

# The Gospel News

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*New Year's  
Blessings*

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## FORGIVEN

*By Evangelist Rosario Scraglieri*

In John 8:1-11, we read:

"Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, 'master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?'

"This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

"So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto the, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first case a stone at her.' And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

"And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

"When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

This event that we read in the Word of God is a source of great reflection for us, because today the Lord wants to remind us of the great love and immense capacity for forgiveness He has towards us.

The story of this adulterous woman who seems to have nothing to do with the path of believers is enclosed in a great truth, which can only be revealed in the light of the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Let's start by receiving teaching from every single event that this story offers us today.

The accusers:

Even today, as in the time of Jesus, what accuses us when we make mistakes is not someone or something that does not know the will of God, but who accuses us are mainly three who know the truth well, but who each try to apply it according to their own rules.

The first is called Satan (Revelation 12:10). "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

*(Continued on page 4)*



How did a Canadian with an Italian band (not Cornelius) wind up popularizing an 18th century Scottish ballad we sing every year with no understanding?

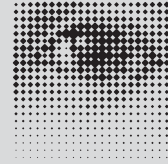


Monday, Jan. 20th. Martin Luther King's Birthday. Acts 2:17 makes me think of him.

"In the beginning was the Word..."  
"The manner of administering the wine..."  
"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly..."



Word Challenge: The top o' the year deserves memory verses that top their respective chapters. Can you find the three to the left?

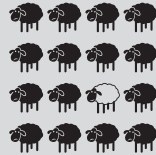


"Love, oh, what love! Such perfect love!"



"..joined together in perfect harmony..."  
This Feb. 14th, remember your first true love, and then share it.

January 10th and 1st Peter 2:9 go together: The 10th is National Peculiar People Day. Let's proudly celebrate our uniqueness in the Restored Gospel.



...and Feb. 11th, John 15:15, Saints Hymnal #497 and SOZ #69 all go together. Because the 11th is National Make A Friend Day.

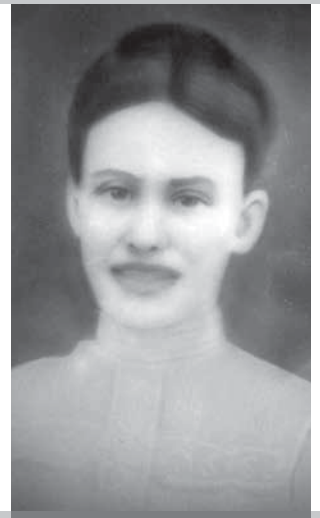


## BFTIP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck

On Valentine's Day, February 14, 1910, one hundred and ten years ago, an MBA meeting was being held at Brother Alexander Cherry's house in Roscoe, Pennsylvania. Sister Minnie Kennedy was President of "the assembly" as it was called then, and Brother John Penn was the treasurer. After a hymn, Sister Emma Leonard opened in prayer. Mosiah 16th and 17th chapters were read for the lesson. After the lesson each member contributed to the meeting. Sister Bertha Ashton (20 years old at the time) sang "the song of Zion" which was "Longing for the Gathering" that she composed on the guitar at the age of sixteen. Sister Alice Wells read a poem, "A Little Talk with Jesus." Sister Mary Bell Wells read a poem by Rudyard Kipling called, "When Earth's Last Picture is Painted." Sister Drusilla Gollick read a piece called, "The Overconfident Man." Brother John Penn sang, "Guard Us Our Great Jehovah." Bro. Alex Cherry read an article for Valentine's Day on "Courtship" by Josh Billings. Two bottles of oil were presented to God for His blessing. The total dues collected was 25 cents. The collection was 23 cents, for a total of 48 cents.

Sister Bertha Ashton composed "Longing for the Gathering" ►



## 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.
- To draw Israel to Christ through an effort focused on the Native Americans of North and South America.

## Vision Statement

- The full manifestations of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, resulting from living and worshipping in unity and righteousness, stimulate continuous growth of the Domestic Church—even at a rate of doubling over a five year period—while strengthening the International Church.



## Wordup



## “What’s In It for Him?” *By Elder Doug Obradovich*

**“He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him.”  
(John 14:21)**

Every inch of counter space seemingly housed every type of food. Sunday morning, pre-church, breakfast was ready (each month, last service = “Breakfast Sunday”), lunch prepped, and all courses for dinner awaited our family’s visit later. I quickly assessed Candace’s time and effort, and asked her, “Was this an act of LOVE or RESPONSIBILITY?”

This question confirmed a message I believed God had directed for church. Transitioning, I thought, “Was Jesus Christ’s life an act of LOVE or RESPONSIBILITY?” Also, “Did He feel RESPONSIBILITY to His Father and/or His creation, or was He driven by LOVE for His Father and/or His creation?” Lastly and simply, “What’s in it for Him?”

