

DEVOTIONAL POEMS

By Pastor Bien Llobrera

1 AWESOME GOD

“How fathomless the depths of God’s resources, wisdom, and knowledge! How unsearchable His decisions, and how mysterious His methods! ... For from Him everything comes, through Him everything lives, and for Him everything exists. Glory to Him forever! Amen.” (Romans 11:33, 36, C. B. Williams Translation)

As the moments and events of the passing year
March again in grand parade before my eyes,
My God, I cannot help but cry, how fathomless
The wealth of Your blessings have been to me!

And Your wise purposes for me how impossible
To search out, tunnel hard like a miner as I might,
Downward and sideward and forward and back.
Enough that You’ll make all work out for good.

Nor do I need to track down Your footprints to see
What paths and ways, what methods and processes,
You use to bring Your sovereign decrees to pass.
That You know me and I know You, that’s enough.

2 GOD LOVES ME

“For God so loved the world” (John 3:16).

Maker of all, God lifted high above
Your works, You declare You love this dust-speck
Of Your creation. Why, this theme’s beyond
Mortal ability and time to sing
Without ceasing, on earth and in heaven!
Nor need I other blessings more to praise
My God, all day and all life long,
I have no breath to waste on other songs.

3 TO BE NEAR GOD

“As for me, it is good to be near unto God” (Psalm 73:28).

Oh God, I'm drawn to You only because
You in Your grace draw near to me and cause
My oft-wand'ring soul to be drawn to You.
Now only this shall be what's good for me.

No more for me the quest for usefulness –
It's oft just lust for glory in disguise –
Enough for me that God wants me near Him,
My highest joy to hide under His wings.

No more of service then for you to do?
Oh yes, even more, but now no trumpets;
Just quiet deeds of mercy with my Lord,
Which leave in hearts the fragrance of His love.

4 A HANDFUL OF DIRT

*And the LORD God formed man of
the dust of the ground, and breathed
into his nostrils the breath of life;
and man became a living being.*
– Genesis 2:7, NKJV

*For I say to you that God is able to raise
up children to Abraham from these stones.*
– Matthew 3:9b, NKJV

And God scooped up a handful of dirt
And fashioned it with head and body,
Limbs and organs, a statue of imposing
Strength and beauty – but who cares?
It's only dirt, yes, ingenuously arranged,
But still very like the earth it came from.
Then God bent down and into the nostrils
Of this arrangement of dirt He breathed,
And the earthen statue awoke, no more
A handful of dirt, it stood a living man!

A handful of dirt, that's all I am, and I
Share in the frailties and wickedness
Of all sin-cursed children of the earth.

But God scooped me up and paid
 My ransom price with His Son's blood.
 Then He sent His own Spirit to mold
 This lump of earth to become like His Son.
 It's not about the dirt, it's about the God
 Who can, who wants to, and who will
 Make of this handful of dirt His child!

5 LAUNDERER AND MENDER OF RAGS

John 13:5: After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.

What a polluted, stinking piece of rag am I!
 Why should the pure and holy One
 Put up with me at all? How so much easier
 To toss me into the trash incinerator and rid
 His world for good of the stench and hateful
 Sight of this rag. How much easier to weave
 A new piece of unsullied tapestry, beautifully
 Embroidered and sweetly perfumed
 With the fragrance of choicest flowers.

But no! He pulls this piece of stinking rag
 From the Smoky Mountain of noxious trash
 And sets Himself to the task of washing
 And mending the rotting rag until it's made
 Clean and sweet and new, the slightest trace
 Completely erased that it has ever been touched
 By the darkest stain of sin. Almighty, most loving
 Launderer and Mender of filthy rags, I throw
 Myself completely into Your tender, holy hands!

6 A DISCIPLE'S COMMITMENT

To my mind's eye a carpenter appeared;
 Around him lay his tools – a saw, a hammer,
 A measuring rule, and many other tools
 With which he built, perhaps a rich mansion,
 Perhaps a lowly bench – all arranged and ready
 For his use, though he did not use them
 All at the same time. I wondered:

What if, say, the hammer said, "I'm not
Being used. I'll go off and help a person
On my own," what would the master say?

The master said to the hammer, "You are
My servant, a special tool of mine.
I decide when to use you, where and how
And why, and for how long I want.
You are not more busy when I take you up;
You are not idle when I put you down.
In or off my hand you are busy, if you're
Constantly yielded to me, ready at any time,
Never leaving your station as a tool
Of mine, nobody else's, mine alone."

And so I looked up to my Master and said,
"Yes, Lord, I am Your servant, Yours alone,
To live only because You want me to,
Or to die. I am Your instrument for building up
Or tearing down; to declare Your grace
Or wrath; through me let Your wisdom,
Power, and love flow forth, until You have done
What's in Your heart and mind. I am
Your servant now and evermore, and I wish for
No other station, no other work, no other life."

7 BLOOMING FOR HIM

You say I'm in a rat race?
Worse, I'm in a rat hole,
Where no one knows or cares
That I exist at all.
Yes, I do my work;
Yes, I pay my dues;
I even do the best I can.
All this – but for whom?
Do all this – but for whom?
I do all this, yes, but for whom?
That's why today I'm in this park,
Hiding in this dark, sad corner of the park,
Just to get away from it all,
Just to get away from it all.

But, look, what's this I see here?
It's a flower blooming

In this dark, sad corner;
 Blooming, but for whom?
 Then I hear a voice –
 Or am I dreaming?
 I hear the flower answer me,
 "I bloom, bloom for Him,
 For Him who put me here.
 I bloom for Him who put here."
 So now I'm ready to leave this park,
 Back to, no more a rat hole, but God's garden,
 To bloom for Him who put me there,
 To bloom for Him who put me there.

8 STOPPING PLACES, STARTING PLACES

"And Moses recorded their starting places
 according to their journeys by the command
 of the Lord...." (Numbers 33:2, NASB)

Starting places they were called,
 But stopping places they were, too;
 For the pleasant places where they camped
 Tempted them to forget and let go
 Of the Promised Land God called them to.

Starting places they were meant;
 Places of regret they became;
 For the bitter places where they stayed
 Tempted them to prefer past bondage
 In place of their future heritage.

But pleasant or bitter, hard or kind,
 God helped them to make
 Their stopping places
 As fresh starting places
 On their journey to the Promised Land.

Lord, I've dallied too long
 At many easy places,
 And hard places have stopped
 Me dead in my tracks.
 But thank You, Lord,

You're telling me today
 To make my stopping places

As fresh starting places
 And follow as You lead me
 To my Promised Land.

