

# The Gospel News

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## "Isn't It Great to Be Dependent?"

By Elder Doug Obradovich

**"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." (Luke 22:32)**

As she was failing physically, my mother was being perfected spiritually. This was unbeknownst to me when she asked an odd question, "Isn't it great to be dependent?" I was ill-prepared for her unprovoked question, answering much too quickly, "No, Mom, I don't like feeling dependent." She replied patiently, lovingly, and with no disapproval, "Honey, you didn't understand me. Isn't it great to be dependent upon God?"

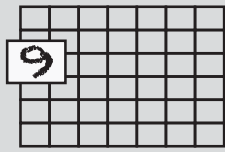
As I've grown older, I understand differently. Given the strange circumstances into which we have all been thrust, her question arrives with newfound clarity. "Yes, Mom, it's glorious to be dependent." This pandemic has me awakening with a prayer on my mind, after falling asleep with a prayer-filled heart. Dependence does that.

We are living in a time when the Word of God is being fulfilled: "*Blessed, though compelled to be humble*" (Alma 32:15). It's not necessarily by choice, but by circumstance that we feel so dependent upon God's rescue. Just months ago, I was obediently prayerful. Today, I am wonderfully reliant upon God. Peter described our situation, "*Be sober, be diligent; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*" (1 Peter 5:8). Paul approached such a threat, "*Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might*" (Ephesians 6:10). Jesus calmly comforted, "*Take no thought*" (Matthew 6:31). He told us not to worry about things that easily bring concerns and worry, because the Creator intimately knows His creation. Jesus explained how God provides protection, nourishment, and raiment for nature, such as ravens or lilies. He iterated and reiterated how God does so much more for us, His followers.

Jesus instructed us not to waste time on these trivialities, as there are much more important things on which we should place our focus, "*If ye then be not able to do that thing that is least, why take ye thought for the rest?*" (Luke 12:26). He was saying, "Trust me! I have this, so you need not waste time worrying. Believe in God and place your dependence upon Him!" It really is just that simple. He concluded, "*But rather seek ye the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you're the Kingdom*" (Luke 12:31). He is a proud, good Father, who is happy to give you all you need.

Yes, there is an impending threat somewhere out there, but we've always had reasons to depend upon God's rescue. Maybe, we all have a new-found clarity. God has waited patiently for us to shift from obedient prayer to urgent dependence.

I still hear my mother's question, "Isn't it great to be dependent?" But I now hear the Lord's question also, "Isn't it great to be dependent upon an almighty God, who was, is, and always will be omnipotently dependable?"



Some great mothers are found in the Holy Word. Let's consider a few since this is Mother's Day month.



Not the least of which, but certainly the first, was Eve. (Gen 2:17+) Why do you think she gets a bad rap?

Sarai had her name changed to Sarah and had baby Isaac at 90 years old! (Gen 17 & 21)



God gifted Hannah with son Samuel, after many years of prayer. Once he was weaned, she gave him back. (1 Sam 1:26-28)

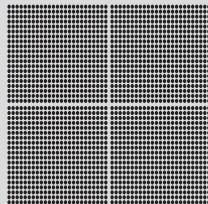


Fetal communication continues to be studied. Imagine how Elizabeth felt when John leapt in her womb. (Luke 1:44)



II Timothy 1:5 tells us that unfeigned faith is hereditary. From grandma Lois, to mother Eunice, to son, little Timmy.

One dot for every one of the 2000 stripling warriors whose mothers taught them that God would deliver them if they would not doubt. (Alma 56:47)



And of course, we can't forget about Mary. She had some mighty mothering to do. Mentioned 26 times in the New Testament.



# BFTP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck

Ten years ago, in May 2011, Sister Ilene Collison Smith wrote the following short verse:

*"My God and I walk down this road together. What fills my soul! I hear the rolling thunder as my life to me unfolds. And I shall see the glories of my Lord. So my dear ones press forward; the prize of great glory is awaiting you." Love, Ilene.*

Later that year, in October, she passed on to her eternal reward at the age of 96. Ilene had no natural children of her own but was a spiritual mother to me and also many others. She was born in 1915 near Windsor, Ontario, Canada. She said her parents were the first Gentiles baptized into the Church in Canada. At the age of 19 she asked for her baptism and was baptized after the first

meeting she attended. They held meetings for about three years in her parents' home until the Windsor Branch was built. When she was 22 her mother passed away and she raised her younger brothers as if she were their mother. Sister Ilene spent Church conferences at the Ashtons' in Coal Valley, Pennsylvania, where she helped cook and care for their company. When she was 27 she married Charles Smith in Glassport, Pennsylvania, and was ordained a deaconess later that year. She was a faithful member of the Ladies' Uplift Circle and attended the 101st Circle Conference in Glassport in 1945. Ilene and Charles were missionaries near Independence, Missouri in their later years. They cast many seeds and made many friends who attended meetings in their home. Sister Ilene told many experiences and always carried a sweet spirit.





## Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

## Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ, while working to draw Israel to Christ through efforts focused on the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America



## Vision Statement

- Living and worshipping in unity and righteousness will result in the fullness of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, culminating in continuous growth of the Church and fulfillment of Christ's promises concerning His Kingdom on Earth.

## Wordup



# "We Are Faith-filled...Most of the Time"

By Elder Doug Obradovich

**"Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:25)**

**H**is sister called. Then his mother called 5 minutes later. She asked me to go the hospital to anoint him, explaining the dire situation, as he had taken a dangerously bad turn. She described her worst fears as, "never getting my son back to normal." She ended the call warning me he would resist my prayers as he adamantly kept telling her he no longer believed in God.

Upon arrival, I was told to empty my pockets and remove my belt before being escorted by an attendant into the psychiatric ward. The attendant never left my side. I approached my beautiful young congregant, who looked right through me, exhibiting no recognition of me. This unnerved me, and although afterwards the attendant assured me he never saw anything telling, I fully experienced my frailty facing off with this young man. Furthermore, the young man showed no evidence he was even listening. I finally said, "I came here to pray for you," and he immediately thrust his hands out so I could hold them. The attendant flinched, but remained beside me. Standing in this populated general room, we held onto

one another as I prayed. Moments later, we went to his own room where he regressed, opening and closing drawers that didn't exist, moving unseen items around, and talking nonsensically.

I had driven to the hospital in faith, believing God would take care of this young man. However, once I gazed into his unresponsive eyes, I was tempted by wavering belief. But as I prayed for him, all of that was taken. Later I learned that an hour after I left, he fell asleep and slept soundly for the first time in 3 days. He awakened to complete cognition, healed completely.

The Savior was approached by a desperate man who explained how his son had been given what were probably seizures, since he had been "of a child." When overtaken, the young man was uncontrollable, at times falling into the most dangerous of surroundings (ex: "fire," "water," etc.). Jesus challenged him conditionally, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible..." Mark 9:24 states the father answered immediately ("straightway"), but he must have first considered his years of outreach to others,

which always ended in failure. He must have contemplated life's troubling lessons about trust. Yet he found the courage and the strength to answer, through his tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!"

How I understand! Can you? Do you find yourself faith-filled...most of the time? Some have said they feel strong during daylight, but later, in the evenings, weakness creeps in. If you find that happening, just remember that minister who stood in solitude, experiencing doubts created by his own humanness. Then remember how the Savior intervened and saved both the young man and the minister in the same moment. Remember the man who faced the Savior, filled with spiritual faith, while tempted with natural doubts. Then remember how the Savior stepped in and healed the boy and the father in the same instance.

We are faith-filled! We will absolutely get through this present circumstance. If, and when, doubt attacks your peace, remember that the Savior will intervene and rescue you in that very second!



# Women in History

By Sister Carolynn O'Connor

In the US, the month of March is set aside to honor women in history. It was wonderful to learn about the women throughout history who played an important role in science, politics, sports, literature, business, medicine, and every other area of the growth and success of this country and the world. In most cases, these women went completely unrecognized for their accomplishments. During March we celebrated some of these women and focused on women and the role they play in current and future society.

As we look at the history of The Church of Jesus Christ, women played an equal role in its growth and development over the years. In every branch and mission around the world, brave, strong women have worked tirelessly to push the Gospel forward. They were teachers, missionaries, deaconesses; they provided financial support, played the piano, organized activities, and held offices. God blessed them with experiences that they shared, they invited friends and neighbors, they knelt for endless hours in prayer on behalf of the Church and its members. Some were even pioneers, leaving their homes and the life they knew to move onto reservations or to missionary fields. These women in our history were responsible for convincing many souls to give their life to Christ.

I am blessed to be born into a family of amazing female role models and raised in a branch filled with strong, courageous women who give endlessly of their service to the Lord—who truly live the Gospel. They set this example for me, and my hope is that I have carried this on to my daughters and the young women in my branch who will do the same going forward.

