

# The Gospel News

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Happy  
Mother's  
Day!



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## ***Ordinations in Mesa, Arizona***

*By Sister Valerie Dulisse*

February 23, 2025 was a day of great anticipation in the Mesa Branch. Six members were to be ordained into new offices; two deaconesses, two deacons, and two teachers!

Brother Jim Huttenberger from the Irvine, CA Branch opened our meeting with scripture from Matthew 9:37 and 3 Nephi 21:26. He shared that the harvest is plenteous. Our brother's theme was that the Lord is calling laborers; the Church needs workers! There are many in the world struggling and it is up to US to share Jesus with them! In 3 Nephi 21:26 Jesus spoke, "The work of the Father will commence at that day when Zion is upon the earth, and the labor will commence among God's people." For every one of us, God has a work. All of the unseen ways God has preserved your life until this moment, are for a reason. He wants us to labor for Him. Brother Jim exhorted us to be a part of that!

Brother David Picciuto from the San Carlos, AZ mission followed. He stated that, regarding labor for the Lord, we are to be the salt of the earth. In Leviticus 2:13, God commanded Israel to offer salt along with all of their meat offerings. There will be a challenge for all of us, an opportunity to serve the Lord, and grow in the Lord, when we accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We write a chapter in our life every day of what God has done for us. He has proven faithful, and we love and praise Him for that. How many of us prepare for the future? The greatest thing we will ever have in this life is the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Brother David submitted to us that we should take care of it! He shared a testimony with a man recently of God healing our Brother David of polio when he was three years old. The man exclaimed that he had never heard of something like this first-hand, only from second-hand accounts! "The world is waiting to hear our testimonies," Brother David exclaimed.

Brother Pete Giannetti of Mesa, AZ then explained to us regarding the duties of the offices the newly ordained brothers and sisters will occupy in the Church. In Ephesians 4:1, Apostle Paul beseeches us to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. Brother Pete addressed the six candidates and told them they are a result of the prayers of the ministry to God, to send workers in this branch. He encouraged them to walk worthy of the vocation they are being called to on this day; to walk with lowliness and meekness and longsuffering, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit of God in the bond of peace.

**(Continued on page 4)**

The Lord has never  
promised to deliver us  
immediately  
from every trial...

...but He has promised  
to bring us

**THROUGH  
THROUGH**



**Isaiah 43:2**

through the \_\_\_\_\_ and  
the \_\_\_\_\_.

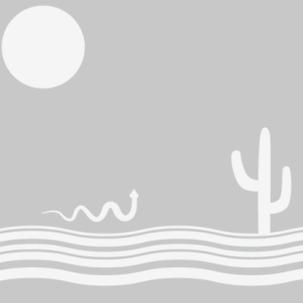
**Psalms 66:6**

through the  
\_\_\_\_\_.



**Psalms 106:9**

through the  
\_\_\_\_\_.



**Isaiah 48:21**

through the  
\_\_\_\_\_.

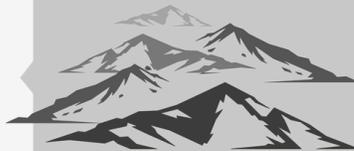


**Job 29:3**

through the  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**Deuteronomy 2:7**

through the  
\_\_\_\_\_.



**Psalms 23:4**

through the  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.



# BFTP Blast From The Past

## The Spanish Mission

With the baptism of Juan Gonzales 65 years ago this May 8, 1960, the desire for missionary work in the Puerto Rican community of South Lorain, Ohio would spur the Lorain Branch priesthood into fasting and prayer. But the work would not take root in the community of about 5,000 Hispanics until a dream led Brother Joseph Calabrese to a grocery and meat market on Pearl Avenue in 1968. Hoping to rent the building for church services. Brother Joe discovered upon his arrival that it was only for sale. He also found that the market had living quarters, and he, along with his wife, Sister Vickie, decided to purchase the property in which they and their children could both live and hold services. Known as the South Lorain Spanish Mission, it would flourish until it was later incorporated into the Lorain Branch in the late 1970s.

Brother Joe and Sister Vickie Calabrese ►





## 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.



## "Seeing What Is Essential" By Brother Doug Obradovich

***"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." (John 1:51)***

In the children's book, *The Little Prince*, the fox says to the little prince, "And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."