Our normal processes are innate, so we often decision-make through self-centered intentions. Consider choosing a job. We weigh whether the prospective position will support us and/or our families financially and will we be fulfilled intellectually and/or emotionally. Said differently: “What’s in it for me?”

We even begin our spiritual walks with this mindset. We may frame it as soul salvation, but this can also be spelled, “sole” salvation, as we are singular in gaining forgiveness for our own failings. Giving and sacrificing go against our natures (ex: “the natural man is an enemy to God”) to such degree that we must be enticed in order to serve Him righteously (“He doth require that ye should do as He have

commanded you: for if ye do, HE DOTH IMMEDIATELY BLESS YOU”).

Is salvation not enough? The Word can’t simply say, “Just do as Jesus commands,” because subservience is not in our natures. What gets in the way? The inquiry, “What’s in it for me?” Note: this is my observation and not my judgment, as I head the line of those guilty of such fault.

While we mostly obey obligingly, I can only recall one time Jesus may have been motivated by “responsibility.” When He confronted His impending arrest and crucifixion, feeling most abandoned (“My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death”), He requested prayerful support from those He trusted most (“Tarry ye here with me”). Instead, they failed Him and slept (“Could ye not watch with me one hour?”).

But “RESPONSIBILITY” quickly shifted to “LOVE” as He fulfilled all that was required in order to save mankind from our self-inflicted fallen condition. One man’s LOVE overcame an entire creation’s sin. How did He do this? He never asked, “What’s in it for me?”

But we can! We can flip the script and turn our attention, focus, and life efforts towards Him and selflessly ask, “What’s in it for Him?” What can you do differently today to give to Jesus Christ without considering what you can get from Him? What do we need to receive (is salvation not enough?) before we willingly, joyfully sacrifice for His gain? And start small with just one thing, so you don’t feel overwhelmed. What ONE THING can you do differently today that tells Him, “I love you?”

Said differently, ask: “What’s in it (your life) for Him?”

## Ruth: She Had to Sit Still

By Sister Alena X. Ricci

I wrote a blog for Ruth, but this isn't it. You're reading version two. After my first draft, I realized that there's a lot more to this woman than I thought.

Admittedly, Ruth has never been one of my favorite folks from the Scriptures. I've found her to be inactive, and, as someone who prefers to live life moving quickly, Ruth's patience and steadiness have always been hard for me to connect with. She is and always has been a woman that embodies Proverbs 31, which for me has been unattainable.

But as I was going through Ruth's story for the seemingly hundredth time, verse 3:18 stood out to me. Naomi says to Ruth, "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall..."

Wait. Does Scripture record Ruth being told to stop and sit still?

I cannot count how many times I have been

told to stop and be patient, and lo and behold, so was Ruth! How had I read this story so many times and never noticed that, just like me, Ruth had to be told to be still?

There are so many things to say here, and I hope that each of you goes back and reads the book of Ruth to get the full effect of Naomi's directions.

But, ultimately, what I see here is that God's kingdom is full of beautiful, broken people.

Ruth is an incredible example of faith and dangerous hope. Hope so dangerous, she left everything she knew to follow Naomi into the unknown.

But ultimately? She was a sinner saved by grace just like you and I.

I found myself reading a book about Jacob—the straight-up audacity he had to wrestle an angel of God and insist on a blessing! And guess what? Ruth's hope, her ambition, her

relentless loyalty is just as audacious.

But, through all of this, Jacob's hip hurt, and through all of this, Ruth was told to sit still.

That drive and ambition is something I deeply connect with, but the sitting still part is something ... I don't.

But isn't that the point of God's kingdom? That when one person isn't strong in something, someone else is.

I am not strong in patience or waiting, and neither was Ruth in that 3:18 moment, but I could give you a list of brothers and sisters from the McKees Rocks Branch who have eternal patience.

Rereading Ruth reminded me to not only sit still, but to bask in the clear miracle that is the body of Christ, that while I'm being told to sit still, someone else is being told to run.

## FORGIVEN Continued from cover

But know that on this type of accuser, there is a means that will always defeat him every time we invoke upon us the Blood of Christ Jesus.

Revelation 12:11 "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

The brethren who accuse: The second type of accusers are those who in some ways have known the great love of God, but having forgotten their compassion they stand as judges of their own brothers, accusing them of sin whenever he falls, forgetting the same words of Jesus and the Apostles concerning judgment.

Luke 6:37 "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." 1 Corinthians 4:5 "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

What truly accuses us: The third accuser of our sins is the voice of the Holy Spirit who shouts inside us when we fall into temptation and break that intense communion that binds us to the Father; this type of accuser is the one who is healthy; that is, who produces within us the true will of repentance and the true

request for forgiveness, to have the capacity for change in our lives.