9 STAY UNTIL

Matthew 2:14: "Stay there until I tell you."

Lord, You want me to stay here?
 Here, where I'm cramped, boxed in,
 Cut off from resources and friends?
 Here, where the outer weather is hot
 And suffocating; where the inner weather
 Is dark, dank, and surely deadening?
 Here, where I'm nameless and feel so useless,
 Where everything I do seems pointless,
 And where my life seems all so meaningless?
 Stay here, until when? Until You tell me?
 And may I ask, Lord, when is that?
 The only answer to my prayer that I got
 Was a sky made of deaf, unheeding brass.

Until one day I heard again His Word,
 Telling me in no uncertain terms,
 "Get up, move, time to hit the road!"
 And, looking back, after I'd gone a little ways,
 I saw what lessons He had taught,
 What changes in me He had wrought,
 The knowledge and the skills, the attitude
 And fortitude, and many big and little things
 He had equipped me with while I was kept
 In that, to me, unwelcome wayside cave,
 To make me fit and ready for the rugged roads
 And steep mountain passes I must climb
 At the next stage of my upward pilgrimage.

10 LORD, TEACH ME TO FLY

"In the wasteland, a howling wilderness, He encircled him (Israel), He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreading out its wings, taking them up, carrying them

on its wing... so the Lord alone led him.” (Deuteronomy 32:10-12)

In the howling wilderness, O Lord,
 You encircled, instructed, protected
 Your people Israel and kept them
 As the apple of Your eye – so may I
 Trust in You to do for me as You did
 For them, because I am Your child.

You also, like a mother eagle, stirred up
 The nest and pushed Your people off
 Their comfort zone into the open sky
 So You might teach them how to fly.
 Oh, how vainly they flapped their wings
 And, oh, how they panicked as they fell

Like dead weights toward the rocks below.
 But before they crashed You swiftly flew
 Underneath and caught them safely
 On Your mighty everlasting wings.
 And back to the nest You returned them
 Only to push them out into space again

So they might try again – this time harder
 And better – to use the wings they did not
 Know they had. And this time they discovered
 Their wings could hold them up – and more!
 Their wings, cocked correctly to the wind,
 Could really make them glide and dive and soar.

O my Father God, teach me to use my wings,
 Teach me to fly, yes, and soar toward the sun!

11 TO REACH THE STAR

When I look back over the distance
 I travelled this year and when I look
 Forward to where I need to be,
 To be the kind of person God wants me
 To become, I see the goal remains
 A twinkling point of a star in the outer
 Reaches of an infinite sky, and I ask:

“With my stumbling baby steps,
 How can I hope to reach my goal,

When to reach the star I need
To fly with the speed of light?"
Then I hear my Savior whisper:
"I am the Light. Ride on my wings
I will take you to the star."

12 GOD'S CALL AND LEADING

"You lead Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (Psalm 77:20).

God leads His people, absolutely,
Beyond all quibbling, but as surely
As the sun shines and the moon reflects
Its light, so sure it is that God has chosen
To lead through faltering steps
And trembling human hands.
Not from these humans' choice,
For oft they recoiled from God's call.
But God insisted that they stand tall
And brave and strong, depending
Only on His direction and His power,
So all peoples will have no doubt
Only God could bring all this about.

Today God's call still rings out
To fathers struggling to lead their families;
To mothers sacrificially nurturing their young;
To pastors agonizing against all odds
To bring their wayward flock safely
On their journey home; to young men
And to young women battling the downward
Flood of a world gone mad, rushing after
Fleeting treasures and pleasures –
God's call rings out to one and all,
To high and low, to arise and cut a new
And narrow upward path with God's
Clear light straight-streaming from above.

13 CORAM DEO

"... that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

(Ephesians 3:19)

The presence of God, I told myself, is sweeter by far
 Than being with anyone or anything in all the world.
 When you've run your errands, I told myself,
 When you've completed your work, always
 Hurry back to be in the presence of God.
 And then I heard God say to my spirit, "My child,
 You've got it all wrong. You think when you're done
 With your devotions, when you've read your Bible
 And said your prayers, you excuse yourself and say,
 Sorry, Lord, I have to leave You now. I got work to do,
 Got errands to run. But I promise I'll be with You again
 As soon as I can, and then we'll enjoy each other again.

"My child, you've got it all wrong. You don't hurry
 Back to My presence. My presence never leaves you.
 What you need to do is to change the way you think
 About us two. From now on, always think we are partners.
 We're always together, always experiencing life together,
 We win over sin and Satan and the world together.
 While we do all that we never stop enjoying each other."
 Lord, forgive me for being like Jacob, who said,
 Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not.
 Now I understand what the old saints said,
 "Always live your life BEFORE GOD!
 Always live your life CORAM DEO!"

14 LITTLE ONE, BIG ONE

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus..." (Ephesians 1:1)
 In the original, *Paul* means *little*;
apostle means *someone sent*.

They named him Paul, the little one,
 And he set out to prove them wrong,
 Until the Big One took hold of him
 And called him "My sent one".
 Then his littleness became his pride
 As he went forth to tell the world
 How big He was who now owned him

And whom he now, too, owned, the Big One
 Who owns me, too, and has sent me forth on
 The same mission, and it doesn't matter

No one knows it's my finger that points
 Them to the Big One in whom they are
 Now rejoicing, just like I am rejoicing
 Because when you're His, He's yours, too.

*In the original language, *Paul* means *little*;
apostle means *someone sent*.

15 THE WILL OF GOD

*"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God."
 (Ephesians 1:1)*

"It seems to me that we," the young man said,
 "Are caught between the horns – " The aged minister
 Interrupted, "Of a dilemma," picking up on
 An argument from past beyond remembering,
 Which many sophomoric minds past counting
 Have worn bare. The youth rejoined, "How can
 God's will be absolutely sovereign and man's will
 Still be free? Sir, will you please explain to me."

"Let me share with you my mentor's answer,
 Which, from time immemorial, mentors have
 Shared with students with newly opened eyes.
 God's sovereign will is like an ocean liner
 And we are passengers. God, the Captain,
 Has already charted the ship's course,
 Its ports of call and its final destination,
 But He gives everyone the freedom to choose –

"Choose their relationships, attitudes and activities
 On board – based, of course, on choices available
 On deck, and governed by rules the Captain has set
 For everybody's welfare and security on the ship."
 "So no one is really free?" the youth protested.
 With fatherly compassion the minister replied,
 "If you mean unhindered anarchy, no. Our liberty
 Is free to move only within the Captain's boundary.