We naturally rely upon our eyesight, but so often it lets us down. Spectacular moments lie just beyond our line of vision, as visual reliance can prove untrustworthy. One such instance can be found in 2 Kings 6. The king of Syria plotted to destroy the people of God, so Elisha warned Israel in advance and averted danger. The persistent king finally had the Syrians surround the city where Israel was camped, readying for battle the following morning. Awakening to the encompassing army, Elisha's assistant reported it to him, but Elisha was unmoved and simply stated, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." The assistant

saw no evidence that there were "more than they," as he only saw the Syrian soldiers. But what is essential is invisible to the eye, and Elisha prayed, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see." God heard Elisha's appeal and instantly the assistant saw and exclaimed, "Behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about!"

Our eyes are limited, and the spectacular can hide just beyond these restrictions. When Israel's eyes were opened and they raised their sights just above their impending peril, they were able to clearly focus on God's protecting angels. Like Israel, our problems, situations, and/or disappointments can overwhelmingly surround us and unless we pray, then raise our eyes just above our problems, we'll miss what is most essential. So, raise your eyes, open your hearts, and claim the spectacular workings of God in your life. When you do, what is most essential will be yours.

You'll no longer only see who is sharply dressed, owns a beautiful home, or drives a nice car. Instead you'll see in

one another what is most essential, as the beauty of life lies just above the façade of what surrounds us. You'll have to look higher, through the eyes of God ("...it's only with the heart that one can see rightly").

Seeing rightly involves viewing what is spectacular, which originates within the heart of God. He scatters His beauty throughout, hiding it in plain sight. This, His fingerprint, can be seen in a sunrise, found in the conversation with your elderly neighbor, or in the healing that must be requested. But too often we miss these moments, because we're rushing too quickly to pause and take them in.

God is ready to protect and bless you in your battles. To take advantage of this, you'll have to raise your eyes. Do you desire to see what is most essential? Jesus promised the most spectacular, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." But they can't be viewed with natural eyes—these are things only seen with the heart.

**(Ordinations in Mesa, Arizona - continued from cover)**

He told them they have to die to self, then their tree will be full of the fruits of the love of God, ready for the saints at all times. He asked all six, "Will you be a part of helping to perfect the saints?" He spoke of Ephesians 4:15, and shared that all of them are being called to speak the truth in love; if you do this, the saints will accept it. Zion is built one soul at a time! May we have a vision that The Church of Jesus Christ is building the Kingdom of God, which will have all nations flowing into it!

Sister Zarella Scolaro and Sister Jerrica Huttenberger were ordained into the office of deaconess. Sister Zarella's feet were washed by her mother, Sister Rosita Mosqueda. Sister Jerrica's feet were washed by her mother, Sister Lori Picciuto. Brother Josaiah Marquez and Brother Dan Wiktorowicz were ordained into the office of deacon. Brother Josaiah's feet were washed by Brother Steven Dulisse. Brother Dan's feet were washed by Brother Edward Greenland. Brother Ryan Huttenberger and Brother Jared Scolaro were ordained into the office of teacher. Brother Ryan's feet were washed by his brother-in-law, Brother Michael Watson. Brother Jared's feet were washed by his brother, Brother Jonathan Scolaro. Each of them was individually anointed and set apart into their offices with the prayers of the ministry: Brother Ryan by Brother Jim Huttenberger, Brother Jared by Brother Tim Scolaro, Brother Josaiah by Brother Brian Martorana, Brother

Dan by Brother Paul Liberto, Sister Jerrica by Brother David Picciuto, and Sister Zarella by Brother Jonathan Scolaro. Our newly ordained brothers and sisters then shared their testimonies, giving all honor and glory to God!

An experience was shared of the word of the Lord, "I have ordained these by My hand, each and every one of them. Behold, won't you come and be a laborer for me today, for the harvest is great!" Thus saith the Lord.

We enjoyed a time of fellowship and a potluck dinner after the service, visiting with members who had come from all over the Pacific and Southwest regions to the Mesa branch to witness the ordinations.

Later a young sister, Alana Paster shared that during our ordinations that took place on this day, when Brother Josaiah Marqez had testified, "God is with us today," she saw at that moment, the lower half of a man in a long robe standing at the front with our newly ordained members. Another Sister, Linda Scolaro testified that she saw a personage standing next to Sister Alana as she related her vision. This was a confirmation of the vision Sister Alana had.

May God bless us all as we endeavor to serve Him in a greater way in our lives!