Sisters, know that you are appreciated, loved, and respected for all that you do every day to share the Gospel and support the work in whatever way that you do. Without you, the message of love that Jesus clearly placed above all things, and that you so freely give to those around, would not succeed. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another" (John 13:34-35). They know us by our love. You show that love!

To all the mothers, we wish you a Happy Mother's Day! To all women, we thank you for being spiritual mothers—messengers of God—and for the love that you share and the work that you do every day! You are AMAZING, and you are appreciated!

Happy  
Mother's  
Day!

# A Different Kind of Redemption

By Elder Anthony Scolaro

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When I think of the word “redemption,” the scriptural examples that come to mind are the returning prodigal, the debtor forgiven, the lost sheep found, the workman receiving his appointed penny. But an account I heard a while ago painted redemption in a different light, and caused me to ponder the extent of God’s love and mercy.

One of our brothers in Christ had discovered a stray dog living in the alley behind his backyard. He could see that the gaunt, sickly animal wouldn’t survive for long in that environment. He also soon learned that the dog would growl threateningly if approached. But he really wanted to rescue this dog from its miserable existence. Finally, he enticed the starving animal into his yard with food, then, walking around to the alley from the side street, he closed the back gate, shutting the dog in the yard. From then on he kept the dog safe, and provided food, water, and shelter from the elements.

Not surprisingly, the dog didn’t appreciate the gate closing, and though it lived out its life in that backyard, never did become the family pet. Given where it had come from, what did that dog know of gratitude or affection? Its initial reaction was that of someone who was taken captive. The dog must have felt trapped; it could not process that it had been rescued from the hazards and privation of living in the streets. It took time for that dog to be at ease in that safe place, to accept the care and protection of its kind benefactor. Only very gradually did the dog learn to trust, eventually allowing itself to be approached and even petted by its new owner.

Hearing this story, I thought about what drove our brother to come to that animal’s rescue. The dog had no redeeming qualities to speak of—it was emaciated, hurting, likely infested and/or diseased. Angry on the outside, and no doubt fearful on the inside—incapable of forming relationships, returning affection, or providing companionship. I saw it as a parable of the way the Lord intervenes in our lives.

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Love compelled (and compels) the Lord to rescue the spiritually and emotionally lost. Even those who are broken, filled with hurt and bitterness, whose fears render them incapable of feeling, have a place at the Lord’s table. And as we look at the world today, we’re likely to find that the broken, hurt, and bitter souls who need the Lord are as numerous as ever.

Similar to the reaction of the dog in the story, it’s not reasonable to expect a hurting person—one who is relationally scarred or undeveloped—to respond to their redemption in the “ordinary” way. While everyone comes to the Lord of their own free will, a broken person’s demeanor at their baptism might be sullen, rather than appearing joyful or grateful. At that moment, they may feel numb; it might feel to them as if they were turning themselves in to the authorities, not understanding yet that their Captor is their Deliverer, not able to see God smiling down at them, not realizing that they have come to dwell in the King’s house, will be eating at the King’s table, and shall be followed by goodness and mercy all the days of their life.

While the personal Salvation so freely offered through Jesus Christ ought to be a source of unspeakable joy and gratitude, we need to realize that not everyone comes to the Lord with the capacity to form a relationship. Many will need to grow—relationally, spiritually, emotionally—at their own pace, in the context of their own circumstances. For some, redemption might feel like being taken prisoner—of their own will, and for their own eternal good. They may not be resisting arrest, but they don’t exactly appear eager to be led away. “Who could have supposed that our God would have been so merciful as to have snatched us from our awful, sinful, and polluted state?” (Alma 26:17). Let us always remember that God’s love extends even to such as these.

# Our Force: Jesus Christ!

By Brother Gianni Difede

## A SHORT TIME AGO, IN A CHURCH NOT TOO FAR

A young boy was brought up in the Lake Worth, FL Branch learning about the wonders of the Lord.

Children are fascinated by the world. Blank canvases influenced by much. Some children favor sports, other games. For me, it was Star Wars, and if you know anything about Star Wars, you will hear about "The Force" over and over again.

In the Star Wars universe, "The Force" is a connection between all the characters in this fictional world. What's interesting about "The Force" is that it has a nature, and reacts to one's decisions, either good or bad: making up the Light Force, and the Dark Force. Upon re- watching the movies and feeling inspired, I saw many similarities between "The Force" in the Star War movies, and how we are told to act in God's Word vs. how we witness the world act.