"We are His passengers, like it or not, sailing in
 This ocean of our universe, with earth the solitary
 Ship, which belongs to Him alone. You may rebel
 If you like or sulk in a corner and cry, or, submit
 To the Captain's plan to prepare any who's humble

Enough to live by the rules, to get ready to explore
 And enjoy the island of their destination. I choose
 To get ready. Young man, what's your choice?"

16 HE KNOWS WHAT TO DO

When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already knew what he was going to do. (John 6:6,5)

Jesus and His tiny band of helpers were trying
 To get some rest – but not for long, for from the foot
 Of the mountain where they sheltered they saw,
 Rushing toward them from the valley below,
 Great crowds of people, rolling forward like waves,
 Many carrying sick friends and loved ones on pallets,
 And everybody carrying secret burdens in their hearts.
 But in their haste to be first to reach the Master's touch
 They forgot one most mundane but still elemental
 Thing of all: They forgot to bring some lunch!

As the disciples watched the on-rushing crowds, some
 Grumbling "There goes our precious hoped-for rest!",
 Jesus asked Philip, no doubt the math wiz of the group,
 "Where can we buy enough bread to feed these crowds?"
 Quickly Philip's mental calculator spat out the answer:
 "Forget it, Lord, impossible! Two hundred days worth
 Of a laborer's wages won't buy even a bite for each."
 What Philip didn't know or maybe plain forgot was that
 The Master was merely testing him, for He already knew
 What He would do to feed five thousand hungry mouths.

Today I ask the Lord: "Lord, my needs like tidal waves
 Are breaking over me – needs for today that I thought
 I have prepared for, and still greater needs for tomorrow
 That, if I tried a hundred-fold, I know I can't prepare for.
 Lord, to meet all these needs where shall I get the supply?
 I hear the Lord reply: "Peace, my child, quiet your heart.
 Drive demon doubt away, command devil fear depart.
 I am your Source, your needs will be supplied. Just as I

Multiplied five loaves and two fish to feed the crowds,
So I will multiply my blessings upon you, you will have
Enough today, and tomorrow you'll never run out."

17 IN EPHESUS, IN CHRIST

*To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.
(Ephesians 1:1)*

Saints? In Ephesus? Yes, in Rome and Philippi,
Laodicea, Colosse and Corinth, too, and all over
The pagan world in places where, you'd think,
Faithful followers of Christ were most unlikely
To be found, and yet there they were,
Living lives unsoiled by their environment.
But how? Only one way: they lived in Christ.

And here I am, a saint in L. A.? In Manila?
In Saudi Arabia? In places where no one
Can take a breath without breathing in sin,
Like microscopic particulates of pollution,
Ever-present in the air? How can I stay free
Anywhere at all from sin's contamination?
Only one way: Abide in Christ continually.

18 GRACE AND PEACE

*Grace and peace to you
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.
(Ephesians 1:2)*

As a young Christian
I heard my pastor say,

GRACE means...

**God's
Riches
At
Christ's
Expense.**

An older Christian now,

I want to tell young Christians,

PEACE means...

Prospective

Events

All

Comprehensively

Ensured.

Grace provides
 For all my needs,
 Because God is my Father
 And I am His child.
 Peace protects me
 From all harm,
 Because Christ is my Lord,
 Who owns and guards me
 As His treasure,
 And He controls all things,
 From biggest galaxy
 To tiniest grain of sand.

19 FATHER AND CHILD

*God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
 (Ephesians 1:2)*

Out walking one morning, the sun was shining
 In rarest celebration, but dark clouds of giant
 Walls of doubt were shutting out the light
 From my soul. And then I saw him, this little boy,
 Wandering about alone on the street and so
 I asked him, "Are you lost?" "No, sir," he said,
 Happy and carefree like all God's creatures
 On a bright summer day. No adult was around

That I could see, who was taking care of the boy
 So I asked him again, "Little boy, you're all alone,
 Are you okay? What's your name, who's your daddy?"
 "Sir," the boy replied, "my name is" and he told me,
 "And my daddy's following behind me." Then out
 Of the blue, an angel might have touched his lips
 For all I know, he added, "But, sir, you look so sad,
 My daddy will help you – there he is!" I looked.

And sure enough, there he was – how could I have
 Missed him, it must be the dark clouds in my heart.
 But I knew – everybody knew – who this man was.
 “Mayor, sir, what a surprise to see you here!”
 “My boy and I are just out enjoying the sun.”
 Then the little angel butted in, “Dad, he looks so sad,
 Will you help him?” “Sure, son,” and then to me,
 “You’re my citizen, I’m your mayor, I’ll help you”

“Oh, no, thank you, mayor, sir, like you and your boy
 I was just taking a stroll.” Hurriedly I walked away
 When like thunder from above I heard the Voice:
 “You’re a citizen of my kingdom, you’re My child.
 I am your God and King and Father, I’ll help you.”
 And in my soul I felt the clouds, like massive prison
 Walls, shake as in an earthquake, crack and fall,
 And sunshine, like floodlights, burst into my soul.

20 TREASURES: EARTHLY OR HEAVENLY?

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the
 heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)*

On the radio I heard repeatedly today
 A lucky man had won the super lottery,
 The prize was huge, in mega-millions,
 Envy said, “Don’t you wish you’re him?”

Lucky for him, gone work’s daily drudgery;
 Finished for him sleepless nights of worry.
 Now his wife could buy anything she wanted,
 His children’s dreams would now all be granted.

Very subtly into my heart envy slithered in,
 “Indeed, why not me instead?” I complained.
 Discontent reared up, I railed against my lot,
 And then I stopped, sobered by this thought:

You envy his millions on this fading earth,
 Your wealth in heaven do you count for naught?
 With every spiritual blessing you are blessed
 By the Father in the heavenlies in Christ.

Satan saw a chink in my armor and attacked,
 "Pie in the sky, yes -- by and by" he mocked,
 "That lucky fellow has got it all, here and now,
 You only hope to muddle through somehow."

"You got a point there, Satan," I almost agreed,
 When in my heart the still small Voice I heard,
 "How many sets of clothes, how much food,
 For the here and now do you really need?"

"How many houses before you feel safe;
 How many beds for a good night's sleep?
 From a mountain hoard of goods and gold,
 Just how much, this moment, can you hold?"