THE CHURCH OF  
**Jesus<sup>®</sup>  
Christ**



*From left to right: Brother Dan Wiktorowicz, Brother Josaiah Marquez, Brother Ryan Huttenberger, Sister Jerrica Huttenberger, Sister Zarella Scolaro, and Brother Jared Scolaro*

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## The Changing Faith & Doctrine

By Evangelist Mark Kovacic

Since our Faith and Doctrine is based on the Holy Scriptures and they never change, how could the Faith and Doctrine change? Before we look at some examples, let's take a look at the history of the text.

In 1897 Apostle Wiliam Cadman, Sr. wrote the Faith and Doctrine, and it was approved by the General Church Priesthood to be published in pamphlet format. A few years later, Brother Cadman was authorized to prepare and print a pamphlet, setting forth our faith relative to the doctrine of Polygamy and loose divorce laws. Five thousand copies were published, and it was printed under the title "*Faith and Doctrines of the Church Series No. 2.*"

The next edition of the Faith and Doctrine came in 1948. Here we find the first changes, but it's better to compare the 1897 edition to our current edition (using the *Dissertation of the Faith and Doctrine* by Apostle V. James Lovalvo, published in 1985). I will use the terms "1897" for the first Faith and Doctrine and "1985" for the last one.

Now on to the big changes. As a disclaimer, when I say "new" I do not mean the concepts are new, but simply published in a different format or layout. Starting with Article 19 (1985), which incorporated nearly all of the four parts that included most of Articles 21, 22, and 23. This revised article included our belief that God will employ this Church for the purpose of retrieving Israel and that the Native Americans (First People) are of the House of Israel.

A new Article 22 is our statement to the world that the Book of Mormon is a record from God. A new Article 23 proclaims our belief in the Peaceful Reign (not found in the 1897 Edition). Article 24 was added and it solidifies our belief in the second coming of Christ.

Also added was a PENN Article 25 regarding continuous divine revelations, which is so critical to our communications with God and Jesus Christ.

Now I want to add, these changes are minor compared to other organizations and at most they clarify what has been a long-standing belief of our Church from the days of William Bickerton to today. What is far more important, is that our Faith and Doctrines have withstood the changing times and an onslaught of wickedness. (See *Songs of Zion* #38, "The Ending of the Sorrow.")

As Jesus said, not one jot or one tittle shall be lost. We thank those who have gone on before us, maintaining the purity of the Restored Gospel for our generation and generations to come.

## ***I Shouldn't Have Been Surprised*** *By Sister Sydney Lovalvo*

**T**his time of year can be stressful for young people. As students, you could be preparing for finals in college and feeling immense pressure. In middle and high school, Spring Break has ended and there are still a few months left in the school year. Even if you are not in school, sometimes the transition from Winter to Spring can bring new experiences in your personal or professional lives that require discipline and focus and cause anxiety. This month, I felt inspired to share a personal testimony about a time when the Lord surprised me, as a form of encouragement. I must confess that I shouldn't have been surprised, because He listens and knows our hearts always, but I still feel blessed for the experience where He provided me comfort and support when I needed it most.

I was in my second semester of nursing school, and in the middle of the hardest class I would take throughout the whole program. The professors openly told us that it was the hardest class, and that it was the semester where the greatest number of students would fail out of the program. We usually had exams every two weeks, and they were probably the most difficult exams I've ever taken in my life. It seemed like every week students would drop the class, and the class averages on the exams were always either just at passing or below. To say the least, I was feeling the pressure. I was studying constantly, but I still wasn't performing the way I'd like. It was a very intense period of my life.

As midterms approached, I was struggling. I did everything I could to prepare the best I could, but I experienced a level of anxiety that I had never felt before. This exam was consuming me, and it was all I could think about. I was constantly asking the Lord for peace and strength to get me through this rough period. I knew that He would help me, but for some reason, I didn't feel like He was going to do something "big." I went about my days thankful for His love, guidance, and direction, but I was simply going through the motions, wishing for this midterm to be over.

As I was preparing the weekend before the exam to be given the following Monday, I went to Church that Sunday and explained to some brothers and sisters how stressed I was and how I felt that this was a "make it or break it" situation. They offered so much love, kindness, and prayers that I walked away feeling lighter and a little more hopeful about the situation. I had also confided my concerns to my family, and between my natural and spiritual families, I felt a blanket of support and prayers around me, easing some of my worries.

