

God Turns Around This Family's Unimaginable Loss for His Glory

Last year's devastating typhoon in the Philippines killed more than 7,000 people and hundreds are still missing.

In a coastal city destroyed by the storm, one family's heartbreaking loss has become an inspiration for many.

Their Lost Children

She sat at a table and counted on a piece of paper her family members who died or went missing during Typhoon Haiyan.

"Ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen... Thirteen of them are dead, but many are missing," Dolor Lingo said, as she cried. "At first it was very painful but slowly I've come to accept what has happened as the will of God."

Among those who died that day were three of her children who drowned when tsunami-like waves swallowed up their home.

"The only child to survive is here," she said, showing a picture of her only remaining child.

This past Saturday, marking the one-year anniversary, Dolor, her husband, and 13-year-old son, visited a makeshift grave that holds her children and six other relatives.

"I can just imagine them being happy in the presence of God," Dolor said.

A New Hope

A year later, the Lingos have almost rebuilt their home and Dolor is busy with a children's ministry outreach.

"We have a children's feeding program and ministry to at-risk youth," Dolor said.

Her husband Dante leads a small church called New Hope Evangelical in the neighborhood.

"Even though what happened to us is so painful I know that in everything God has a purpose for our lives," he shared.

And 13-year-old Dante Jr. plays drums in the church band.

"For me playing the drums lifts my spirit. Even though I lost my brothers and sister, I want to keep on playing," he said.

The Lingos firmly believe that God is using the tragic death of their three children to point people in their neighborhood to Jesus Christ.

"Most of our neighbors were unbelievers but since the death of our children and the example that we've tried to be in the community, now many have become Christians and are attending our church," Dolor said.

Keeping Faith in God

The Lingos say they have a special burden for youth in their neighborhood.

"A lot of the young kids sniffed glue and some of them gambled. We started reaching out and inviting them to church. At first they didn't want to come, but that has slowly changed," Dante said.

The Lingo's testimony has reverberated throughout the community

"Before the typhoon all the young people you see seated in the front row were unbelievers. But after the typhoon the pastor encouraged us to serve and trust God. We did. Now we are telling others about Christ," new believer Rashbert Pedrero

said.

"After the storm I thought there was nothing left in life, everything was destroyed. But then the pastor helped me realize that material things are not important. I'm happy that I am here serving God," another new believer, Duke Villanlino, said.

Dante Jr. said he's tried to reach out to other kids but finds it difficult since he still misses playing with his siblings.

He said he's studying hard and dreams of being a sailor one day. But for now his heart is right here behind the drums.

"I know God has a purpose for me because he spared my life," Dante. Jr. said.

It is a theme that runs through this precious family – devastated by unspeakable loss, yet determined to turn tragedy around for the glory and honor of God.

"No matter what storms may come, calamity, or tragedy, we must do our best effort to stand up on our feet again and to keep our faith in God," Dolor said. "No matter what happens God is always there."