And gently the Spirit jogged my memory,
 "Always take to heart your Father's guarantee.
 As your days surely your strength shall be,
 He'll never fail to give your bread each day."

The radio repeated the name of the lucky man,
 I turned the radio off, and then it seemed heaven
 Called my name, "Child of God, Christ's joint-heir,
 All that Christ owns you own – the whole universe!"

21 CHOSEN IN CHRIST

*Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation
 of the world, that we should be holy and without
 blame before Him. (Ephesians 1:3)*

Ere the world appeared
 From nothing into being
 God marked me His own.

I'm His, in His Son,
 To stand holy, without blame,
 Pure, before His throne.

22 PREDESTINED

*In love, having predestined us to adoption
 as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according
 to the good pleasure of His will. (Ephesians 1:4)*

“What does *predestined* mean?” I asked my pastor.
 He replied, “I’ll tell you what my own pastor
 Told me long ago. *Predestined* means you stand
 Before God’s door and above the door you read
 This invitation, emblazoned bright and clear:

“*Whosoever will may come!* You feel welcome,
 You come in, and once in you cast a glance
 Back to the door and above the door inside,
 These words, as clear as the words outside,
 Proclaim to your wondering eyes and heart:

“*Chosen before the foundation of the world!*
 Only those who accept the invitation outside
 Will know they’ve been chosen, once inside.
 Those who choose to stay outside won’t ever know –
 They don’t care to know – what they’ve let go.”

23 DIVINE GRAMMAR

²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. (Romans 8:29-30)

My Father God in heaven, in the name of Your Son,
 My Savior and Lord, before Your throne of grace
 Gladly I do come to worship You and to praise.
 How wise and gracious You are, and as for me
 How foolish I am and forgetful, always forgetting
 That You began Your work of salvation in my heart,
 And You’ll sure complete it at the day of Jesus Christ.
 You foreknew and predestined, You called and justified,
 And what to me is still some distant future,
 You already declare it as accomplished fact, that I,
 Though still in fire being refined, I am already glorified!

How mind-bending this divine grammar, this mystery!
 The future, in God’s eyes, is already past, and this
 Present progressive of my being sanctified cannot add to
 Or subtract from the perfection of God’s glorified.

The result is assured of this process I am going through
 Because the end to which I am travelling is, in God's book,
 Already recorded history that I have arrived. Oh, God,
 Your divine grammar my human grammar cannot grasp.
 But one thing I do know, the grammar be human or divine,
 My life is in Your hands, and Your hands will never let go
 Of my future as surely as You have never let slip
 From Your grasp my present or my past. Hallelujah, amen!

24 THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY

*To the praise of the glory of His grace,
 by which He made us accepted in the
 Beloved. (Ephesians 1:6)*

"To the praise of His glory" – doesn't that seem
 Like God is selfish and self-centered, doing things
 Only to bring glory to Himself, what do you think?
 Yes, certainly, I would seem like that to you if I
 Said, "I'm doing this for you, you know why?
 To make the world admire how good I am."

But now let me see exactly what it is God did
 For me, that I should give Him praise and glory.
 First, through my pride and rebellion and sin
 I deserved only God's total wrath and rejection.
 In fact, He just had to do nothing, just let me go on,
 I was hellbent to achieve my own self-destruction.

And when, to reclaim me from sin, He foresaw
 This would cause His Son the cross to undergo,
 He drew not back but said, "Then let it be so."
 And when on the cross His Son in anguish did cry,
 "You've left me alone, my Father, why, oh, why?"
 He turned His back, closed His ear, left His Son to die.

And then He turned to me and said, "It's all paid!
 Your debt's all cancelled, you may return unafraid,
 Back to my loving arms, a lost sheep back to the fold.
 If all that was selfishness, what love is I don't know.
 All I know is I was gone, but He did not let me go.
 So praise to His glory I'll give all eternity through.

25 PRAYER IS

*Therefore I... do not cease to give thanks for you,
making mention of you in my prayers.
Ephesians 1:15, 16.*

*Prayer is
Bringing myself, a container,
To be filled by God's grace.*

"Is prayer like bringing my cup
To the Lord for Him to fill it up?"
Asked a young Christian.
The old Christian replied,
"Yes, bring your cup to the Lord,
Better still bring a bucket, a barrel,
A huge drum, a tanker truck,
Yes, bring to God a tanker ship,
Bring the biggest container that you have
And God, who sits on His throne of grace,
Guarantees He will surely fill you up!"

*Prayer is
Dedicating my container
To pour out God's grace into
Another needy one's container.*

"Is praying for others like taking
My cup in order to pour out
The grace I have received into
Someone else's cup?"
The young Christian asked once more.
Again the older Christian answered,
"Yes, take your cup to fill someone's
Empty cup, but much better still,
Take the largest hose you have
And hook one end to the fountain
Of God's inexhaustible supply
Then point the hose's other end
And just let it flow and let God's grace
Flood desert-dry hearts all around."

*Prayer is
Believing no one and nothing
Are beyond hope or out of reach,
For where God's grace is, miracles*

Can and will happen – be sure of this.

“What does the prayer of faith mean?”
 The young Christian wanted to know.
 The old Christian’s face began to glow
 And he replied, “Close your eyes, my son,
 And imagine that moment before creation,
 When only God was there and nothing else,
 And then you hear God speak,
Let there be light! And from nothing
 Comes forth what was never there before.
 And then, one after another, you hear
 The creative Word, *Let there be!*
 And everything – all out of nothing –
 All comes to be all that we now see.
 The prayer of faith is asking God
 To speak again His creative Word
 Into any person or into any situation.
 And because of all that God has done,
 And all that He continues to do,
 And for still more that He will do...

Prayer is...
Continually returning to God,
My container filled with the incense
Of worship and gratitude and praise
Rising to God for unending miracles
Of His goodness, mercy, love and grace.

26 ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED

To the praise of the glory of His grace,
by which He made us accepted
in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption
through His blood, the forgiveness of sins,
according to the riches of His grace.
 – *Ephesians 1:6-7*

“Disqualified!” Satan protested. “He’s got too many
 Counts against him. He’s broken all your laws.
 Your fiercest wrath – that’s all he deserves to get.”

“Removed!” God replied, “All disqualifications
 Are removed, all erased and blotted out through
 The redemption made by My Son’s precious blood!”

“Okay, then,” Satan insisted, “Don’t damn this sinner,
But don’t bless him either. He’s not qualified to receive
Anything. He has not done even one iota of good
That deserves favor or reward. Don’t punish this wretch,
But don’t show him any favor or blessing or regard.”