The morning of the exam I woke up feeling uneasy and anxious, just wishing the day were over. It was an early morning, leaving my apartment before daylight so I could study once I got to school. As I was driving, my phone started to ring, and it was my grandfather calling me. My first instinct was that something was wrong, because he usually wouldn't wake up that early. When I answered the phone, he was so calm and loving, explaining how he wanted to pray with me that morning before my exam. I can't even remember what was said in the prayer, but I remember tears in my eyes, a literal weight coming off my shoulders, and peace filling my heart.

Once the prayer ended, I was at school ready to walk in. I thanked my grandpa and was about to walk in when I looked at my phone and saw two texts from sisters and dear friends at my branch saying they were also praying for me that morning. My heart swelled knowing that there were prayers being offered on my behalf, and I truly felt peace.

The exam was hard, but I conquered it and felt okay. As I was driving home after the long day, I reflected on the events that took place that morning. I was genuinely surprised that my grandpa had called and prayed with me, and that I received texts from loved ones that they were praying as well. But my big question was, why was I surprised? The Lord loves me, wants the best for me, and wants to provide me with my needs. He knew I needed comfort that morning and gave it to me through three people who I love and who love me. In that moment I felt immense gratitude, and knew I would never forget that day because I knew to never be surprised by God. I passed the exam, but walked away with so much more after this experience. I didn't directly ask God for my morning events, because I didn't know I needed them until they happened, but God did.

I write this testimony to encourage anyone reading: God truly knows your heart and your needs, even if you didn't ask for them specifically or even know what you need. This was a great reminder for me because I felt seen by God and knew that He knew my heart completely.

I hope this can be a testimony of encouragement, that even if you don't ask Him directly for something or know what you need, He will provide for you. I feel blessed that the Lord reminded me and provided me with peace, and I know that He can and will do the same for you.

## Unforgettable Memories of the California Area Ladies' Uplift Circle

by Sister Orletta Liberto

When I was thirteen years old, my family moved into a new home. I was happy with the move because I had my own bedroom, and my next-door neighbor, JoAnn Smith, became my best friend. The Smith family was so much fun to be around, and they introduced me to The Church of Jesus Christ. The year was 1954 in San Diego, California. The Smith home was a central gathering place for the Saints to meet, play games, sing, eat, and have joyful times together. It was there I experienced the sweet "joy of the saints" and met JoAnn's cousin, Paul. I had thought having my own room was special, but it was the love of the saints that was the greatest gift I have ever received. Paul and I were married in 1961, and have been baptized for over fifty-five years. I am so thankful that God directed my family to exactly where I needed to be!

One of my unforgettable memories over the years is about how I became a member of the Ladies' Uplift Circle. Sister Sarah Watson of the San Fernando Valley (now Simi Valley) Branch had a desire to have all the California circles be united to provide stronger support for the missionary efforts in Tijuana, Mexico being conducted by Brother Eddie and Sister Evelyn Purdue. Sister Sarah invited the California circles, and those branches who did not have an organized circle, to meet in the San Fernando Valley in the fall of 1969. I remember riding to the Valley with the Purdues in their van

along with Sisters Norma Kennedy, Mary Saczko, Violet Thomas, and Lena Liberto. I was just recently baptized in July 1969 but had not yet become a member of the Ladies' Circle. After expressing a desire to be a member and to have the opportunity to vote on the issues which would be discussed, the sisters administered the Circle pledge to me on the way to the meeting.

The conversation on the ride to the meeting relative to forming an area circle was not positive, with questions about the need for an area circle and other considerations. However, at the meeting, Sister Evelyn was the keynote speaker, and a powerful spirit was experienced. When the day was over, all the sisters were in agreement to unite together as an area circle. It was noted that Sister Mable Bickerton, president of the General Ladies' Uplift Circle, would be invited to come to California to organize the California (now the Pacific Area) Ladies' Uplift Circle.

Sister Sarah Watson served as president for several years, and later, I was privileged to also serve as president. It has been a blessing to be a part of the Circle for over fifty-five years. May God continue to bless all the sisters as they do their best to support the missionary efforts of The Church of Jesus Christ.

## Happy Mother's Day!

In reviewing past issues of the May Gospel News, I was touched by so many beautiful expression of love and support for the women in the Church. The following are some new testimonies and some excerpts from articles and testimonies from years gone by.

