

MY LIFE
WITH CHRIST

by Rocco V. Biscotti

PREFACE

My Life with Christ before and after I obeyed the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I hope all who read this story of my life will be blessed, as I have, in the service of God.

My life has been full and rewarding; I am thankful and grateful. I've done my best, and have given my best, in the service of God.

Rocco V. Biscotti

Several have asked me to write a little of my life. I was born in Peschici, Province of Foggia, Italy, on February 11th, 1903. My father's name was Matteo, and my mother's name was Caterina.

The village of Peschici is located on the spur above the heel of the Italian boot on the Adriatic ocean. It is a very beautiful spot, there is a lot of fishing, hence the name (Peschici).

It has now become a very beautiful resort area and during the summer it is very busy. When I visited there in 1971, I could hardly believe what I saw and it is hard, during the peak summer season, to find a place to stay unless reservations are made in advance. - I have relatives there so I had no problem.

My father was a fisherman and my mother, a Godly person, had eleven children, eight of the eleven survived. Unfortunately, my father died as a result of an accident. He was 48 years old. I was 4 years old and my youngest brother was 2 years old. So the youngest of us never knew the love of a father. At this time, my oldest brother Nicola, was in the United States. Mother kept the family together and never remarried.

Our living came from fishing, farming and mother did much gleaning, as we read in the book of Ruth. I remember that we, the younger ones, would help mother gleaning. At evening, we would beat out what we had gathered. In the late fall, we would glean for olives so that we would have oil. So we got along fairly well.

We boys also would go into the woods and gather wood which we put in bundles and sold in the village. The following incident is one which I'll always remember. One time, as we gathered the wood and made it into a bundle and before we left for the village, we rested for a while. As we rested, a poisonous snake crawled into our bundle. We loaded the bundle on our shoulders and carried the wood to the village not knowing of the intruder in our bundle. As we unloaded our bundle in the village square, the snake crawled out, a frightening experience. Some of the older people came to help us kill the snake. I must say thank God for He was watching over us.

My oldest brother, Nicola, sent our mother some money and she bought a small piece of land near the ocean, in which we grew our vegetables. We had figs, prickly pears, and pomegranates, also grapes. This kept us boys busy in our own place. I well remember that we would arise early in the morning and pick the fruit in season and walk to the village to sell them so we could buy other things we needed.

My mother often told me how, at the age of eight, while I was trying to reach a merchant ship via a rope from the shore to ship, I lost my grip and fell in the water and was rescued by the Coast Guard unconscious, but they revived me. As my mother always said, I was spared by the hand of God.

In my young life, I did much fishing. I remember one day, caught a young octopus and I was so proud of myself. As I was returning to the village, a man offered me five liras for it, and I sold it, and brought the money to my mother. That amount would buy enough flour to make bread for one month.

We rarely saw meat and we relied mostly on fishing. Meats were mostly lamb and kid of the goats and a little pork in the winter time. But only the rich could afford it - - not the poor.

As a young lad, I worked at anything I could to help my mother. One time two boyfriends and I went out in a row boat fishing and while we were quite far out a storm arose. We had a hard time getting back to shore. I feel we were spared by the Lord. At the age of fifteen, I took on loading a ship with logs. The logs weighed about one hundred and fifty pounds each and we had to wade through the water to the ship. The man in charge had warned us that whoever started and did not finish the day would not be paid. I, knowing my mother's need, remained at work while some of my friends left. That day I earned nineteen liras. I was tired but happy, as I gave my mother the money and asked her for only one lira, which she gave me. (One lira was twenty cents.)

My brother came home from the Army - (World War I) and brought me my first pair of shoes. I was so happy to have new shoes. At the age of 15, I was working in a large farm owned by a wealthy man with other young people, about 50 boys and girls in all. We had separate dormitories. Since there was not electricity, we had large oil lamps. One evening, my sister told me they (the girls) had no oil in their lamp. I told her "I'll give you the oil" and I took the empty lamp and filled it with water and told my sister to light it. To my surprise, it did light and burned to the very last drop. We were all amazed. I did not realize that God was with me. My mother taught us the reality of God, and faithfully attended Church.