Here are some attributes of The Force:

LIGHT FORCE	DARK FORCE
• honesty	• anger
• mercy	• hatred
• compassion	• greed
• positive emotions	• jealousy
• self-sacrifice	• fear
• positive emotions	• aggression

It is easy to get caught up in sin from the world around us. Whether it be trends on social media, or talk at work, sin is all around us, and it is important to listen to the Holy Spirit and do the will of God. Just as Yoda talked about the Light Force being stronger than the Dark Force, we must remember our Lord is **much stronger** than the world. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Immediately I was reminded of the Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), and similarly as the Jedis following the "Light Force," we are taught as saints to be led by the Spirit of God, and not by the Flesh of this world, as we see so many do around us.

As there are many characters in the bible that

we individually favor, a person in Star Wars that growing up I always loved was Mace Windu. He was the coolest. While all the other characters had blue, green and red light sabers, he was unique as his light saber was purple. But I later learned he was special because he used both the Light Force and the Dark Force.

Jesus teaches us in scripture NOT to do this. In **Matthew 6:24**, Jesus states, "**No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other**" (cross-references: *Moroni 7:11-12 and Revelation 3:15-16*). Jesus teaches us that we must realize that when serving God there is a fine line. As saints we need to be 110 percent on His side, not only because of our human nature, but because He

While we receive the Holy Ghost the moment after the laying of hands after our Baptism, it is important we let it develop and cultivate our faith.

Dialogue from: "Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back" –

### YODA:

Yes, a Jedi's strength flows from the Force. But beware of the dark side. Anger, fear, aggression; the dark side of the Force are they. Easily they flow, quick to join you in a fight. If once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny, consume you it will.

### LUKE:

Is the dark side stronger?

### YODA:

No, no, no. Quicker, easier, more enticing.

loves us deeply as His children and we are His servants to do His will.

As youth and saints of The Church of Jesus Christ, we should continue to go into the world with the pure Love of God, and refuse to wage war with the people around us, putting on the full Armor of God (*Ephesians 6:10-18*). We should also remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and how He not only saved us but sent His comforter because of His great love for you and me.

I love you and God bless you, Brother, Sisters, and Youth!

May the Lord be with you!  
(*Ruth 2:4 and 2nd Corinthians 13:14*)



# The Importance of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (May 2017) By Brother Mark Kovacic

Sometimes when we write an article for the Gospel News we start with one idea and the Spirit of God leads us in another direction. That is the case with this article. I started an article reminiscing about an item written by Evangelist Alvin Swanson and published in the Gospel News about 50 years ago. The title of his article was: There Is No Easter! Wow, talk about an attention-grabbing title! He laid out in the article the timeline of Jesus's death and resurrection. Since that article was printed, I have observed that others have come to the same conclusions, including Messianic Jews. Now, many people hold the opinion that the Romans crucified Jesus on Wednesday, Joseph of Arimathea then buried him, the rulers placed guards at the tomb, and that on Saturday at 6:00 PM, Jesus resurrected.

In any case, as I said, sometimes the Spirit of God leads us to other subjects. I was led to the following seven points:

1. Jesus brought about the concept of eternal life through the resurrection. Jesus said to the Sadducees: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:31, 32).
2. Jesus' resurrection brought about the fulfillment of prophecies. Apostle Paul wrote: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4).
3. Jesus gave us hope in the resurrection. "Neither can they die anymore: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36).
4. Jesus taught that the good and the evil will resurrect someday. "And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and

(Continued on page 11)

## Gospel News Facts 2010s Did you know...

- |   |  |  |   |   |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| 1. The General Ladies; Circle celebrated its 90th anniversary in Nashville, TN on April 29, 2010. | 2. There was a World Conference from June 25 to July 1, 2011 with "The Everlasting Gospel" as its theme. | 3. The Gospel News started a new publication layout in 2012. | 4. The building for the Albuquerque Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ was dedicated on February 19, 2017. | 5. 620 people attended GMBA Campout in Redlands, CA in July 2018. The theme was, "Peace, Joy, Strength in Righteousness." |
|---|--|--|---|---|



By Sister LuAnn Carson

"As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus." Are these words that I can say? Are they words that we all can not only speak, but believe and live by?

I often read quotes that make a lasting impression on me. This sentence, spoken by Mother Teresa, is one such quote.

How can we belong entirely to the heart of Jesus?

Another quotation of Mother Teresa elaborates. (It's rather long, but worth reading!)