### Best advice my mom ever gave - 2025

"As we were growing up our mother encouraged us to pray. Especially to pray for the Church and also to give either to the Church or others in need." -Brother George Kovacic, Middle Tennessee Mission

"My mother would always say, 'There are two sides to every story.' She had an even, calm temperament which I attribute to having the peace of God and carrying the joy of the saints within her." -Brother Anthony Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch

"Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings! Job, house, car... go to Him with all your life choices!" -Sister Erin Palposi, Irvine, CA Branch

"Never forget the promise you gave to God at the waters edge when you were baptized." -Brother Michael McGuire, Cape Coral, FL Mission

"To always show kindness to everyone and to open your house up to the brothers and sisters when they are visiting." -Sister Kim Morle, Atlanta, GA Mission

(Continued on page 8)

### **Share blessings about being a mother - May 2014**

"I am so blessed to be a mother. The day my son was born, a brother pointed to my newborn baby and spoke in the Gift of Tongues and the Word of the Lord said, "My gift to you, thus saith the Lord." God has now given us two gifts in our two sons, and I pray as a mother, I can raise them with the love and knowledge of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is my gift back to my Lord for all He has blessed me with!"

-Sister Mandy Griffith, Forest Hills, FL Branch

"I desired to have children for many years after we were married. Many prayers were offered that God would fulfill our desire, and He answered in His time and in His way. There was a dream related to me that I would receive children through a fire. Little did we know what it meant. After some time had passed we received two children, a boy and a girl, who were available for our adoption. Their mother had died in a fire! Our children are grown now, but God gave them a home and a family when they needed one, and they filled a giant void in my heart. I am so thankful and blessed to be their Mom." -Sister Wilma King, Vanderbilt, PA Branch

"The joys of motherhood in the world today are usually measured by 'Pinterest perfect' homes and lives. But I am thankful that the true joys of motherhood are in fact witnessing God's purest gifts: life and love... We are entrusted with the heritage of the Lord. Psalm 127:3 says: 'Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.'" -Sister Rachel Cotellesse, Lakeside, AZ Branch

"God has granted me two beautiful daughters in a very unique way—through adoption. He has shown me that they are in His perfect plan to be part of our family. I am truly grateful for having the opportunity to be their mother and first and foremost to teach them to become godly women."

-Sister Linda Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch

It is a special blessing to be a mom for my son, Jonas. We adopted him when he was 6 months old. I prayed to the Lord to help me become a mother and he gave me the wonderful gift of a son. I tell Jonas that the Lord picked him to be our son because 'He wanted you to know the Lord.'" -Sister Denise Bodo, Detroit, MI Branch 2

### **Share a comment about a sister you admire - May 2016**

"I admire my mom, Sister Renée Scolaro. She studies the scriptures more than anyone I know and is always making changes in her life to be more like Christ in how she shows love to others." -Brother Jared Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch.

"I saw, personally, Sister Rose Milantoni's love for the Lord – standing by her husband as he worked tirelessly from Muncey to San Carlos, as a GMBA officer, and later in the inner city of Detroit. She was his strength in many ways – always supportive behind the scenes. She was everyone's mother to the young people of her daughter's generation – which would include me – always opening her life and home to their needs." -Brother Kerry Carlini, Detroit, MI Branch #2.

"Sister Jean Zaranko from Detroit Branch #2 has been a tower of positive strength to me. She has never ever wavered in her faith and dedication to God and her church and family. She is my aunt and a mother to me in the Gospel!" -Sister Diane Surdock, San Diego, CA Branch.

"I have such a love and respect for so many 'salt of the earth' women who have set such wonderful examples of God's deep and abiding love: my own mother, two grandmothers, and three sisters; Sister Martha Gehly (my second mom); Sisters Ethel Cadman, Elsie Gehly, Eleanor Sproul, and Martha Kelly (extended family); Sister Sylvia Curry (Mesa); and my sweet sisters here in Erie; Sisters Elaine Peterson, Dolly Kovacic, and Peach Robertson. I am so grateful to God for these and many others." -Sister Ruth Gehly, Erie, PA Branch.

"I would like to recognize my grandma, Sister Betty Azzinaro. She is an amazing, strong, loving, independent, and a very faithful woman. She is 94 years young! This May, she will celebrate 75 years in our Church. She is a deaconess and she cleans our Church to this day, every week!" -Sister Jennifer Robertson, Simi Valley, CA Branch.

"I would have to say the woman I have admired most for her spiritual strength is my mother, Sister Patricia Christman. She has shown great strength throughout her life through many adversities, and has been a faithful missionary for most of her life." -Sister Melissa Bicelis, Herndon, VA Branch.