It is important to listen to this voice that calls us to a true change and a true conversion, made not only of moments or even a few days of change, but to request with all our strength and to draw help from the Holy Spirit in order to win all that wants to take us away from the presence of God. In 1 Timothy 1:19 it says, "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck."

The accusation and the penalty: In John 8:4 "They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act..." The accusation directed at the woman was one of the most serious, comparable to murder, and therefore punishable under the law with only one method of death, we read in fact:

John 8:5 "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?"

Imagine this scene for a moment., For centuries the people have been used to giving immediate judgment, and if this judgment is fomented by religious leaders, all the people feel obliged and in their rights to exercise their own

(Continued on page 8)

## Beat the Air *By Evangelist Mark Kovacic*

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air."

The Apostle Paul wrote those words to the Saints residing in the city of Corinth close to 2,000 years ago, but they are as applicable today as they were then. What drew me to this scripture is something that has occurred in my own life. As I noted in an edition of the Gospel News a couple of years ago I was managing my new condition called Parkinson's disease. I tried different activities to reduce the effects of it on my body. I also discovered Scriptures that cause me to more deeply reflect.

So this leads us to the practice of establishing resolutions, particularly New Year's resolutions. I have discovered that few people accomplish their resolutions, and I believe I have also discovered some reasons for this fact. One of the key factors in setting resolutions is to select one that is actually accomplishable, i.e. it can really be achieved. For example, there is a big difference between resolving to read the Book of Mormon in one year and resolving to memorize it in one year (or ten years, for that matter). The resolution should be measurable (lose 20 pounds) and achievable (I can lose 20 pounds without it being detrimental to me). The resolution should be realistic (I can afford to lose the weight) and time framed (one year, which equates to less than 2 pounds per month, is reasonable). Finally, it should be shareable, i.e. you should be able to work with someone to help accomplish it.

What are some doable physical resolutions? One of the most popular is losing weight. To accomplish it you would need to follow the steps shared above and most likely perform some exercises. My goal in reducing the effects of Parkinson's disease includes physical exertion. Recently I started attending a program where boxing training is utilized due to its intensity. (Don't worry, no one, including me, steps into a boxing ring or throws punches any time or at any one.)

Now, let's look at some spiritual resolutions. For example, drawing closer to God (an excellent choice). The first question that may come to your mind is, "How can I measure my success?" Paul told the Galatians (5:22) that the fruit (result) of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. If these nine characteristics are increasing in your life, then you are on the right path.

There are a lot of verses in the Scriptures that use the word "exercise," but most of them are referring to authority, not activity. And what type of exercise is expected to accomplish spiritual resolutions? Here are two samples from the Book of Mormon and one from the Bible:

If we want God to be in our lives, then, "Yea, and how is it that you have forgotten that the Lord is able to do all things according to his will, for the children of men, if it so be that they exercise faith in him? Wherefore, let us be faithful to him" (1 Nephi 7:12).

If we want to know the mysteries of God, or bring people into the Gospel, "Yea, he that repents and exercises faith, and brings forth good works, and prays continually without ceasing – unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed; yea, and it shall be given unto such to bring thousands of souls to repentance..." (Alma 26:22).

If we want to draw closer to God, we follow Paul's admonition, "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profits little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

Yes, physical exercise profits little when compared to godliness, but Paul is not saying it is worthless or that it is without merit; he is pointing out that spiritual exercise should take precedent.

"And every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:25-27).

In conclusion, pick one or two spiritual resolutions or goals, and do it today! For example, the following from the Book of Helaman: "Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God" (Helaman 3:35).

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
Carolynn O'Connor  
carolynn@xelapack.com  
734-260-0213

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**  
Chuck Maddox, Jr.  
cmaddoxjr@gmail.com  
937-266-2506

**CONSULTANTS**  
Alex Gentile  
Paul Liberto  
Leonard A. Loyalvo  
Anthony Scolaro  
Cathy Gentile

**CIRCULATION MANAGER**  
Dianne Maddox

**DESIGN & LAYOUT**  
Ken Lombardo

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**  
KarenJo Pandone

**QUORUM OF 70 EDITOR**  
Q70 Communication Team  
Q70team@gmail.com  
313-820-4503

**GMBA EDITOR**  
Christine Martorana  
Christinemaddox13@gmail.com  
937-266-2539

**GENERAL CIRCLE EDITOR**  
LuAnn Carson  
uannie@comcast.net  
724-518-0491

**REGION EDITORS**

**ATLANTIC COAST**  
Michael Zaino  
mrzaino35@gmail.com  
732-289-4191

**GREAT LAKES**  
Kim Komjathy  
komjathy@wowway.com  
248-371-9208

**MIDWEST**  
Valerie Dulisse  
valdulisse@hotmail.com  
203-617-9443

**PACIFIC**  
Jody Greger  
jcslldr@yahoo.com  
209-810-4880

**PENN-MID ATLANTIC**  
Chris Nicklow  
rdnjr@comcast.net  
724-258-7392

**SOUTHEAST**  
Mandy Griffith  
mandygriffith324@gmail.com  
727-264-7905

**SOUTHWEST**  
Anthony Scolaro  
ajsazplanner@gmail.com  
732-259-3861

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# GMBA November Conference *by Sister Sydney Loyalvo*



The saints gathered together on Friday, November 8 to Sunday, November 11 for GMBA conference. This year, in order to provide a more inclusive environment, conference was held at the Hilton Garden Inn right by Pittsburgh Airport. The space and location allowed for more fellowship and easier travel, which was a great blessing for all.