"People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered  
 Forgive them anyway  
 If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives  
 Be kind anyway  
 If you are honest and sincere people may cheat you  
 Be honest anyway  
 If you are happy some may be jealous.  
 Be happy anyway  
 The good you do today will quickly be forgotten  
 Do good anyway  
 Give the best you have and it will never be enough  
 Give your best anyway  
 In the end it is between you and God. It was never  
 between you and them anyway"

These words were written by Mother Teresa, but they are supported by scripture. A few takeaways from this passage are :

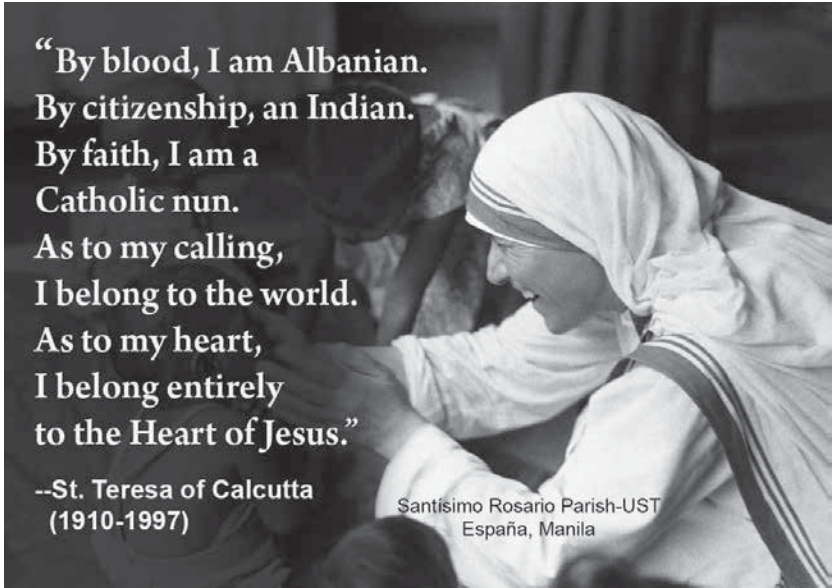
Forgive and be kind. Colossians 3: 12&13: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

Be honest. Ephesians 4: 24&25: "...put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying,

**"By blood, I am Albanian.  
 By citizenship, an Indian.  
 By faith, I am a  
 Catholic nun.  
 As to my calling,  
 I belong to the world.  
 As to my heart,  
 I belong entirely  
 to the Heart of Jesus."**

**--St. Teresa of Calcutta  
(1910-1997)**

Santísimo Rosario Parish-UST  
España, Manila



speaking every man truth with his neighbor."

Be happy. II Nephi 2:25: "...and men are, that they might have joy."

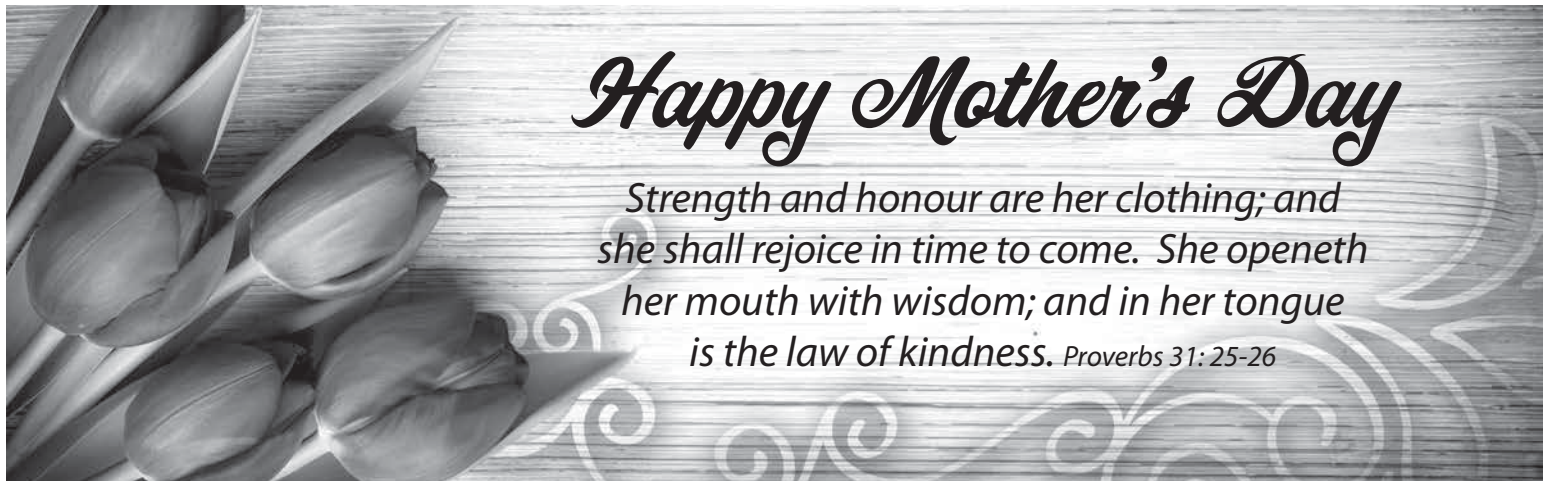
Do good. Psalm 37: 3: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