### **Share something special about your mom- May 2013**

"As a child, I especially loved to sit between my Mom and my Grandma, Sister Carolyn Light and Sister Lena Martorana, during church so I could listen to them sing harmony together. They inspired my love of music, missionary work, and family traditions, and taught me how to pray and rely on God in all things. They are the wind beneath my wings." -Sister Erin Light, Irvine, California Branch

"My mother, Sister Cathy Gentile was a pioneer in holding a General Church office, that of Print House Manager in the 70's. Growing up I watched her spend endless hours poring over literature, the Gospel News and handling legal aspects of copyrighting and communication, all while running a business and a busy household. She taught me the meaning of hard work, dedication, and true service." - Sister Carolynn O'Connor Detroit Branch #2.

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"As a little girl, I would sit near my mom as she took sacrament. I could feel how special that moment was to her and I am thankful that my children are next to me when I take sacrament. Through it all, God has blessed us." -Sister Janice Frammolino, Detroit, Michigan Branch #1

"I'm convinced I am a writer because of my mom. From a young age I'd remember seeing her write dozens of letters and cards to family, friends and brothers and sisters of the Church. She's instilled in me the importance of remembering the little things and I'm so thankful for that." -Sister Natalie Pezzenti, Cincinnati-Morrow, Ohio Mission

"My mother, Sister Janet DiFalco, always told me that although she didn't have money to give me she could share with me the keys to living, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which was worth more than gold." -Sister Denise DiFalco Dickson, Detroit, Michigan Branch #1

"My mother, Collen Daveila, has always done everything she could to make sure my sister and I were raised right. She is a very strong woman, always telling us what we NEEDED to hear and not always what we WANTED to hear. Love you Mom." -Joseph Pittius, Hopelawn/Metuchen, New Jersey Branch

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### **Topic Series on Women - Women in Scripture by Sister Christine Martorana - March 2016 (partial)**

When I read about the ways that Christ interacted with women, I often ask myself, "what can I learn from Christ's relationships with women? What qualities does Christ favor in women and how can I cultivate these qualities in my own life? I'd like to share with you three of the qualities that have emerged for me in my own readings of Christ's interactions with women.

First, scripture suggests that Christ favors focused women. This quality is clearly identifiable in Christ's interaction with Mary in John 12. In this chapter Mary boldly anoints Jesus' feet with costly oil and wipes His feet with the hair of her head. Christ's disciples do not look favorably upon this act. In fact, when they see what she is doing, they criticize her for what they interpret to be a brash and thoughtless action. However, Jesus' response is quite different from that of His disciples. Instead of chastising Mary, He defends her, telling His disciples, "Let her alone." The Mary presented in this story is focused.

Second, scripture suggests that Christ favors courageous women. Luke 8 offers one example of Christ rewarding this quality in women. In this chapter, Jesus is walking through a dense multitude. One woman in this crowd has been sick for twelve years. She has spent all of her money on doctors who, despite their best efforts, have been unable to offer her much help. However, this woman refuses to resign herself to a life of illness. Instead, she pushes her way through the mass of people, desperate to get close to Jesus. Mustering all of her strength

and courage, she reaches out her hand—and does so at exactly the right time. For just as Jesus passes by, her fingers graze His clothing. At that exact moment, two incredible things happened. First "her issue of blood stanchd." Second, Christ stops walking. He has compassion for her, rewarding her courageousness with both a physical healing and the gift of peace.

Third, scripture suggests that Christ favors persistent women. This quality is made explicit in Mark 7. In this chapter, a Greek woman is pleading with Jesus to "cast forth the devil our of her daughter." At first Jesus refuses the woman's request, telling her that there are other more important tasks to which He must first attend. However, the woman is persistent, and she again petitions the Lord for a healing. This time, her persistence moves Jesus, and He grants the woman's request.

As I read about Christ's interactions, I am struck by the examples they offer us as we interact with Christ. They show us that Christ favors women who are focused, able to block out discouraging, distracting voices and keep their attention set on Christ. They show us that Christ favors courageous women, women who move beyond feelings of distress and uncertainty in their efforts to get closer to their Lord. They show us that Christ favors women who are persistent, women who approach Jesus with intent, respect, and humility.

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### **Mother's Day 2021 (partial)**

As we look to the history of the Church, women played an equal role in the growth and development of the Church 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 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 to reservations or in missionary fields. These women in our

history were responsible for convincing many souls to give their life to Christ.