At the age of seventeen, I was very upset over the lack of work in our area. One of my older brothers (Michele) had been in the United States. He knew I would have a better chance in the States, so he advised me to come to the States. I wrote my two brothers who were already here in the States, Nicola and Luigi. I had to act quickly as I was seventeen and at eighteen the Italian government required all 18 year old males to serve in the Army. My brother Nicola was living near Philadelphia, Pa., in the small town of Ambler. As soon as he received my letter, he sent me two hundred dollars for my fare. My brother Luigi lived in Cleveland, Ohio.

I applied for my passport as soon as I received the money and prepared to come to the States. Being a minor, I had to travel with an older person. My sister Loreta was all ready to leave and in order for me to travel with her my papers had to be hurried, which was done, and we were able to leave together.

I will never forget the tears of my mother as I left, but always helped her financially. Naples was my first large city that I saw. The bay of Naples is very beautiful. I had a bad experience in Naples, noted for con-men, but God surely did protect me.

One of the requirements to enter the States was to be able to read, which I was able to do, but being very shy coming from a small village, I was afraid to read and write before the large group. The first day my sister Loreta was called I, knowing I would be called next, was in tears. A kind woman asked me why the tears, so I told her of my fear. She told me not to worry, as all would be well. As they resumed calling again, to my surprise, I heard them call Loreta's name again, so I never read before them. As we traveled about halfway between Naples and New York, I was going to the washroom one evening and something stuck on the sole of my shoe. I bent down and found that it was 600 liras and nearby were 200 more liras - the exact amount of my fare. I kept on the lookout for anyone who had lost this money, but with three thousand aboard ship and some quite wealthy, I saw no one complaining. Otherwise, I would have returned the money.

I feel that through all that happened to me in my youth, God was with me, bringing me to this blessed land. Surely there was a purpose in all this.

We left Naples in the evening traveling all night. Our first stop was Palermo, Sicily. I always remembered my mother telling us that our father served as a soldier in Palermo, so I was very interested to see the city. We sailed toward the open sea. Our next stop was at a port in France, and for the first time in my life, I saw bananas. It seemed we would never arrive in New York, but 22 days later we finally did arrive. I was thrilled to see such a large city. Then as there was some illness among the immigrants, we were confined on Ellis Island for two weeks. All the citizens were allowed to disembark. Only the immigrants were confined. We really enjoyed our stay on Ellis Island as we were well and we were taken care of wonderfully.

After the two weeks, our brother Nicola had told us what to do when we would be ready to leave. We took the train to the City of Philadelphia and by train we went to Ambler where my brother lived.

The first thing I did was to send the money I had found to my mother in Italy. My mother could live quite a while with that amount of money. My brother, being a foreman working on the roads for the State of Pennsylvania, got me a job working with him. We worked 9 hours per day at 50¢ per hour. The next thing I had to do at this time was to repay my brother the \$200.00 he had sent me. In a short time I did so.

While we were there, my brother Luigi came and visited us from Cleveland, Ohio. While I liked the area of Ambler, Pa., I did not see any future there for me and I was anxious to come to Cleveland, Ohio. Both my sister and I went to Cleveland and lived with Luigi in the home of an Aunt of ours, a wonderful person. My brother Luigi was working in a factory, National Acme Co. He helped me to get a job there. I worked piece work and made very good money, but the depression of 1921 came along and I was layed off work

for 15 months. I became quite discouraged and began to think of going back to Italy to my mother. Not having anything to do, I wasted my time and money in the Pool Room halls. It was at this time that my brother Luigi got work with Emilio DiGeronimo, who was in business working on water lines, sewers, etc. Since he was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ, he talked to my brother concerning the Church.

So, in the evening my brother would relate to us what this man had told him. As he related different things and experiences, it touched my heart, but I said not a thing to them.