“Satan, you’re absolutely right!” God agreed.
“This sinner has done nothing of any merit.
But my Beloved Son – He deserves all the reward.
He’s lived the perfect life and accomplished all the good
I demand in all heaven and earth. My Son has perfect
Righteousness and He deserves all the reward I can give.”

“Well then,” Satan sneered, “bless Your Son, give Him
All you got, for all I care. He deserves it all. But what
Has that got to do with this miserable wretch at all?”

“I’m not done explaining yet, Satan,” God answered,
“This perfect righteousness that my Son obtained like
A white robe of perfection deserving all my approbation,
This perfect righteousness of My Son, this I now give
As a gift to put around this sinner, this miserable wretch.
And what’s more, clothed in My Son’s righteousness
I now take this miserable sinner and wretch and put him
Under the shelter of My Son’s wings and because
He is in my Son he gets all that My Son deserves to get.
*He is totally, unconditionally accepted in My Beloved.
In My Beloved, he is totally, unconditionally blessed!*”

27 THE MEASURE OF FORGIVENESS

*... the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.
– Ephesians 1:7*

Crushed by the mountains of my sin
I cried for help, “Holy God in heaven,
Can You, will You ever forgive me
My endless blasphemies and rebellion,
My selfishness, my hate and my pride?”

“My child,” the Father God replied,
“No mountains of sins are too big or too many,
That the bottomless ocean of My forgiveness
Cannot swallow them up. I forgive you all,

I forgive you now, I forgive you forever.

“Go and, with my Spirit’s help, sin no more.
Remember, no sin is too small for human eyes
That it did not nail My Son to the cross,
And no sins are so few or so common place
That each does not always break My heart.”

28-A

A SONG OF HOPE

When others tell you that no hope is left.

Tune: “Londonderry Air”

My dearest child, they said they’d try the best they could,
And now they tell you they have tried and failed,
And though it hurts, they tell you that the time has come,
There’s nothing left but just to say good-bye.

*My dearest child, the pow’r of life is in My hand,
It’s I whose will and purposes must stand,
Reach out, My child, and let Me hold your hand in Mine,
It’s I, not they, who’ll tell you when your work is done.*

My dearest child, they say that night is coming soon,
And that is true for you, and true for all,
On every dawn a sunset soon shall surely fall,
At journey’s end all hearts look toward home.

*But, dearest child, no, don’t you dread the coming night,
Live, work, laugh, love your fill while there is light;
Keep hope and faith alive and burning in your heart,
A miracle may happen yet before the night.*

But now they ask, “What if there is no miracle,
And no one seems to hear you when you call?
Then does it mean God doesn’t really care or know
What happens here to anyone below?”

*My dearest child, before your God forgets you,
The earth must melt, the sun must lose its glow.
I am with you now in your vale of shadow,
And at the bend, your heav’nly home shall welcome you.*

Refrain:

*My dearest child, the pow’r of life is in my hand,
It’s I whose will and purposes must stand,*

*Reach out, My child, and let Me hold your hand in Mine,
It's I, not they, who'll tell you when your work is done.*

*But, dearest child, no, don't you dread the coming night,
Live, work, laugh, love your fill while there is light;
Keep hope and faith alive and burning in your heart,
A miracle may happen yet before the night.*

*My dearest child, before your God forgets you,
The earth must melt, the sun must lose its glow.
I am with you now in your vale of shadow,
And at the bend, your heav'nly home shall welcome you.*

28-B

“AKING ANAK”

Lyrics: © 2021 by Pastor Bien A. Llobrera

Tune: “O Danny Boy” (Public Domain)

1

Aking anak, ang ulap ay dumarating,
At langit mo'y nagiging madilim,
Ang bukas ay wari'y di mo na makita,
Pag-asa ba'y sadyang naglaho na?
Aking anak, hawak ko ang iyong buhay,
Masusunod kalooban ko lang,
Ang 'yong kamay sa 'king kamay mo ilagay,
Tanging ako ang may takda sa 'yong buhay.

2

Sabi nila, lumulubog na ang araw,
'Ya'y totoo sa 'yo't kaninuman,
Araw na sisikat ay t'yak na lulubog,
Pusong pagod dapat nang matulog.
Nguni't anak, h'wag sa dilim matatakot,
May araw pa, magalak, maglingkod,
Pag-asa mo'y panatilihing marubdob,
At himala nawa ay ipagkaloob.

3

Tanong nila, “Kung himala nama'y wala?
At dalangin mo'y di alintana?
Hindi kaya ang Diyos ay nilimot ka na?
Di N'ya pansin tayong nasa lupa?”

Aking anak, bago kita malimutan,
Ang daigdig muna ay papanaw.
Sa 'yong lungkot Ako ang laging karamay,
At sa wakas, langit ang iyong tahanan!

29 BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH ALONE
Ephesians 2:1-10
(To the tune of "A Mighty Fortress")

But God – how greatly He loved us
When still we were in our sins;
His Son He sent to die for us
And for our sake He rose again.
In spirit we were dead,
By habits were enslaved,
Our doom in hell was sealed,
But Christ, He did us save,
And life eternal He gave.

And from our grave He raised us up
To sit in heav'nly places;
With Christ enthroned at God's right hand,
Ever to sing His praises.
Salvation, God's great gift,
Is by His grace alone,
Alone received by faith,
Work has no part in it.
All glory shall be God's alone.

Now that we're saved we shall serve Him
With heart and soul and all our strength,
To share how much we thank Him
For His gift of salvation.
We work because we're saved.
Not so that we'll be saved,
Our pardon is secure
In Christ for ever more;
Through life we'll serve Him ever.

30 MESSIAH'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

1 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olive... the disciples ... brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on

them, and set *Him* on them. **8** And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. **9** Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the Lord!' Hosanna in the highest!" **10** And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" **11** So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee (Matthew 21:1, 8-11).

Hosanna! Messiah's come! Thunderbolts soon
 Shall our foes shatter; His throne shall soon
 Be set, and we shall reign in might with Him!
 Hosanna! Our long night of tears is done.

But why is He not blasting all our foes?
 Why to the Temple does He rush, throwing
 Out traders and tables, voice thundering,
 "This Temple's not for thieves but for pure hearts!"

"And not for merchandise but for prayer
 Shall this Temple be for all the nations,
 Where they shall bring sweet incense of worship
 To their Maker, Father, and Redeemer."

