Oatmeal Beatitude

On his deathbed Martin Luther wrote, “We are beggars. This is true.” I quoted that once, and someone said to me, “Oh, we don’t want to hear that.” I think what they meant is that none of us want to think of ourselves as a beggar. We want to think we are self-made people, depending on no one other than ourselves. But of course, that’s an illusion. We are all dependent on many people, every day of our lives. Consider, for example, my breakfast.

Think of the oatmeal I eat each day,
and of all it took to come my way.
A seed was planted in the ground
by a farmer who had heard the sound
of voices that knew how to till and sow
and plant many crops in a row.
The farmer also learned from meteorologists,
as well as the work of hydrologists.
So as I hope you are beginning to see,
many are needed to get breakfast to me.

Fully grown grain is gathered in
and for a time stored in a bin.
Then off it goes to a processing site
to be cleaned and dried and cut just right.
Then into packages goes the grain,
ready for transport by truck or train.
When it arrives at the local store,
there remain only a few steps more
until I will finally be able
to enjoy the oatmeal at my table.
But I hope you have begun to see,
the many who get breakfast to me.

Once a week to stock our pantry,
my wife types in an on-line entry.
She drives a distance not too far,
and a worker loads bags into the car.
The bags are brought home by my spouse;
I carefully carry them into the house.
So the next morning when I awake
the box of oatmeal I will take,

mix in milk (and maybe some berries);
and then give thanks for grain, fruit, and dairy.
So I hope you are now able to see,
many are needed to get oatmeal to me.

We may like to pretend
that we can live on our own.
But it's simply not true,
as my story has shown.
We need each other;
we are in community
founded and grounded
in Holy Trinity.

This need for humble attitude
is expressed in the first Beatitude:
"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
May this word Jesus has given
lead us to trust God in heaven.

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