## **FRIDAY- A NIGHT OF FUN**

We kicked off the weekend with a night of bowling, fellowship, and food. This event was perfect for all ages and a great way to start.

## **SATURDAY- THE NITTY GRITTY**

Similar to years past, our Saturday morning and afternoon were spent on fruitful discussions regarding the future of the GMBA. Brother Jason Monaghan shared with the congregation the importance of connecting

with and encouraging our youth. We then went over other business aspects within the GMBA and heard reports from our Areas. It was truly a blessing to hear how the Lord is working in our branches in different regions.

One of the most moving moments during the morning meeting was hearing the success of our Youth Missionary Fund (YMF). Year after year, young people can attend Campout thanks to the YMF, and families who could only afford

to send their children, can now all go as a family and enjoy the blessings of Camp. Speaking of our young people, the officers introduced a new Youth Weekend, held on March 6-8, 2020 at Camp Luz in Orville, Ohio. This camp is for those ages 13 to 25. The best news? It's free.

During the afternoon session, election of officers took place. Brother Tom D'Orazio stepped down as Vice President- everyone proudly gave a standing ovation to Brother Tom for his 11 years of dedication to the GMBA. Brother Lucas Martorana was welcomed as our new Vice President and can't wait to see what the future of the GMBA holds.

## **SATURDAY NIGHT- WORSHIPS AND PRAISES**

Newly ordained Elder, Brother Aaron Palmieri, started off our service. He read from I Samuel 17:34-37, encouraging all in attendance to focus on our calling, not our circumstance. Using the example of David and Goliath, Brother Aaron reiterated that we have all been in that circumstance, facing some type of Goliath in our lives. It's easy to feel like David, however, we must put our faith on the Lord and trust Him.

Following Brother Aaron was testimony- with a twist. We first heard a recording with an abundance of testimonies from brothers and sisters, some of which have passed on to their reward. It was an amazing blessing to hear the miracles of the Saints. In addition, we opened the service for testimony where most spoke

on the common theme: encouraging the young people to serve the Lord and how God had helped them as a young person.

## **SUNDAY- SHOWERS OF BLESSINGS**

We had a wonderful morning service where we heard sermons from Brother Tom D'Orazio and Brother David Loyalvo. Brother Tom reflected on his gratefulness for being a part of the GMBA for the past 11 years and thanked the congregation for allowing him to serve and be a part of their lives in that capacity. He then read from Deuteronomy 11, sharing on why it is important to be close to the Lord. He then asked the young people to make the Lord a priority in their lives, and to follow and stay close to Him. Brother Tom closed by describing how clinging close to the Lord has created an incredible impact in his life.

Brother David followed, explaining to the congregation that Brother Tom is the perfect example of living a life close to the Lord. Reading from the same scripture as Brother Tom, Brother David read "therefore you should live up these words in your heart," encouraging the congregation to live lives close to the Lord because it is embedded in our hearts. He then shared many experiences, similar to Brother Tom, about how God has been with him through every stage of his life because he clung to the Lord in those moments.

The meeting ended with testimonies of brothers and sisters who asked or had gotten baptized at a Campout in the past 11 years- the perfect way to end a very blessed weekend.





# 100 ACTS OF KINDNESS in 100 DAYS



By Sister Carolynn O'Connor

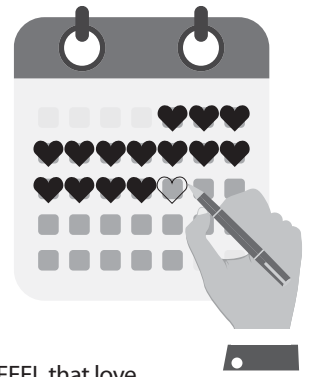
Several things caught my attention recently as I thought about my life and contemplated if I was really doing enough. Could it be that I am searching for that big thing and missing all the small opportunities that are presented to me daily? How many people can I affect if I just start doing the small things more often?

It is easy to sit back and say that this world is full of hatred and sorrow. People are starving for love and attention and many are lost and totally desperate. It can seem overwhelming to think that I, one individual out of over 7.5 billion people in the world, can make a difference. Where to even start?