And who are these that His loving arms receive?
 The sick, the poor, the children – outcasts all –
 Coming to Him and He releases His pow'r
 To heal, to bless, to save, and them He owns.

Messiah's come! But why no blood-soaked streets,
 No cries for mercy from our beaten foes?
 Why just hosannas of praise from children?
 Because He comes to do God's will not ours.

Lord, how oft I call You King just to grant
 My wants, when You keep waiting to make me
 Your house of purity, prayer, and pow'r,
 Till all earth shall sing Your praise forever.

31 KINGS WILL SING

Every king in all the earth will thank you, LORD,
 for all of them will hear your words.
 Yes, they will sing about the LORD's ways,
 for the glory of the LORD is very great.
 (Psalm 138:4,5, NLT)

Kings singing? Earthly kings don't sing,
 They command singers to perform
 And entertain them, and singers better
 Did it well, or they'd never be heard again.

But David, he was of a different heart,
 He was a singing shepherd on the hills
 Before he was a king on a throne,
 And from those hills, while watching
 O'er his flock by night, and marveling at the stars,
 He saw enthroned above the lights the One
 Who made them all, the stars above
 As well as those who dwelt among the dust
 Below, and was enraptured by the glory
 And wonder of it all and burst into a song,
 "O Lord, Creator and Sovereign of all,
 How great, how good, how wise Thou art!"

And when the shepherd of sheep became
 The shepherd of people on the throne,
 Did he lose his voice, forget his song?
 No! King David played his harp more often
 Than he waved his scepter and kept singing on!

And one day all the kings of earth will tire
 Of admiring themselves in the mirror
 And look up at heaven, wonder-struck,
 They'll command their entertainers, "Stop
 The noise!" so they, the kings themselves,
 Will join instead King David in singing

To the One who alone deserves it all,
Whose words and works are wonderful,
On land and sea and beyond the skies!

32 INSTRUMENT OF COMPASSION

When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. – Matthew 14:13-14 NKJV.

All neatly set my long-planned, well-deserved
Time for rest and recreation – but what is this?
People at my door presenting needs they want
Me to help them with, when am about to leave?
Lord, I do have the right, don't I, to take a break?

Then in my mind it flashed, that day when You
With your disciples escaped to the desert to catch
Your breath, but before You had even cleared
Some ground to sit upon, here came the crowds,
Dragging their weighed-down carts of cares.

Your eyes looked once, and the fountain in Your heart
Gushed forth healing torrents of compassion,
And Your clarion voice dispersed sleep away
From Your disciples' eyes: "Vacation over, boys!
Time to feed the hungry, soothe wounded hearts!"

Lord, I confess my eyes are purblind to the crowds,
My heart's too self-absorbed to feel their needs.
But here, Lord, take my eyes and see through them,
And with Your love, please, fill my heart: Make me
Your instrument of compassion, O Son of God.

33 FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH

*And He took the five loaves and two fish,
and looking up to heaven, He blessed
and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples,
and the disciples to the multitudes.*

– *Matthew 14:19 NKJV*

In my hands five loaves and two fish,
 And, Lord, you tell me to feed
 The hungry multitudes with these?
 Yes, My child, but first you have to put
 In My hands and I will bless
 Your five loaves and two fish.

Lord, now I see: My problem
 Is not with what I don't have;
 My problem is with what I do
 With what I have. I try to help
 The needy on my own, and soon
 The little that I have is gone.

Above the banging of my frantic serving
 I hear the Master calling: "My child, put
 In My hands your meager store of bread
 And fish, of wisdom, strength and patient
 Grace. Receive back what I have blessed,
 Then go, feed the multitudes with these."

34 THE DIFFERENCE

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him
 must worship in spirit and truth."
 (John 4:24)

Houses of all kinds in town,
 From clapboard hovels
 To palatial mansions,
 The honor belonged
 To one unpretentious dwelling:
 The king chose to tarry there.

Churches of all kinds in town,
 From storefront meeting places
 To soaring marble cathedrals,
 The blessing belonged
 To one praying congregation:
 God's presence abides and works there.

35 AFTER THE MIRACLE

*And when He had sent the multitudes away,
He went up on the mountain by Himself
to pray. Now when evening came, He was
alone there. (Matthew 14:23 NKJV)*

After the miracle, Lord, the adulation
Of the crowds, feelings of power
And greatness, visions of mightier
Things to do for the multitudes –
These thoughts, like unruly soldiers
Thirsting to battle for You, these
Thoughts, along with the crowds,
You send away, so You can tarry
Long in the mountain with Him
Who alone mattered, Your Father,
And engage in the one struggle
That alone brings power – prayer.

After just the smallest victories,
Lord, how often I've played
The fool; I've lingered in the valley
With the crowds and feasted
On their praises for what
I've done. Oh how often
I've forgotten to seek only
Your commendation, how often
I've forgotten that, apart from
Spending time with You, praises
From countless cheering people
Will turn to gravel in my mouth.

36 THE SECOND COMING

*"Therefore keep watch because you do not know
when the owner of the house will come back –
whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when
the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes
suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.
What I say to you, I say to everyone – 'Watch!'"*
– Mark 13:35-37 NIV

Today could be the day my Lord
 Will come – what a thought!
 Still I must continue faithful
 At my task, doing all He wants
 Me to do each day, my heart tuned
 To the impending trumpet blast,
 My hands and feet toiling
 With all my might, cultivating
 My assigned lot, raising food
 For kith and kin. And on the edges
 Where my field borders the road,
 I plant trees for fruit and shade,
 Hoping weary pilgrims may refresh
 Themselves under those trees
 In days and years to come, should
 My Lord's coming be delayed.

37 MARTHA, MARTHA

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.” – Luke 10:41-42 NIV

“But what’s so wrong with what I’m doing?
 People have to be served their timely meals;
 The house should stay clean, guests may drop in
 Anytime; somebody’s got to buy the groceries,
 Attend to the thousand and one things
 A family needs – if I don’t do it, who will?

“No, nothing’s wrong with what you’re doing,
 They’re all important in their time and place.
 But if your dearest friend travelled all the way
 From out of town, would you leave her
 By her lonesome self in the living room
 While you pother around with pots and pans?”

“Or if just today you’ve gotten married
 And your groom asked you to tarry in the room
 With him another hour, would you tell him,
 ‘But, love, I’m sorry but I’ve got to make you
 A royal feast, I’ve got to get the house ready
 For when our family and friends will come?’”