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 any way that you do. Without you, the message of love that Jesus clearly prioritized over 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! - Sister Carolynn O'Connor



Dear Friends,

Does God hear our cries? Yes! Does God speak to our elders? Yes! Does God see us when we are in trouble? Yes!

You may ask me how I know these answers. I know them because of all the times our wonderful God has done this for me and people I love. Many years ago when I had a young daughter, I went for a regular doctor's appointment checkup. To my terror, He found something that looked wrong on the x-rays. I was so scared. He wanted me back the next week to stick a deep needle in the growth he saw to see how dangerous it was.

I immediately went to Church and asked our elders to anoint me with oil and pray that God would HEAL me. But I still had to go back for the painful needle biopsy. That weekend my daughter was away and I was praying and praying, kneeling by my couch alone, I begged God. I felt so afraid, I told him, "God, You know, I do not have a husband. I am alone. If I have this horrible disease, How will I raise a child alone? I will go out of my mind. I cannot do this!" I cried out and prayed and prayed. I actually laid on the floor begging God for help.

The phone then rang. I blew my nose and answered it. To my surprise, I heard the voice of an elder far, far away from my state. It was Brother Rick Elzby, who I used to travel with to do missionary work on the Muncey Reservation in Canada. He said, "Hello Sister Jan. How are you?" Shocked, I replied politely, "Oh, I am fine Brother Rick."

He quietly answered me, "Really? Then why has God told me to call you right now?"

Brother Rick raises bees for honey and has big farm fields with the right plants for them. He continued "I was almost done on my tractor when the Lord told me "Go call Sister Jan Steinrock!" (My old name.) He answered the Lord, "Yes. I will. As soon as I finish this last row that needs plowing." The Lord's voice spoke loudly, "Call her now!" And so, our brother drove his tractor right up to the house, climbed down and came to call me.

On his way, the Lord told him to "Give Sister Jan these two Bible verses. This first verse is in Isaiah 41:10. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee (you). Be not dismayed; for I am thy God. Yea, I will help thee; Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

I was not to be afraid. Our wonderful God heard my cries. He would be with me. I was not to be so upset. He would give me strength and hold me up! The second verse God told Brother Rick to

tell me was 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

I realized that God knew I had said I'd go out of my mind if I was alone fighting this disease. But no, God's Spirit was of power, love, and a sound mind! How did He know my deepest fear of not being able to cope? God knows everything!

The next week I went back for the painful test and brought my daughter and Sister Cathy Gentile with me. He could not find the growth! The x-ray doctor showed me that day's empty x-ray, then pointed to the earlier x-ray showing the growth. Then he showed me an old x-ray of three years earlier where the growth was beginning to form. I was weak with joy! I ran out to the waiting room so my daughter and Sister Cathy could also see the miracle!

Go thank God and tell others of His goodness and love and care!

With Love,  
Your friend and Sister in Christ,

*Sister Jan*

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## What is your favorite Song of Zion?

"Set Her Free." -Sister Leah Calabro, Metuchen, NJ Branch,  
Brother Ed Nestor, Imperial, PA Branch

"Sing Glory." -Brother Michael McGuire, Cape Coral, FL  
Mission, Sister Wilma Mellor, Vanderbilt, PA Branch

"He's Taken My Blindness." -Brother Steve Kerby, Irvine, CA  
Branch

"If You Would Labor in Zion." -Brother Anthony Scolaro, Mesa,  
AZ Branch

"Don't Let Anybody Take Your Crown." -Sister Katrina Harris,  
Quincy, FL Branch

"Second to God." -Sister Rebecca Wilcoxson, Erie, PA Branch

"The Homecoming Song." -Brother Giovanni Lind, Lake  
Worth, FL Branch

"Take Some Time to Pray." -Sister Joann Cotellesse, Pinetop,  
AZ Branch

"Won't It Be Something to See Israel Smile." -Sister Heather  
Escobar, Forest Hills, FL Branch

"There's Not Anything that Jesus Cannot Do." -Brother Jeff  
Buffington, Jr., Imperial, PA Branch, Sister Patti Saliga,  
Windsor, Ontario Branch