I already do kind things for the members of the Church as is my duty (and my privilege and joy as a saint). I am open with my colleagues and friends about my spiritual life too. I share God's blessings, but how often do I look outside of my personal circle and reach out to humankind in any way? I see a gap here!

Then it happened- a commercial, an article in a magazine, a movie I was watching, and the idea started coming together- I need to challenge myself to do more. Next came a sermon reminding me that Jesus outlines

clearly what I need to do. I need to love Him (which I truly do!) and I need to love my neighbor as myself (Matthew 22:37-40). I see another gap, or let's call it an opportunity for growth. Loving my neighbor, mankind, as myself is a tall request. I am an action-oriented person and I decided that for me to FEEL that love, maybe I need to try to SHOW it more often. I decided that I need to make a plan and set a goal. The result-100 ACTS OF KINDNESS in 100 DAYS. Filling the gap! On January 1st my challenge begins.



Here are my rules- every day for 100 days I will do something that I don't normally do for someone else. It needs to be bigger than holding a door or giving someone a big smile but does not need to be any grand gesture. It can include things like help someone load their groceries, give a child with special needs a hug, tell someone that they are amazing, sit with someone that usually sits alone, give someone on the street money, thank a teacher, worker, or someone that I see doing a great job, for their service to the community, compliment someone about something specific, do a chore for a neighbor, or tell a frazzled mom in the store that she is doing a great job.

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## FORGIVEN Continued from page 4

revenge, their own judgment, on someone who in reality, manages to make us forget our true state of sin ... since someone has been guilty of a sin greater than our own, each one of those present feels justified, and also justifies his own state of sin, since someone has committed a greater sin than own; and how better to free oneself from one's condition of incapacity to do the will of God, here everyone finds it opportune to throw his anger on those who according to the law have committed a major error.

A challenge: But this time before acting, one goes to ask, almost as a challenge, for advice on what to do in this situation. In John 8:6, "This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground..."

The Lord knew their hearts well, knew the hearts of each of those present, and knew their faults well, even though they hid their inability to do God's will behind the mask of religiosity, and for a moment ignored them, He takes no care of their vain speeches; but these accusers had come down to Him not only to accuse a victim, but to seek accusations against the One who accused them without speaking, and it is here that the Wisdom of God surpasses all forecasts of response.

In John 8:7 it is written: "So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

The blood of those present at this response froze in their veins, they could no longer reply or speak, a few simple words had put them in front of the naked and true reality of the condition of their lives.

When they heard this, and were accused by their own conscience, they went

out one by one, starting from the oldest to the last; and Jesus was left alone with the woman who stood there in the middle: Forgiveness (see John 8:10).

"When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee, go, and sin no more."

What for that woman meant her last moment of life, in the presence of Christ's love becomes rebirth to a new life: every sin of hers is instantly canceled, the life of this woman no longer has any dirt, but from the encounter with Christ comes out whitened, washed, purified; no accusation nor any accuser can stand before her, because God's love has forgiven her every mistake.

This story, which may have seemed to have no bearing on our lives as believers, instead reveals itself to be of extraordinary importance in our daily journey.

How many times have we too, like this woman, been adulterous towards the Lord, how many times have we betrayed him, how many times have we been like the same accusers, looking in others for a sin greater or similar to ours to feel justified, or perhaps to stand as judges, forgetting our own condition?

Today the Lord wants to remind us of His forgiveness, His love, His very patience towards us, to bring us back to His presence, to start a new path of Love and certainty together.

To the Lord be Glory.

(Brother Rosario resides in Italy and presides over The Church of Jesus Christ in that country.)

## YIA San Carlos 2019 *By Brother Jared Sclaro*

This past summer, Youth In Action visited the San Carlos, AZ mission to support their annual Vacation Bible School (VBS). San Carlos VBS regularly serves over 100 children from the surrounding reservation community, and this year was no exception. Thankfully, our YIA team of six participants was up to the challenge and they jumped right in with the other volunteers to teach the kids that “God is good!”

Throughout the week, the volunteers get an early start to make sure that each day is special for the kids. As early as 8 AM, children are arriving and the smiling volunteers usher them into the sanctuary where they



learn songs about God’s goodness. In the meantime, other volunteers are preparing fun activities for the kids, including games, crafts, snacks, interactive stories, and more, all focused on the goodness of God. The kids spend the morning rotating through the stations in groups before volunteers serve them lunch and send them home.

It takes a lot of energy to keep the children engaged and smiling all that time, and the work isn’t over when the kids go home. Every afternoon our volunteers clean the entire church building before heading off to other activities, including singing hymns at local nursing homes, helping with meal prep, preparing for Wednesday night church, or washing the vans. There is always work to do, but with so many helpers and a contagious spirit of service, the work doesn’t feel like work at all!