At this point, my brother Luigi was married to a wonderful person, Louisa. My sister Loreta and I lived with them.

One Sunday, this Emilio DiGeronimo came to our home to further explain the Church to us, but I left the house, as he made a peculiar impression on me. I did not come back right away, hoping the man would be gone, but truly I was touched by the spirit of God, which I did not understand. I hungered for the things I had heard. I had never seen a Bible or a Book of Mormon.

As I returned home, this gentleman was still at our home, much to my surprise. But as he was ready to leave, my brother asked me if I would accompany him to the street car line on Euclid Avenue, which I did, and he asked me if I would like to go with him to his home. He said not a thing to me about the Church. He lived in Euclid, Ohio nearby where the little group of nine met in Brother and Sister DiTomaso's home on Miller Avenue.

As I returned to my home, I had time to think because we were living quite far apart. I desired to have a portion of the joy of the saints, and of the same feeling I had while my brother related things, he had heard to us. Truly, God was working in me, but I did not know it yet. I had never prayed in my life. So, the next Sunday, my brother and I attended our first service. They were holding two services on Sunday and we stayed for both. I had a good friend by the name of James Velardi. He was the first person I thought of to tell that I had found the Church of Jesus Christ. The following Sunday, my brother, James Velardi and I attended Church. We arrived a little early. There were some saints visiting from Youngstown and they were having breakfast. As we came in, they were asking God's blessing before eating. As they prayed, some had tears in their eyes, which confused me. I did not know what to think, for as for me, it was hard for me to shed tears. Brother Joseph Corrado was in charge of the group. His office at the time was an Evangelist. On this Sunday they had the ordinance of feet washing, which I had never seen before, so it made me think more. The three of us requested baptism. We attended Wednesday evening service and the Friday evening service, where they studied the Book of Mormon. As Brother Corrado was not there, one of the young sisters was in charge of the class - Sister Angeline DiTomaso.

We went to the Lake Erie to be baptized, and as I was in the bath house, changing my clothes by myself, for the first time in my life I desired to talk to the Lord. Not knowing how to kneel and pray, I stood up and this was my prayer, "Dear Lord Jesus Christ, I do not

know anything about the Church, but if this is the Church of Jesus Christ, give me an evidence, and I will be baptized and will serve you." As I ended this prayer, a fire came over me which enveloped my whole body. The eyes that could not shed tears became like two fountains, the tears came so freely. I then told the good Lord I was satisfied and would serve him. I was then baptized telling no one of my experience. I was sure that my calling was of God and not of man, and that I had felt the presence of God with me. I truly bless God for his mercies on me. At this time, I'd like to interject the words which we read in the book of Enos in the Book of Mormon. The son of Jacob, a brother of Nephi, when he was converted, spoke the words which he had often heard his father speak concerning eternal life and the joy of the Saints, and these words sunk deep into my heart. I did truly know how Enos felt, for I had received a portion of the joy of the Saints, I truly praise God for changing my life. At this time, I was only nineteen years old. Before I spent much of my time in the pool rooms but now, I began to read the Bible and the Book of Mormon and I gave myself to much fasting and prayer. I respected my Elder brothers, the presiding Elder Joseph Corrado and the other two Elders Venanzo DiTomaso and Andrew Nemeth. I had much to learn so I kept close to them.

I was baptized on August 27th, 1922. At the General Conference of April 1923, I was recommended to the Ministerial Board to be ordained an Elder. I was very timid before these wonderful men of God.

I was recommended to the General Priesthood to be ordained an Elder. I was ordained in Euclid, Ohio, at the age of 20 years. I took my office very seriously. I was never too overbearing but very humble and very glad to be of service to the people of God. I received many blessings in the study of the scriptures. My advice to all is to read and search the scriptures. I took to heart the Epistle to Timothy by the Apostle Paul. Timothy, 2nd Chapter, Verse 15, reads:

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the work of truth."

