus presents the Beatitudes, blessing the poor, hungry, sorrowful, and marginalized while warning the rich and comfortable that they have already received their reward (6:17, 20-26). This teaching subverts traditional notions of success and happiness by prioritizing humility, compassion, and reliance on God. As weary individuals from various backgrounds gather to hear him, Jesus offers comfort and reassurance through his proclamations, affirming the value of the poor and emphasizing spiritual dependence, recognizing the longing for justice, offering hope to the grieving, and acknowledging the trials of persecution, ultimately strengthening their bond with him amid life’s challenges.

Margie’s story illustrates that the Beatitudes are not merely about suffering; they reveal God’s presence amid trials, trusting that his blessings shine through even in the darkest storms. Often, the greatest blessings come cloaked in tribulations, revealing the depth of faith that anchors us, as Margie demonstrated through her unwavering commitment to her children and community. In this tapestry of scripture and personal testimony, we are invited to embrace the truth that hope, resilience, and God’s blessings can emerge even from the fiercest storms. The Beatitudes are a call to action in a world craving hope, healing, and love. Let us live out these blessings in everything we do, reflecting the love of Christ to those around us.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 31 [30]:3-4)

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P—In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches us that those who count for nothing in the world—the poor, the meek, the pure of heart, the persecuted—are the truly blessed. God chooses to be on their side and they are most precious ones in his eyes.

Do we see blessedness only in terms of richness, power, and being honored? Do we involve ourselves to the service of those who are not blessed?

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

All—I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, *(strike your breast)* through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Jer 17:5-8) *(Sit)*

The prophet Jeremiah teaches us that blessedness lies in relying on the Lord rather than on human beings, rich and powerful they may be.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah

THUS SAYS the LORD: Cursed is the one who trusts in human beings, who seeks his strength in flesh, whose heart turns away from the LORD. He is like a barren bush in the desert that enjoys no change of season, but stands in a lava waste, a salt and empty earth. Blessed is the one who trusts in the

LORD, whose hope is the LORD. He is like a tree planted beside the waters that stretches out its roots to the stream: it fears not the heat when it comes, its leaves stay green; in the year of drought it shows no distress, but still bears fruit.

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 1)

R—Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

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1. Blessed the man who follows not the counsel of the wicked,/ nor walks in the way of sinners,/ nor sits in the company of the insolent,/ but delights in the law of the LORD/ and meditates on his law day and night. **(R)**

2. He is like a tree/ planted near running water,/ that yields its fruit in due season,/ and whose leaves never fade./ Whatever he does, prospers. **(R)**

3. Not so the wicked, not so;/ they are like chaff which the wind drives away./ For the LORD watches over the way of the just,/ but the way of the wicked vanishes. **(R)**

Second Reading

(1 Cor 15:12, 16-20)

The apostle Paul reminds us that if our hopes are limited to this life and what it offers us, then we are to be pitied indeed. But we place our hope in the risen Lord who prepares for us eternal life.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: If Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If the dead are not raised, neither

has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all.

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Lk 6:23ab) *(Stand)*

All—Alleluia, alleluia. Rejoice and be glad; your reward will be great in heaven. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Lk 6:17, 20–26)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

All—Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS came down with the Twelve and stood on a stretch of level ground with a great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for

their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.”

—The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily *(Sit)*

Profession of Faith *(Stand)*

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (at the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P—Conscious of God’s blessings to us, let us raise our voices to our heavenly Father as we pray for the needs of the whole Church. Full of confidence, we pray:

R—Listen to the prayer of your Church, Lord.

C—For the shepherds of the Church: may they put their hope

in the Lord who strengthens those who serve his people with integrity. We pray: **(R)**

C—For those who aspire to hold public office in our country: may they have the wisdom, the courage, and the honesty to use their gifts and resources in the service of the country, especially for the poor and the powerless. We pray: **(R)**

C—For those who are sick: may they find hope, affection, and assistance from the local authorities and their communities. We pray: **(R)**

C—For our beloved dead: may God’s mercy be upon them that they may reach eternal life with him. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions *(pause)*. We pray: **(R)**

P—Heavenly Father, hear the prayers of your people who hope in your infinite mercy. May these petitions help us to see our blessedness above all material goods, careers, or honors.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.



Presentation of the Gifts *(Stand)*

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—May this oblation, O Lord, we pray, cleanse and renew us and may it become for those who do your will the source of eternal reward.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

Preface VI *(Ordinary Time)*

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in you we live and move and have our being, and while in this body we not only experience the daily effects of your care, but even now possess the pledge of life eternal.

For, having received the first fruits of the Spirit, through whom you raised up Jesus from the dead, we hope for an everlasting share in the Paschal Mystery.

And so, with all the Angels, we praise you, as in joyful celebration we acclaim:

All—Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion

(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 78 [77]:29-30)

They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

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Prayer after Communion

(Stand)

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Having fed upon these heavenly delights, we pray, O Lord, that we may always long for that food by which we truly live.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P—Bow down for the blessing.
(Pause)

May almighty God always keep every adversity far from you and in his kindness pour out upon you the gifts of his blessing.

All—Amen.

P—May God keep your hearts attentive to his words, that they may be filled with everlasting gladness.

All—Amen.

P—And so, may you always understand what is good and right, and be found ever hastening along in the path of God's commands, made coheirs with the citizens of heaven.

All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (+) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—The Mass has been offered. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

All—Thanks be to God.

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