Thankfully, there is always time for loads of fun too. The volunteers this year enjoyed a trip to the local pool, a few Dairy Queen runs, game night, movie night, and a lot of visiting with old and new friends from the church and community. Participants also enjoyed the company of Evangelist Josh Gehly who came to join in the effort, make personal

connections with the children and YIA volunteers, and share about being a missionary. We were also blessed by a group of helpers from Pennsylvania who shared some of the new Songs of Zion and the stories behind them. The whole event was a blast, but those who come regularly to San Carlos VBS expect nothing less.



Here are a few words from some of this year’s YIA participants:

“It was a huge blessing to share and receive God’s love and grace with the kids and with all my fellow VBS helpers. I can’t wait to be back someday.” – *Brother Dominic Mora*

“This was my first year here and I absolutely fell in love, the children made my heart so full and the Spirit of God was felt every second!” – *Sister Taylor Metzler*

“San Carlos VBS/YIA is genuinely a life-changing experience. It’s a lot of hard work but making real connections with the kids and showing God’s love through quality time with them is so worth it. I love going back year after year and watching everyone grow up.” – *Sister Halleey Ivey*

“San Carlos is the greatest experience I’ve had doing missionary work. Every year I look forward to going and seeing the children; they’re the best part! The reservation and Sister Dee will always have my heart. San Carlos is an experience everyone should have. Come join us!” – *Sister Megan Vinsick*

The San Carlos mission hosts VBS every year and is always accepting volunteers. If you are interested in participating in the future, feel free to reach out to Brother Jared Sclaro for more information.





## I Will Give You Rest *By Apostle Jerry Valenti*

**A**n oft-quoted statement of Jesus is found in Matthew 11:28-30 in which He exhorted the people, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Here are 5 amazing facts about the components of this passage.

**1 All Who Labor and Are Heavy Laden** – This passage is addressed to those who are having a hard time in life. It seems to happen quite often today – how many people do we know who suffer from some level of anxiety? In some cases, it's due to the stresses of life while, at other times, it may be due to mistakes that have been made or sins committed and associated feelings of guilt. Regardless of the cause, Jesus provides His own advice to help ease our burdens.

**2 Come unto Me** – Jesus doesn't refer us to anyone else or tell us to search for an answer. His advice is simple: Come unto me – I am the answer. It doesn't mean there aren't people who can help us – the Lord often puts such people in our paths – but we should first come unto Jesus and let Him direct us.

**3 Take My Yoke upon You** – A yoke is a piece of wood that is used to connect one animal to another such that their efforts can be combined in moving a heavy burden. Being yoked to a fellow believer – with marriage being a typical example but not the only one – can make our burden lighter as we can work together to grow spiritually and accomplish the Lord's work. Anytime we connect ourselves to Jesus – or to any person or cause that promotes Him – our burden becomes lighter as Jesus does all the heavy lifting.

**4 Learn of Me** – There is much that can be learned about the Lord but the primary thing to learn is how different our life is when we are connected to Him. Some people may not even realize they have burdens – they think life is

going pretty well – until they learn of the Lord and experience how blessed a life can be when it is connected to Jesus. The knowledge that our future is secure when we stay connected to the Lord helps us to navigate this life.

**5 I Will Give You Rest** – What type of rest is Jesus referring to? Is it our goal to just rest and do nothing? No, when we connect ourselves to Jesus, He gives us rest from the burdens we bear. He gives us rest from the stresses of life. He gives us rest from the guilt of sin. He prepares us for eternal rest in the kingdom of God.



## Ladies' Uplift Circle News

### Today Is the Day *By Sisters LuAnn Carson*

**"T**his is the moment," my yoga instructor whispers as we sit cross legged on the floor, palms open facing the sky. Of course, I think, now is now, today is today. Then "Namaste." And off I rush to another room to teach a Total Body Training class. The first song on my playlist rings out, 'This is the day He has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it.' Do I sense a pattern? Is there a message here?

First, during yoga my instructor wanted the class to focus on and appreciate 'now' instead of letting our minds race with our 'to do' lists and worries. We sit with palms open to symbolically receive whatever blessings are offered to us.

"Namaste" can mean the light in me honors the light in you. We are honoring our 'lights' (in my case Jesus Christ) at that very moment in time Jesus preached to His people in both the New Testament and

the Book of Mormon to take no thought for tomorrow. He promises to provide for us as He provides for the flowers and the birds. Matthew 6:33 & 34 reads, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [whatever we need] shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow." Is that easy to do? Not for a person like me who likes to plan and schedule everything, and then expects life to go according to the plan.

We have all heard the phrase 'let go and let God.' God is in control. Can we relinquish our own personal control to him? And then simply rejoice in knowing He is in charge?