The Sunday after my ordination, I felt a wonderful spirit in preaching. Then for some time I became very reserved and cautious, I would say very little. I wanted to learn from my older brothers of the things that had happened to me in my youth and I now began to count my blessings that I had received from God: My life being spared when I was eight years old; when God changed the water to oil; and when I was spared with my two friends in the row boat on the ocean while the storm arose. Again, when I was so concerned in Naples and my sister was called twice to read and I was not called. As we were traveling toward the United States my finding the sum of two hundred dollars, the total amount of my fare; and many more things that God, as my mother taught me, did for me. I dedicated myself in fasting and prayer that I might be a help to my older brothers in the ministry.

As I was young, I asked Brother Joseph Corrado what can I ask of God since I desired a gift of God. His advice to me was that I ask for the love of God and truly I felt that God did give me a portion of his love, for which I am thankful.

One Sunday, as I was passing the sacrament to our little group, I was given the gift of tongues. I can never forget the feeling I had while administering sacrament with the gift of tongues.

In June of 1925, I was united in marriage to Brother and Sister DiTomaso's oldest daughter, Angeline.

A young man from New Jersey came to our area to visit his sister who was a church member. He attended church; (this was Brother Bill Mazzeo). He was baptized in Cleveland by Brother Andrew Nemeth. Bill was only 16 years old, and confirmed in the Church by myself. After a while, being well informed of the Church, he returned to New Jersey (New Brunswick) where his mother and father lived. He gave them the testimony of the Restored Gospel. They also desired to be baptized and called for us from Cleveland. So, Brothers Joseph Corrado and Eugene Perri of Lorain, Ohio, went to New Jersey. After about a month, I also joined them because the Church there was growing, and many were baptized.

One day while we were in New Brunswick, five of us brothers visited the home of Brother and Sister Valenti. Brother Valenti was working so we visited with his family. Sister Valenti insisted on fixing some lunch for us though she did not have much at home, just some greens and a loaf of bread. We all ate and were satisfied. Surely, God must have multiplied that food.

I remained in New Brunswick for some time, while my wife was back in Cleveland. I will never forget the blessings and power of God that we felt there. Surely the Lord had much to do in that area.

I returned back to Cleveland while the two brothers (Corrado and Perri) remained in New Jersey.

In 1926 our son Matthew was born. The work in New Jersey was progressing immensely so I was asked to go back there. I had a very good job, but I sacrificed my job and took my little family and returned to New Jersey again to help with the work of God there.

I got work while in New Jersey with our Brother Frank Sirangelo. I also worked for Brother Rocco Ensana who was also working with Brother Eugene Perri digging ditches for a pipeline. The wages were very low, but we did manage to live.

The spirit and power of God was made manifest so greatly. I remember one Sunday morning, as I preached, it was very great. At the close of the service a gentleman came to me and wanted to hand me his billfold. I told him we preached the Gospel free. While

we had made the sacrifice of leaving a good job, God blessed us with many converts and blessings, and our upper most thoughts were to preach the Gospel not counting the sacrifice.

We now have a wonderful District in the area (Atlantic Coast District). Though I feel at home everywhere in our Church while visiting, the Atlantic Coast District holds a very special place in my memories.

About 1929 Brother Bill Mazzeo (Gabriel) was ordained an Elder and so they had three ministers in the area and I felt that I should return back to Cleveland with my little family.

I was very active in the ministry. I recall vividly, at one of our General Conferences, Sister Nolphi of Glassport, Pa., brought forth her young son, Alma Nolphi, (now an Elder of the Church). He was not able to walk. Brother W.H. Cadman, our Church President, called on me and some of the other brothers to anoint this child. While I was never forward to take the oil, the brothers wished that I would anoint the child, which I did. I remembered well the scripture we read in the Acts of the Apostles. I truly believed that the God the Apostle Peter called upon was the same God in these days as in the days of the Apostles of old. As we anointed him, I repeated the same words, "Silver and Gold have we none, but such as we have, give we unto thee, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk". I truly believe that we were of one mind as we anointed the child. Sister Nolphi took the child and after the service she came to me and told me the child was walking now. Praise God for the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I visited among the Church very much and God blesses us. We did not have material wealth, but we were rich in the Lord.