Give your best. Colossians 3:23: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily." Titus 2:7: "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works."

If we do all of these things, we can truly say that we belong entirely to the heart of Jesus.

Before her first statement about belonging to the heart of Jesus, Mother Teresa reveals her ethnicity, citizenship, and religion. We are all diverse in these categories.

I Corinthians 16:14 reminds us to "[l]et all your things be done with charity." If we follow this verse, regardless of our differences, we will all have within our grasp to "belong entirely to the heart of Jesus!"



## Happy Mother's Day

*Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. Proverbs 31: 25-26*



# Ah, We Knew the Day Would Come!

By Apostle Jerry Valenti

**W**aiting is never easy, but waiting a long time for something is especially difficult. In the past year our Church meeting places were closed for only a few months but it seemed like forever as we waited for them to reopen. But when the day finally came that we were able to return to Church—What a wonderful feeling! Ah, we knew the day would come! Here are 5 amazing facts that describe scriptural events that people had to wait for (or are still waiting for)—the waiting time for these was (is) significantly longer than a few months.

**1 Freedom from Bondage in Egypt** – The Book of Exodus begins with the Israelites in bondage in Egypt. They are made aware that God will send a deliverer to lead them out of bondage but, as the years go by, they have to question whether it will ever happen. Finally, after waiting for over 400 years, the day comes when Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt and toward the promised land of Canaan.

**2 Freedom from Bondage of Sin** – From the time that the first man introduces sin into the world, people look forward to the fulfillment of the prophecies that God will send a Messiah to make a way for the salvation of mankind. It takes a few thousand years but, on a quiet night in Bethlehem, the angel

announces, “I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day...” (Luke 2:10-11).

**3 Restoration of the Gospel** – For 1,260 years, there is no priesthood authority on the earth. The world goes through a period of time known as the “Dark Ages”. Finally, in the 1820s, a young man named Joseph Smith is visited by an angel and, a few years later—Hallelujah, the Gospel is restored!

**4 Choice Seer and Zion** – The next event(s) we are waiting for are the emergence of the Choice Seer (see 2 Nephi 3) and the establishment of Zion. Those of us who have been in the Church for many years have been waiting a long time to see

the convincing of the Seed of Joseph (by the Choice Seer) and the beginning of a glorious Peaceful Reign. Don’t be impatient—keep looking forward to the time when we shall cry, “Ah, we knew the day would come”!

**5 Second Coming of Christ and Heaven on Earth** – Revelation 19 describes the time when Christ shall return to earth—not in a quiet stable this time, but in great power and glory. Revelation 21 describes the glorious city New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, creating a condition of heaven on earth. This will be the time when the devil and his followers will be defeated forever and the people of God will reign in joy for all eternity—certainly a day worth waiting for!

## Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Continued from page 7

- they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29).
5. Jesus wanted the resurrection of the body and soul to be the cornerstone of our faith. “And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).
  6. Jesus wanted us to know that our future mirrors His. “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Romans 6:5; Revelation 20:6).
  7. The concept of the resurrection is not some crazy philosophy, but a reality for which we strive (Acts 17:16 – 32; 2 Timothy 2:12).

Although I could quote scores of scriptures regarding the resurrection, from both Bible and Book of Mormon, here’s the bottom line, as spoken by the prophet Lehi almost 600 years before Jesus was born: “Therefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise” (2 Nephi 2:8). And Mormon added the following admonition, “And what is it that ye shall hope for? Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise” (Moroni 7:41).



## God Hears Our Whispered Prayers!

**D**ear Friends,

In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus said, "These are the two greatest commandments: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

The week after Valentine's Day I was really missing my husband, who is in heaven. I prayed, talked to the Lord and asked him, "Will anyone ever hug me again, Lord? Will anyone ever really want to hug me (like my husband did) again?"

