

# CABUNTALA FOR CEBU *Philippines*



**Dear Pastor and Faithful Prayer Partners,**

I know I just wrote you a month ago asking for prayer, and now here I am again, but I am in desperate need of your fervent prayers once more. Four days ago, Cebu was battered by a major storm—Typhoon Tino. It brought massive destruction and life-threatening flooding throughout the province. Sadly, many in our community lost their lives in the flash floods and from falling debris caused by the typhoon's powerful winds. Much of the province is still without water and electricity, making recovery even more difficult. Countless homes, businesses, and entire communities have been severely damaged or completely destroyed. Please continue to pray for all those affected. The devastation and loss of life are truly heartbreaking, and our hearts ache for them.

There is another storm expected to hit the country this weekend, and it is anticipated to be a super typhoon. We are not yet sure of its exact track, as it may still shift. Please pray for God's protection over the Philippines and its people. Understandably, everyone is feeling uneasy after the devastation we have just experienced, but we continue to trust that the Lord will keep His hand of mercy upon us.

Thankfully, our church building was spared from damage, and we praise God that our church family is all accounted for, safe, and well. We truly thank God for His mercy and protection over our church members.

Early in the morning on November 4, we were battered by torrential rain and powerful winds. We had been told that this typhoon wouldn't be as strong as Typhoon Odette in 2021—but as it turned out, it was catastrophic.

When the power went out, I turned on the generator and set up the pumps to try to control the flooding. But soon after, the generator stopped working. As I went to check on it, Ty was outside, and suddenly we heard a loud, terrifying boom. Ty turned around and saw that our wall burst open and water came rushing in like raging rapids. Realizing what had happened, Ty shouted at the top of his lungs, "We have to get out of here now—GO, GO, MOVE!" You could hear the fear and urgency in his voice.

The water gushed in so fast that we barely had time to react. We ran toward the other end of the compound where my in-laws live, fighting against the powerful current. The force of the water was so strong you could feel it pushing us as we ran. We were struggling to keep our footing. My youngest son, Ace, was knocked down by the water and almost swept away—but praise God, he managed to get up and was okay. We all made it safely to the second floor. I truly believe that if we had been asleep, we wouldn't have survived.

God really protected us. Just before we heard the boom, I had been standing in the exact spot where the wall later burst open, trying to get the pumps running and watching to make sure they were working. Then the generator suddenly shut off, and I stepped away to try to fix it. Moments later, the wall gave way. If I had still been standing there when the wall collapsed under the force and pressure of the floodwater, I truly believe I could have been killed. My wife believes God caused the generator to shut off so that I would walk away from the pumps and be out of harm's way.

Watching my son get knocked down and swept by the water, I realized how close we came to losing him—I can't stop thanking God for His mercy and protection.

Once we reached the second floor, the floodwaters were only seconds behind us. It was terrifying to watch the water rise so quickly, knowing how close we came to tragedy. It filled the entire first floor in such a short amount of time and then it began creeping up the stairs. The water outside had risen between 12 to 15 feet high, and the winds were so strong that we couldn't evacuate—it was simply too dangerous. We were trapped. We cried out to God for mercy and protection, preparing to find a way to climb onto the roof if we had to. But God was faithful—He kept us safe, and the water stopped rising almost halfway up the stairs. Thank you Lord!

Thankfully, at around 2:30 a.m., after nearly 24 hours, a rescue team with a boat came for us. We had been trapped for almost an entire day, but praise God, we were finally brought to safety. We lost nearly everything—including our vehicles, sentimental keepsakes, and important documents—as the floodwaters had risen almost to the ceiling of our home. We even lost some of our pets, including our loyal Rottweiler, whom we had for almost as long as we've been on the field.

As devastating as it is to have lost all of our belongings, we are just so thankful that we are safe and alive. Things can be replaced, but a life cannot. Our family is completely exhausted and honestly we feel emotional just thinking about what just happened, but we PRAISE God for His love, His mercy, and His protection. We lost everything, but I realize I could have been writing you a completely different letter, telling you there was loss of life in our family, and for that I am completely grateful to God.

Although the trials have come at us relentlessly—one after another—it sometimes feels like they just won't stop. My wife's ongoing battle with cancer, the earthquakes, the flooding in between, and now this typhoon that has taken everything from us... yet through it all, we are not giving up. We will remain steadfast and unmovable. Our eyes are fixed on Christ, and we are claiming Romans 8:28. We may not understand why all of this has happened, but we do know that God loves us, He is in control, and if we respond properly to these trials, then through our example, our lives can point others to Christ. God will be glorified through all of this.

Going forward, we have a temporary place to stay until we can find a permanent place to live. Please pray that the Lord would guide and provide us with the right home. We know it will take time to rebuild and recover, but we are holding on to God's faithfulness and trusting that He will provide every need—that He will strengthen and comfort us when we need it. God is good. We hold to Nahum 1:7: "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him."

As I have already mentioned, we are not giving up—we are going to keep pushing forward—but I have to be honest with you: our hearts are heavy and overwhelmed at this time, and we truly need your prayers. Please pray for God's continued strength, comfort, protection, and much-needed financial provision in the days ahead. Thank you so much—we greatly appreciate your love and your prayers. We love you all! God is good!

For His Glory,

Missionary Dave Cabuntala