Going back a while, I had a very great experience. I was not married and lived with my brother Louis. We would always read the scriptures and pray in the evening. We lived quite a ways from the group in Euclid. As we went to rest one evening, I was wide awake. I felt such a cold feeling starting from my feet. I felt it traveling up my body 'till it reached my bosom. I was taken away in spirit as we read in the scriptures; it is very difficult for me to explain how I felt, but it is a reality to me that this experience will live with me as long as I live. When I started to come to myself, I felt a warmth come starting from my feet until it reached my bosom, and I was myself again.

I will not compare myself with Nephi, the 2nd Book of Nephi, Chapter 4, Verse 25; I do not like to boast, but I am compelled to tell what God has done for us in this last dispensation. God does not change. He blesses the sincere in heart and all those who trust in God in all ages of time. In our day and time, if we serve God, as the saints of old, we shall enjoy the same blessings.

I would like to relate at this time a wonderful experience. A brother of the Church was at the time not doing his duty; the evil spirit made him denounce the light of the Gospel. He thought someone was after him, and he picked up a pan and threw it at the window,

breaking it. He then wanted to go after whoever he thought was after him by going through the window, which was on the third floor. His sister and brother-in-law could hardly hold him. I, living on the second floor, heard the noise of the broken window and rushed up to the third floor to help his sister and her husband. As he heard me come up, he went to the furthest room away from where I had come in the door. I saw him and told him to come by me, and he came quickly. He began to say Hurrah for darkness, down with the light and spoke many more evil words. I was amazed at how he spoke against God, and he seemed possessed with great strength and powerful words. At this point, I asked him if he feared anyone. He replied with a strong voice that he feared God always and that he feared me. As he spoke these words, the power of God fell upon me, and I commanded the evil to depart from this man and to leave him alone. He was freed from that evil which controlled him. This was done in the name of Jesus Christ.

Afterwards, he testified that he saw me as I came in dressed in uniform as a Captain, with a sword at my side. I would say this did represent the sword of the spirit, that we as ministers of The Church of Jesus Christ possess. This happened about 3:00 a.m. We all glorified the Lord for such a manifestation of his Holy Spirit.

In 1930, being that I had come from a mild climate, I decided to move to California with my family. I had hopes to do some work for the Gospel there. It was hard to get a job; I had left a good job in Cleveland. I did at last get a job in a Super Market as a Produce Manager at \$15.00 per week. We also hoped that some of my family would come to California, but no one came and after almost two years, I decided to return to Cleveland. It may have been God's plan to have me come back East.

Jobs were hard to get as then we were in the height of the depression. My wife took a housework job at \$5.00 per week plus room and board and car fare. I took up barbering at \$50.00 for the course of three months. My first shop, a 2-chair shop, I rented for \$30.00 per month, but I only took in \$26.00 so I decided to leave that shop. I began to work at different shops to obtain more perfection in the art. My first job was in a non-union shop where haircuts were 25 cents. I then bought a shop on East 200th Street in Euclid - a 2 chair shop - quite old. I paid \$50.00 for it. My rent was \$2.00 per week. My first week in business I earned \$6.00. I then had my wife leave her work. The second week I made \$8.00 so it seems now that I could take care of my family. I later sold this little shop for the same amount I paid for it and bought a shop on Euclid Avenue, a main street in Cleveland. I paid \$400.00 for this shop. By this time, I had become more experienced in barbering. The shop was in the building of The Austin Co., an Engineering Company. I was treated wonderfully by all there, the business was good, and I had my brother-in-law working with me. My brother-in-law left the barber business, and I had another man with me. I spent the next 35 years barbering in that area, until I retired.