And the next day, before I masked up and left the house, I prayed and asked the Lord, "Please let me be a blessing to someone today. Let me help someone," and I happily went out to my errands. Nothing happened at the Physical Therapist's office. Then I stopped by the dollar store to pick up a birthday card.

As I walked in I saw a tall young man standing at the cashier's line holding three bright, shiny red heart-shaped balloons in his hand. In the other hand, he had three or four one-hundred-dollar bills. He was saying, "But, I've got to get these for my wife! Today was payday, so we are celebrating Valentine's Day late!"

But the guy at the cash register and the manager were saying, "We're sorry sir, but yesterday was Presidents' Day; the banks were closed, and we don't have enough change."

"How much change do you need?" I asked.

"Change for a hundred," came the reply.

"Oh, sorry," I said, "I don't carry that much."

I noticed how upset and sad the young husband was. "Are those for your wife?" I asked.

"Yes!" he said again. "For her!"

It came to me to ask him, "Would you mind if I just gave you the three dollars so you could buy them?"

"No. No, that would be great!" he answered, quietly putting his hundred-dollar bills back in his wallet.

I handed him the three dollars and the cashier just stood there waiting. I realized he wanted the tax as well.

"Oh, let me give you the tax," I said as I searched through my wallet again and handed him another dollar. Just then, I noticed a twenty dollar bill folded away. "Hey!" I said happily, "I just found a twenty! How much did your other things cost?"

"Twenty three dollars total!" the cashier guy said.

"Great! Let me give you this!" I said, feeling strangely blessed. Now I have never given a

stranger that much money in my life. But that day it felt so right to help.

And the young husband was talking out loud, like he was talking to God, "And she just came in here out of nowhere. And she is helping me. I don't know her. Oh, I want to give her a hug!"

I turned, smiled, and said, "You're a good husband. People have helped me so many times in my life. Now I'd like to help you!"

"I've got to hug her," he said to nobody.

I laughed and said, "Sure. It is my privilege to help you. So many people have helped me in my life."

He hugged me quick and hard. Then he said in a voice full of longing, "I got to hug her. I really got to hug her."

I laughed out loud as he hugged me again, telling him, "You are a good husband. My

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husband used to do things like this for me. And so many times in my life people, even strangers have helped me." (Like when my car broke down, or I needed help in a store.)

He seemed to be in a daze as he walked out of the store. Then I remembered my prayer that past weekend when I had asked God, "Will anyone ever really, really want to hug me again, Lord?" And I started laughing out loud as I realized God had answered my prayers! It was so funny and wonderful. And He let me help someone! Now I was in a daze, thinking how God had heard me. I ambled around the aisles of the store, thinking rapidly!

In the far corner of the store is the freezer section. I opened the door and saw a bag of broccoli. I turned it over and found one of my favorite Bible verses. It was a verse that a minister

was told to call me and tell me to read one time when I was very ill, Isaiah 41:10. "Fear thou not; for I am with you: be not dismayed; for I am your God: I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness."

The final blessing happened when I went to the checkout line. The cashier gave me a huge grin and said in a loud voice, "And YOU just won the prize for the week!"

And still wearing that huge grin, he handed me back the twenty dollar bill!

So, I was blessed over and over! I'd shown love to a stranger who I could help. I was given a huge hug, then another one. I was reminded of my favorite Bible verse, and my money was given back to me! I laugh with joy every time I think

about how great God is to me! And how He hears our every whispered prayer!

Do yourself a favor! Pray to Our Living God and see what miracles He will do for you too! It's fun!

With much love, your friend,

*Sister Jan*

*Note: For me, my prayer to the Lord was to be able to help someone that day. I was also talking things over with God a few days before, wondering if I'd ever be back in a family situation and getting regular hugs. What are YOU wondering about? How to make a new friend, or how to do your schoolwork or get along with someone? The Lord cares and hears your worries. Remember, your family can tell you who is safe to hug. Especially with the germs from COVID causing worry.*

## Answers from last month:

"Hugging my friends and coworkers!" – *Sister Christine Martorana, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"Hugs!" – *Brother Anthony Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch*

"Attending church and partaking of communion!" – *Sister Dienna Rogers, Irvine, CA Branch*

"Singing in church!" – *Sister Sophia O'Connor, Farmington Hills, MI Branch*

"Being able to see my students' whole faces!" – *Brother Chuck Maddox, Jr., Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"Hugs!" – *Sister Mallory McNamara, Columbus, OH Branch.*