"Is It Nothing to You?" -Sister Lorraine Ratliff, Coastal Carolina  
Mission

"He's My Rock." -Brother Michael Zaino, Edison, NJ Branch

"Following God." -Brother Andrew Tenorio, Edison, NJ Branch

"All of them!" -Sister Kenah Lobzun, Atlanta, GA Mission

"The Storehouse of the Lord." -Sister Lydia Zaino, Edison, NJ  
Branch

"Sing Hallelujah." -Sister Anita Znoy, Creekside, MI Branch

"These the Latter Days." -Brother Jim Calabro, Hopelawn, NJ  
Branch

"God Made My Mountain Strong." -Sister Sherry Curtin,  
Hopelawn, NJ Branch

"To Keep the Gospel Pure." -Brother George Kovacic, Middle  
Tennessee Mission

"No me dejes ahora Señor / Don't Leave Me Now, Lord." -  
Brother Carlos Rodriguez, Jr., Tijuana, Mexico Branch

"He Will Hide Me in His Pavilion." -Sister Sharon Sloan, Forest  
Hills, FL Branch, Sister Kathy Natoli, Detroit, MI Branch #1  
Sister Jacqui King, Imperial, PA Branch, Sister Diane Nestor,  
Imperial, PA Branch

"Can These Bones Live?" -Brother Jeff Buffington, Sr., Imperial,  
PA Branch

"The Latter Day Theme." -Sister Kim Buffington, Imperial, PA  
Branch, Sister Margaret Roscart, Imperial, PA Branch, Brother  
Chuck Roscart, Imperial, PA Branch

"I Am Your Brother." -Sister Cheryl Roscart, Imperial, PA Branch

"My Country Calls." -Brother Trevor King, Imperial, PA Branch



# REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

## GMBA CAMPOUT 2025 | JUNE 28TH-JULY 4TH

@ SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY CENTER, MICHIGAN

**ALMA 5:33** - BEHOLD, HE SENDETH  
AN INVITATION UNTO ALL MEN, FOR  
THE ARMS OF MERCY ARE EXTENDED  
TOWARDS THEM, AND HE SAITH:  
REPENT AND I WILL RECIEVE YOU.

**REGISTER  
HERE!** →



# Blessing Bits

## **BB** God Stopped Time

On a snowy February morning, our family was making our way across town to an event for our granddaughter. Roads were very bad with accidents everywhere, even with extremely slow speeds. Thank God, we arrived safely. Returning home in the afternoon, road conditions had improved significantly. We were driving in the middle lane of a high traffic expressway at a reasonable speed when suddenly an SUV, traveling much faster, passed us. When it was less than a car's length in front of us, that vehicle veered towards us and turned around, completely perpendicular to ours. This same SUV then slid sideways across all three lanes of highway, crashed into the concrete embankment, and flipped over one and a half times! We didn't even have time to hit the brakes and should certainly have hit the SUV. However, God stopped time for us—we were miraculously not impacted in any way! We immediately called 911 and offered a prayer for all involved, as we were not in a safe situation to stop. God truly intervened and saved our lives. We praise Him for His love and mercy.- Brother Tom and Sister Cindy Everett, Detroit #1, MI Branch

## **BB** His Peace Abides with Me

After many years cancer free I developed another area in my mouth that was cause for concern. Within two months it was determined that I would need to have a biopsy done. The procedure was the worst I'd endured and came with complications. On the way to the recovery room, I knew the cancer was back. I told the Lord that I knew it was back and I was ok with that. No matter what would happen I trusted Him and knew His will would be done. "Just give me peace, Lord." At that moment I had a great peace come over me. There's no fear of treatment or outcome. He has been completely with me. Since then I've only had a few short-lived side effects and some fatigue, but that peace still abides with me. What a Loving God we serve!- Sister Terri Nath, Monongahela, PA Branch

## **BB** Sing Me the Songs of Zion!

On Wednesday evening, March 19th, I was privileged to be on the Imperial Branch Zoom call. Brother Andrew and Sister Rachel were singing the new *Songs of Zion*. It was truly a blessed evening! While one of the songs, #244, "A Home in the Clouds" was being

sung, three people in three different states across America heard a flute playing. I was blessed to be one of the three. I am so thankful for *The Songs of Zion* and for God's blessings to His Church!- Sister Sharon Church, Simi Valley, CA Mission

Send us your Blessing Bits by contacting Sister Elizabeth McDonnell at [eksanchor@gmail.com](mailto:eksanchor@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 thing about your relationship with your dad, or, for the fathers, what is your favorite thing about your relationship with your children?



### Answer from last month:

What is your favorite Song of Zion?  
*Turn to page 11 for more answers.*



"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath afore prepared that we should walk in them." – Eph 2:10