“Or didn’t you know the Throne Room door
 Of your God and King and Father and Friend
 Stays open day and night, and His eyes watch
 You rush, back and forth, by His open door,
 Vainly waiting till you hear His eager voice,
 “Come, child, sit by Me, let’s talk awhile”?

38 SERVING CHRIST

*Not with eye service, as men-pleasers,
 but as bondservants of Christ, doing
 the will of God from the heart.
 Ephesians 6:6*

At a friend’s memorial service I heard
 Eulogies and stories that extolled
 Virtues I never knew he had,
 And the difference he made
 In so many people’s lives.
 I was glad to hear them say
 He did it all for the glory of God.

Across my face blew a subtle
 Hint of envy that entered my mind,
 An envious wish, that someday
 People would say one or two
 Words that extolled me, too.
 Then the Voice within whispered
 Low: “You fool, for wishing so!

“What if the whole world proclaimed
 All your virtues, both hidden and known,
 Over your unhearing ears and unseeing eyes,
 What then, if in heaven’s courts above
 God spewed your name out?”
*O God, while I live let me die
 To all praise and blame but Yours.*

39 BALLAD OF A LOVING MOTHER

I

The doctor told her she’d be next,

This loving mother,
 And so she waited for her turn,
 This loving mother,
 It did not seem to bother her,
 This loving mother,
 She was not here for life but death,
 This loving mother,
 'Cause this was an abortion clinic,
 'Cause this was an abortion clinic,
 She was not here for life but death,
 This loving mother.

II

But soon she drowsed and in her dream,
 This loving mother,
 She heard her baby talk to her,
 This loving mother,
 "If a wolf or bear attacked me,
 Dear loving mother,
 Or a mean alley cat clawed me,
 Dear loving mother,
 Would you, O would you protect me;
 Would you, O would you protect me,
 If wolf or bear or cat attacked,
 Dear loving mother?

REFRAIN:

"The doctor's here! O please, wake up,
 Dear loving mother!
 Why won't, why won't he let me live
 Dear loving mother.
 To live and grow and be like you,
 Dear loving mother?
 Why does the doctor hate me so,
 Dear loving mother?
 Wake up, please, wake up! Protect me!
 Wake up, please, wake up! Protect me!
 Why does the doctor hate me so,
 Dear loving mother?

**A POEM FOR MY BEST FRIEND
ALFREDO A. LIONGOREN, THE ARTIST,
ON HIS 65TH BIRTHDAY**

*The Lord will sit like a refiner and a purifier of silver;
He will purify the sons of Levi,
And purge them as gold and silver,
That they may offer to the Lord
An offering in righteousness.
(Malachi 3:3)*

I've seen him paint for countless hours,
And it seems like at times the oil paints
Have a mind their own and just won't yield
The shades of color and contours of form
He struggles to bring them to conform
And so he turns his back on the canvas
With its recalcitrant shapes and colors.

But then he always returns and like a lover
Caresses once more the hues and forms,
And though they keep rebuffing him
He never tires, now leaving the canvas,
Now going back to it again, and yet again,
Until one day – how long it takes doesn't matter –
The work of art is complete, finished, done!

Over the years I've seen the Divine Artist work
On the canvas of his life, and oh so many
Were the times when he just won't yield
To the Master's touch. And yet how patient,
Oh so patient the Divine Hand. And today
We begin to see a little bit more clearly the outline
Of the masterpiece God wants him to become!

(+Alfredo A. Liongoren, 1944-2025)

**ANNO DOMINI – THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
POEM DEDICATED TO ALL GRADUATES OF LAKAS-ANGKAN LDI**

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20)

¹⁹ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen. (Mark 16: 19-20).

From the moment He cast off the grave clothes in the tomb
And took the scepter and the throne at the Father’s right hand,
Exalted far above all titles and thrones in this world and beyond,
From the moment He proclaimed “All dominion in heaven and on earth
Is mine, a gift from the Father’s eternal plan!” – from that moment
Until now, through all the centuries that have run, after the rise
And fall of earthly rulers, after the warring on the stage of millions
Of horses and men over gold and sod and women and wine –
From that moment until now Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word,
The Virgin-born Son, the Crucified Redeemer, the Risen Savior,
The Ascended and Enthroned Son, has sat unmoved from His throne,
King of kings and Lord of lords, through all these years
That are inscribed in letters bold: Anno Domini, the Year of our Lord!

This is our Lord Jesus Christ, who was and is and will sit on
And continue to reign on that throne at the Father’s right hand,
Supreme General of His Great Commission Army, marching on,
Planting the banner dipped in the blood of the Lamb, planting
That banner in human hearts one person at a time, planting
That banner one city, one tribe, one people, one nation, at a time.
We are His royal heralds proclaiming one unchanging message:
Christ the Lord has overcome the evil despot Satan! His slaves,
Held only by his dark veil of lies, may now walk into freedom.

The Light has dawned, the veil is ripped and torn, full pardon
 And restoration is now announced to all; the prison doors
 Are all blasted open, all you slaves and prisoners are loosed
 From your chains. Rise up, throw off your broken shackles,
 The Victor now sets you free. Get up, stand tall, walk out
 Of darkness into the light, into the glorious freedom
 Of the sons and daughters of the living God. Come forth,
 Get washed, get dressed in the Lamb's robes of righteousness!
 Come, join in the feast, take your place at the banqueting table
 Of the all-gracious, all-merciful, all-loving God and Creator,
 Sit down and take your fill of the Bread of heaven,
 Drink deep from the fountain of the Water of life,
 Let your sick bodies be healed, your famished souls be filled,
 Your broken spirits be made whole, your whole being be reborn!

And thus made fully new, put on the whole Armor of God,
 And take your position in the Great Commission Army of Christ.
 Side by side with your fellow soldiers of the Cross,
 Under the command of the Enthroned Son and Lord,
 The Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah, run to the battle
 And destroy the remaining strongholds of the enemy Despot,
 Your mission: To rescue and recover all slaves and prisoners
 That still remain uninformed of the Good news, "Vanquished
 Now their slave driver, triumphant now and evermore
 Is the Crucified and Risen and Ascended Son of God!"
 The decisive battle has been fought and won, His kingdom
 Of righteousness and love and peace and true prosperity
 Has begun! Anno Domini! This is the Year of the Lord's favor!
 This is the true picture of the world. The rise and fall
 Of nations, the wranglings of peoples are mere background noise
 Behind the march of the Great Commission Army and her Lord!