While I was with The Austin Company, we had decided to build a Church building on E. 200th Street in Euclid and the Austin Company donated the building plans (worth \$600.00) to us. When we dedicated the building, Mr. Austin and his wife came and attended the dedication. Soon after, he presented me with a \$500.00 check for the

Church and continued to give more money from time to time. In 1952, when I went to Italy with my wife, he gave me a \$100.00 check for my personal use.

From time to time, I would go to the homes of my sick customers and take care of them at home. And, where the illness was very grave, I would pray for them. I became known as a working minister in the area, as I would close my shop for any occasion such as weddings, funerals, conferences, and I would put up a notice on the door telling of my reason for closing. As at times, I worked alone, as I did for many years; Conference time my shop would be closed for days at a time and sometimes the Conference fell on Easter week.

I was asked to go to the home of a gentleman, rather poor; he was the custodian of the building. I went to take care of him several times, not charging him for my services. I remember the last time I went he was in very poor health, I prayed for him. Ten years after his passing, along with his wife, I received a letter from his lawyer telling me I had been remembered in this gentleman's will. I had forgotten about this gentleman and I did not remember the name. When the estate was settled, the lawyer called me again, so I went to his office to discuss the matter with him. He asked me why was I remembered in this will, when I had no connection with this family. He told me the name and that he had worked in the Austin Building where I worked. I did remember him then, and I told the lawyer about me going to this gentleman's home to take care of his barbering needs and not charging for my services, and the last time I was there how poorly this man was, I prayed for him also. Then the lawyer said to me that God does pay his debts and handed me a check of \$500.00. I then quoted to him the 11th Chapter Ecclesiastes, Verse 1:

"Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days."

In the late 1920's, I desired to visit my mother in Italy, but my mother wrote me back, not to venture to visit Italy at that time as Mussolini was in power, and I would be made to serve 2 years in the Italian Army. He did not exclude American citizens, which I was. I was married and we had our son, so she displayed true Motherly love.

In 1952 I did go to visit Italy and help the Church work there. My wife and I went at our own expense. I was only given \$100.00 by the General Church to pay for the expense of one of the Italian Ministers to travel with. We also had two meetings at my hometown. I also visited my family which I had not seen in 32 years. I had 3 brothers and a sister living there. My oldest brother joined me in Italy, having been baptized in 1950 in California, and he traveled with us wherever we went in Italy. We were in Italy a total of six weeks, but we spent only nine days in my village with my family. We flew by Pan American to Italy. On returning, we made arrangements to come by ship, The Queen Elizabeth. Out of the English Channel we met a gale and for three days I was very bad with sea sickness. The storm was so strong that we docked in New York 10 hours late. I must note that at this time, my mother had passed away. I met during this visit several of my boyhood friends, and it certainly was nice to recall our boyhood days. Our trip at this time cost me about \$2,500.00 but thank God we did quite a bit of good among our people

in Italy. I became very ill while in Calabria as sanitary conditions were very poor. As the village was small, no doctor was available, but God was with me.

Going back to my days as a young Elder, and the many blessings we enjoyed, I well remember that we were called to go anoint a young sister on the west side of Cleveland - the distance of about 15 miles from where we lived. I accompanied Brother Joseph Corrado and before we left, we two went in a room by ourselves to petition God to go before us. With us were Sister Thomas, a deaconess, and this young woman's stepfather, who had come to get us (Joseph Pell). Brother Joseph prayed audibly before we left, as I heard him. As we arrived at the Cleveland Public Square and we had to change street cars, we heard a voice speaking to us as we traveled toward the West side of Cleveland. The voice was still but very penetrating. I was touched by the spirit of the Lord and began shedding tears. The voice was saying "Wait, wait a minute, let me in". As I turned to Brother Corrado and told him what I heard, he told me he also heard the same. As we got off of the streetcar, we asked Brother Pell and Sister Thomas if they had heard the voice, but they had not; we then knew the Lord would be going before us.