"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalm 118:24)

Wow, that sounds simple!! And it can be because really there are so

*(Continued on page 11)*



## The King Who Disobeyed His Father

The king of the great Lamanite nations had appointed some of his sons to be kings of their own smaller countries. They were, however, supposed to do whatever their father told them to do; they were to rule their countries the way the great king ordered, according to Lamanite beliefs. Now one of the great King's sons, Lamoni, had met the Nephite preacher, Ammon, and began to believe in God and Jesus Christ.

Lamoni, who was also a king, realized that there was one, true, living God. He was full of joy and love. But Lamoni was afraid to tell his father, the great king of the Lamanites, about his new religion. The Lamanites hated every Nephite and all the Nephite beliefs, and it was the Nephite prince, Ammon, who had told Lamoni the convincing story of Jesus Christ's love and power.

God spoke to Ammon and told him to go to the next country to rescue his brothers, who were being tortured in prison for talking and preaching about God. Ammon told king Lamoni that he had to go and free his brothers.

King Lamoni said, "I will go with you. The king of that land is my friend. I know that you can do anything without power of God but maybe I could talk to the king of that land. But tell me one thing: How do you know they're in prison?"

Ammon answered, "The Lord told me to go and rescue my brothers who are in prison."

So King Lamoni had his servants get the horses and chariots ready, and he and Ammon began their journey.

And it came to pass that as they traveled, they met the father of Lamoni, the great Lamanite king. The king was angry, and said to his son, "Why didn't you come down on the day when I made a great dinner, a feast, for my sons and my people?"

(King Lamoni hadn't come because he was busy setting up new churches in his own

land, with the help of Ammon.) The angry older king insulted his son by demanding, "Where are you going with this Nephite, whose people are all liars?"

When Lamoni started explaining about the love and power of Christ, the older king became furious. He shouted that Ammon was a liar and a thief, and commanded his son to kill Ammon with a sword and to come with him back to the capital, where his palace was.

Lamoni quietly refused, and his father then drew his sword to hit his own son. But the man of God, Ammon, stood up and said, "You shall not kill your son! He is an innocent man."

Lamoni's father answered, saying, "I know—it is you that has tried to change him!" And the king stretched forth his hand to kill Ammon. But God gave Ammon power, and Ammon struck the king's arm so he could not use it to fight.

When the great king realized that he could be killed, he began to beg Ammon to allow him to live. Ammon raised his sword and said to

the great king, "I will kill you unless you agree to let my brothers out of prison."

"Yes, yes!" agreed the king, "I'll give you anything you ask—even half of my kingdom!" Ammon continued, "You must also agree to let your son Lamoni keep his kingdom and give him permission to rule however he sees fit. Then will I spare you and let you live."

The older king was full of rejoicing. He agreed to everything, and he was astounded, because Ammon hadn't asked for riches or power, but only for religious freedom. The king said to Ammon, "I will give you everything you ask for. But you and your brothers must come to teach me too—as soon as they're out of prison!"

Ammon's brother did go to the great king of the Lamanites to tell him the story of Christ. The king believed, and thousands followed and were baptized. The prince who disobeyed his father became a great king who led his people to serve God.

*This article is reprinted from Jan 1995*

### Trust in God

I Q  
F S  
W A W S  
N I B G  
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Q L D K I N G O F S F I Q M D R M C R K  
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F K E E U R M X R R R N C E  
C B F B R M Q H P F P H M S  
Y Y O L A T S U R T  
X Y Z Y I E A N  
K L B D

TRUST  
JESUS  
LAMONI  
FATHER  
BELIEF

OBEY  
PROMISES  
AMMON  
BAPTISM  
FAITH

GOD  
KING  
RULER  
OBEDIENCE  
LOVE

## In under 5 words, tell us what you are praying for in 2020?

Continued from Back

"Seeing more of the power of God in Church."  
-Brother Marc Zaino, Mount Laurel, NJ Branch.

"I am praying for our country." -Sister Olivia Parravano, Detroit, MI Branch #1.

"For wisdom in parenting."  
-Sister Linda Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch.

"A new house!" -Sister Juliette Coppa, Monongahela, PA Branch.

"Philippians 4:11 sums it up!" -Sister Natalie Shawver, Cincinnati-Morrow, OH Mission.

"To graduate nursing school!" -Sister Alyssa Morle, Atlanta, GA Branch.

"Branch growth, everyone's good health."  
-Sister Carla King, Lorain, OH Branch.

"Increased faith, greater love, peace." -Brother Gary Thompson, Creekside, MI Branch.

"Choice seer." -Sister Flo Benyola, Yucaipa, CA Branch.

"Clarity." -Sister Dianne Maddox, Lake Worth, FL Branch.

"For a safe school year."  
-Giovanni Lind, Lake Worth, FL Branch."

"God to remove my sorrow!" -Brother Aaron Nolfi, Clairton, PA Branch.