"I work in a hospital and watched so many patients suffer without their families during the pandemic. I'll never take for granted being surrounded by the

love and support of my family and loved ones, including my church family." – *Sister Sydney Lovalvo, Farmington Hills, MI Branch.*

"Greeting family friends, brothers, and sisters with that long-lost hug again!" – *Sister Cindy Davis, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"Being able to end each day in my classroom by high-fiving every student as they leave. I didn't realize how special it was to celebrate the success we've had that day in this way." – *Sister Alyssa Maddox, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"Hugs and seeing smiles." – *Sister Natalie Shawver, Cincinnati-Morrow, OH Mission.*

"Our spiritual and natural freedoms to come and go as we please. We were restricted in traveling, visiting loved ones, and meeting in person. I really miss

our General Church Conferences and camp-outs and look forward to when we can all gather together again." – *Sister Connie Rossi, Gastonia, PA Branch*

"I missed meeting in person and participating in communion. Even though the branch is now open, I miss being able to hug some of the brothers and sisters. Greeting with the elbow touch just isn't enough!" – *Sister Jan Humphrey, Forest Hills, FL Branch*

"Hugs." – *Sister Dianne Maddox, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"Freedom; to fellowship and worship with the people of God, travel to conferences and visit loved ones, to breathe without a face covering. Although these were inconveniences, it built upon my reliance on God making me even more grateful for the treasure and security I have in

Him." – *Sister Cynthia Onorato, Brunswick, Maine Mission*

"Gathering together often with MBA and branch lunches. I also miss in-person social events with the saints." – *Brother Michael Zaino, Edison, NJ Branch*

"I think I took the ability to meet as a group for granted, as a church and with friends and family. While it's been great to be able to see people virtually, I've really missed getting together to celebrate milestones and just talk face-to-face." – *Sister Kim Komjathy, Detroit, MI Branch #1*

"Spiritually: Hugging and a holy kiss. Whoever thought that would ever be taken away from us? Naturally: Family Celebrations." – *Sister Eleanor Carrillo, Las Vegas, NV Mission*



# Blessing Bits

**BB** One afternoon as I was walking down the steps, I slipped and as I grabbed the railing, I felt my shoulder dislocate. The last time my shoulder dislocated, I had to go to the hospital to have it put back into place. I was terrified thinking about going to the emergency room, especially because I knew during this Coronavirus Outbreak I would have to go alone. Immediately my dad anointed me. I kept trusting God that He would take care of my shoulder. I sat up in a chair, hoping it would relieve the pain, but it did not. I thought it might help to walk, so I took a few gentle steps, and suddenly, I felt my shoulder go back into place! The pain was gone immediately, and I could move my arm. I knew it was a miracle! He always takes care of me. – *Sister Gracie Gibson, Detroit MI Branch 1*

**BB** During a review of my mammogram images, the doctor noticed a spot that raised some concern. I was advised to come back for another mammogram and ultrasound around the area of concern. The day before I had to go back in, I called on an elder to come anoint me.

He prayed that the doctor would tell me they could no longer see the spot and that it was not there anymore. The next day after my testing and ultrasound were complete, the radiologist met with me and confirmed that the spot they saw last time was no longer there, and that I did not need further testing. The doctor said it must have been a fluke with the way they took my pictures, but I KNOW the Lord intervened and took care of me just as He always does! Praise God! He never fails me! – *Sister Laura Carson, Detroit MI Branch 1*

**BB** Back in March, my brother passed away very suddenly. We were very distraught by the news, but we could not help but glorify God for His grace and mercy. My brother had suffered a stroke about 4 years prior and the Lord spared him. A little over a year before his passing, he decided to give his life to the Lord and surrender through baptism. It was a miracle to be able to witness his baptism. I often say, if the Lord could change my brother's heart, He can change anyone, and I praise God for that. – *Sister Zarella Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch*

Send us your Blessing Bits by contacting Sister Zarella Scolaro at [zarellamosqueda@gmail.com](mailto:zarellamosqueda@gmail.com) [in approximately 150 words].  
Answers to Question of the Month to [gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org](mailto:gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org).



**Question for this month:** What is your favorite part about being a father?



**Answer from last month:** What did you take for granted the most before COVID that you plan to enjoy or treasure more when the pandemic is finally behind us? "I took going to church in general for granted. It was just second nature to go, and even though it meant so much to me, I just never thought that it would come down to this. This is definitely one thing that will treasure much more after this pandemic!" –*Brother Giovanni Lind, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

Turn back to page 11 for more answers to this question.



*If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me... Psalm 139:9.10*