42 THE CHRIST IN MY HEART

The Christ in the Crib
 Is a deep, dark mystery.
 How can this Baby be
 The epiphany of Deity?

The Christ on the Road
 Is a wonder to behold,
 Dusty feet, grimy hands, sweaty brow,

Teaching, healing, feeding the crowds.

The Christ on the Tree
 Is love beyond contemplation.
 For me, sunk in sin so bottomless,
 Did die the Lamb of God so spotless.

The Christ on the Throne,
 Victor over the grave, over sin and Satan,
 Now reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords,
 It's Good News to tell all worlds!

And here's Good News specially for me:
 This Christ in the Crib and on the Road,
 This Christ on the Tree and on the Throne,
 Is now the Christ in my Heart forever more!

43 ONE TRUE LOVE*

We have wandered for so long our lonely way,
 Waiting for that One True Love to come one day,
 Always searching in the crowd, in every place,
 Looking for one special voice and touch and face.
 Now that day has come, behold, what a surprise!
 You and I now stand before each other's eyes.
 All our lonely days and nights take wings of flight,
 And the world of One True Love dawns on our life.

And today that One True Love asks you and me,
 If we'll take each other's hand to walk one way;
 And, forsaking all, to hold each other's heart,
 As our only life-long prize, never to part.
 Oh, what can we say and do but say, "We do!
 To the world of One True Love we shall now go,
 Though beset with hidden snares for you and me,
 Hand in hand we shall now walk the narrow way."

While the early sun shines bright upon our face,
 And the morning breeze lends grace unto our feet,
 Let this song of One True Love within our breasts
 Ever closer bind our hearts before the tests.
 Soon the noonday sun shall beat upon our heads,
 And the breeze shall turn to storms to sweep our feet.
 Then this song of One True Love within our breasts

Shall give strength and hope and faith to meet all tests.

When at last the sun goes down, and day is done;
 And the storms of life give way to evening calm,
 We shall sing again our song of One True Love,
 Love that helped us walk together the narrow road.
 Then we shall look up and thank the One above,
 Who has placed within our hearts our One True Love.
 In His world of joy and peace with Him above,
 We shall ever live in love, for God is love.

44 ISANG TUNAY NA PAG-IBIG*

Ang paghihintay natin ay kay tagal
 Sa tunay na pag-ibig na dumatal;
 Sa buong kalaparan ng daigdig,
 Hanap nati'y kabiyak nitong dibdib.
 At ngayo'y narito na, o kay saya!
 Ikaw at ako ngayo'y nagkita na;
 Napawing lahat ating kalungkutan,
 Daigdig ng Pag-ibig natagpuan.

Ang tanong ngayon sa 'yo at sa akin,
 Ang magkaisang landas ba'y susundin;
 Dalawang puso'y pagkakaisahin,
 At habang buhay tayo'y magkapiling?
 Ano ang sagot natin kundi "Oo!
 Daigdig ng Pag-ibig ating tungo,
 Pagsubok sa 'ting landas titiisin,
 Basta magkahawak ang kamay natin."

Habang bagong araw ay sumisilay
 At banayad ang hanging pumapaypay,
 Hayaang ang pag-ibig sa 'ting dibdib,
 Ikaw at ako'y lalong ipaglapit.
 Init ng tanghali'y t'yak na darating,
 At sa bagyo tayo ay susubukin,
 Ang Tunay na Pag-ibig sa 'ting dibdib,
 Ang s'yang sasagip sa 'tin sa panganib.

At kapag ang araw ay palubog na,
 At lahat ng pagsubok natapos na,
 Pag-ibig natin ay s'yang itatanghal
 Na nagdulot sa atin ng tagumpay.
 Pasasalamat natin ang Di-yos

Pag-ibig sa atin S'yang nagkaloob;
 At pag-ibig N'ya'y ating lalasapin,
 Sa langit kaylanpaman S'ya'y kapiling.

45 AU REVOIR!*

LOLITA CATA CUTAN GARCIA-LLOBRERA
 (June 11, 1938-March 27, 2019)

Today we bring closure to the life journey of our loved one –
 My life partner of forty-six years, the mother of our three sons.
 We truly miss her; we did not realize what a big part
 She occupied in our lives until she was gone. She loved us,
 She lived for us. Next to her love and service to her God,
 We were the constant objects of her actions and affections.
 Truly her life revolved around us, we deeply mourn her leaving.

Fervently she prayed for God to take her home, her last
 Two or three months were almost unbroken days of pain,
 So hard for us it was to see her suffer, we agreed with her
 To pray, "Please, dear God, would you release her soon."
 God answered our request, she left with peace and joy.
 We are comforted to know at last she had found rest.
 Too, we are comforted by our Christian hope and faith
 That at the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ
 We'll have a grand reunion with her and with loved ones,
 And with our friends who've gone before... but still the pain
 Of grief is real, the emptiness of loss all but unbearable.

Yet today we gather our love for her and all our memories
 And hide them in a treasure chest within our hearts,
 And with her securely hidden there, we now move on
 To face a new tomorrow, to walk a newly opened path,
 In order to fulfill what purpose God still has left for us.
 My love, my sweetheart, the mother of our sons, au revoir!
 In God's own time and sweet ordering, we'll see you soon.

**In memory of the love and partner of my life
 Lolita Garcia Llobrera (June 11, 1938-March 27, 2014).
 God blessed us with 46 years together
 (March 12, 1973-March 27, 2014),
 With three sons Keryx, Kairos, Kratos.*



PASTOR BIEN LLOBRERA

After one year at Ebenezer Bible College, Zamboanga, he was involved in **student discipleship ministry** with the Navigators at the University of the Philippines from 1964-1971 (one year hiatus, 1967). **Served as pastor:** First Baptist Church, Cavite City (1972-1988); Faith Filipino Fellowship, Sta. Ana, California (1988-1990); First Filipino Baptist Church, Pasadena, California (1990-1996); First Southern Baptist Church, Pasadena, California (1996-2014). **Author** of the Newlife Series for Evangelism, Discipleship & Missions, Books 1-14 (Revised, Expanded, 2026). Pastor Bien retired from the pastorate in 2014, but continues his **Christian Writing Ministry**, producing Bible studies, devotionals and sermons, which are shared freely on his website, through email, and through social media platforms.

Family Picture:

Pastor Bien Llobrera and Lolita Garcia got married in 1973; they had 46 years of love and ministry together until Lolita's passing in 2019. They have 3 sons: Keryx (b. 1974), Kairos (b. 1976), Kratos (b. 1979).