## 100 ACTS OF KINDNESS

Continued from page 4

Next, I need to figure out a way to track it. Write in a journal, keep notes on my phone, make a list? It all seems like too much work. I wanted to this be simple, and since my goal is showing love, I decided that I will draw a heart on my calendar in my kitchen every day after I do something kind. It does not matter what specific deed I do, and I don't need to re-read each of my actions and congratulate myself, I just need to know that I achieved my goal and spread some love. The visual on the wall will also encourage my family to join in.

Like every SMART goal (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time based) I need to make a plan in the event that I get off track. If I miss a day, I will do two the following day to catch up. Not to give myself an out, but to ensure that I can achieve the ultimate goal of achieving the 100 ACTS.

The world needs a little kindness. I have heard about people that experienced a complete change in life because of a small act of kindness by a stranger. I recently read about a woman who was

involved in a public scandal and on trial. It was well publicized, and she felt that everyone was against her. During the trial, a stranger handed her a note saying, "Hang in there, I'm praying for you." Not only did it give her the hope she needed to get through this horrible time, she then reached out to people later in life in similar circumstances and offered the same hope. I also think of the times in my life where someone went the extra mile to say something nice to me or do something small and thoughtful. Many times, in my life I have been the recipient of love and kindness. It changed me, sometimes only for that day, sometimes for a longer period.

Maybe I am only one person but if I can brighten someone's day, show a little love and encourage them to do the same, maybe together we can make real progress towards the loving environment Christ encourages.

So, I challenge you to join me and see what joy and love you can spread and how you can affect the lives of others with 100 ACTS OF KINDNESS in 100 DAYS.

## Today Is the Day

Continued from page 9

many things to rejoice about. (Sometimes it feels like we just need a magnifying glass to find them.)

Let's start by simply counting our blessings. They might include a beautiful sunrise, or our health, the fact that we have food in the refrigerator, a roof over our heads, family. Most important, our greatest blessing is in Jesus Christ who died for us. How can we not rejoice when we think of what He did for us unworthy servants? His plan of salvation is a gift so great it should bring rejoicing every day.

At the GMBA conference in November we were told to not focus on our circumstance, but to focus on what we can do for God. That means now, today!

2 Corinthians 6:2 tells us, "now is the day of salvation."

So, let's focus on what work we can do for God today, this very moment, whether great or small. Then let's "rejoice and be glad" in today!"

Philippians 4: 4: "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."



Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; and snow, and vapours;... Ps 148:7,8

# Blessing Bits

## BB Power of Prayer

After two hip replacements, I was ready to go to Las Vegas to attend the ordination of my cousin Giuliano when one night I fell and dislocated my right hip. The doctors put it back in and sent me home. Three days later, it came out again, prompting an additional trip to the emergency room with a 3rd dislocation. Soon after, my son called Brother Bob McDonnell who came and anointed me before they took me to the operating room. I felt such peace that all would be okay. I wore a brace for 6 months and I am now walking with no dislocation or pain. I thank God for the power of prayer and God hearing each and everyone's prayers on my behalf. - *Sister Virginia Suprenant, Bell, CA Branch*

## BB Three Healings

1. My mom and I were in the bathroom at home because I felt so sick. I was shivering a lot, and I was going to throw up.. My mom prayed for me, and I instantly stopped shaking and felt better.
2. One time I was going to Imperial, and I had a really bad migraine. My head felt like my brain was flipping and flopping over and over. The ministers came to my car and asked me if I wanted to be prayed for.

They prayed for me, and I felt really happy because Jesus healed me!

3. It was the night before last night, and I woke my mom up, and I was crying so much, because my stomach hurt so so so bad. She came into my room, and I asked her to pray for me. She prayed for me, and as soon as she finished, I was HEALED! - *Carson Stroyne (8 years old), Monongahela, PA Branch*

## BB Bendito sea Dios

Many years ago, I suddenly became severely ill. I was afraid it may be appendicitis, so my father immediately wanted to take me to the hospital. After carrying me out to the car, since I was unable to move myself, I told my father that I did not want to go to the hospital and that instead I wanted to get anointed. We called a minister and met half way at a gas station. He anointed me and in that very moment all the pain went away. We drove back home, and I was able to walk back into our house feeling 100% better. My mother's response as I walked back in the house was "Bendito sea Dios", which translates to "Praise God!" The Lord is so merciful and truly hears us when we cry out to Him. - *Sister Zarella Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch*

Send us your Blessing Bits [in approximately 150 words] and answer the Question of the Month by contacting us at [gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org](mailto:gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org)




**Question for this month:** Share with us a time when you were on the giving or receiving end of an Act of Kindness and how it affected you.



**Answer from last month:** In under 5 words, tell us what you are praying for in 2020?  
"To be more like Him." -*Sister Marge Crupi, Kinsman, OH Branch.*

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



Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; and snow, and vapours;... Ps 148:7,8