As we came to the home, we were met at the door by Sister Rachel Pell, the mother, and she told us that God had been there already. As we went into the room of the sick young woman and anointed her, I put the oil on her head, and I asked Brother Joseph to pray. As the prayer ended, the sick woman spoke to us and told us the prayer offered before we had left. She had heard every word, surely via the royal telephone. We truly rejoiced and praised God for such a great experience. The voice was as we read in the scriptures (1st Kings, Chapter 19, Verse 12).

In later years, many of our people moved to California, including my two brothers, one an Elder of the Church, Louis Biscotti. My oldest brother, Nicola, was not yet a member. My two sisters also did move to California, Loreta a member and Theresa not a member yet. In 1950 I had a very vivid experience. As I was cutting hair in my barber shop, the voice of the spirit was speaking within me telling me "If your Brother Nick were to be baptized, would you go to California?" I, knowing that my brother, while he lived here in Cleveland, had told me that unless Lake Erie turned into wine he would never be baptized in the Church. I would not commit myself, but at the third time, the voice spoke to me, insistently. I was compelled to answer as the spirit of God was on me, and I then did commit myself that if my brother was to be baptized, I would go to California. I began to shed tears of joy at this point, the voice of the spirit left me, and I dismissed this from my mind. That very evening, as I arrived home, my wife handed me a Special Delivery letter from my brother, Nicola. She had read the letter but did not tell me the contents. The first words of the letter were, "Rocco, I am ready to meet the Lord. Will you come and baptize me?" It is hard for me to express the joy I felt in reading this letter, knowing the experience I had at my work. My wife, seeing that I was blessed in reading this letter asked me "What will you do now?" I replied, "We will go to California, for the Lord spoke to me today while at work." She replied, "We have no money". I told her we will get a loan from the bank. I had the good fortune to find a man to run my barber shop for me. I put some money together and the loan from the bank of \$100.00 for one month had an interest charge of \$1.00 for the

month. We went to Los Angeles by train. I had informed the presiding Elder of the Bell Branch and, with their approval, proceeded to baptize my brother, his wife, my sister Theresa, and a niece and her husband. The total that were baptized was eight.

My wife and I returned home very happy, we truly had a wonderful time in the Lord. With us on this trip were Sister Agata DiTomaso, my Mother-in-law, and Sister Madalena Ranieri, who also enjoyed the trip.

This experience will be with me always, surely God moves in mysterious ways to perform his wonders. Thank God our little effort and sacrifice was truly compensated with many blessings.

In 1971, I returned to Italy to help the work of the Lord there. This time my wife did not go with me, because my Father-in-law was very ill. I was very happy to see my sister, Loreta, a member of our Church for many years (she resides in Italy) and I was very glad to see my family and friends in the village where I was born. I had a little service with my sister; we read the Bible together. We had the Lord's supper together and remembered the many blessings we did experience while together in the United States.

I have spoken of many experiences we had from the time we obeyed the Restored Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I feel to relate at this time, some wonderful healings:

Brother Vernon Chester, an Apostle of the Church, and his wife, lived in Cleveland and were members of the Cleveland Branch of the Church. Sister Chester had lost her eyesight in one eye and the doctor told her she would lose the sight in her other eye also. One Sunday afternoon they attended service, and we had such a blessing in our service. Sister Chester requested to be anointed, which we did, and she received her sight in both eyes. She had her eyesight for the rest of her life. For this, we praise God from whom all blessings flow. Also, Brother August Perlioni had a very serious accident at work, and suffered much including a broken leg and was on crutches. He attended Church on a Sunday afternoon, requested to be anointed, and a miracle happened after the anointing. He left the crutches and was able to walk without any discomfort, we had him help to administer the Lord's Supper. Thank God for a wonderful miracle and we have had many more experiences, since we obeyed the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ.

By the revelation of God, we started a Mission on the west side of Cleveland, we had several Elders in the Cleveland Branch, some brothers then labored in the west side of Cleveland. I, guided by the Lord, labored in Painesville, Ohio. My wife and I worked in Painesville along with Brother and Sister Rainiei, and Brother and Sister Piccuito and family. Brother Piccuito was an ordained teacher. My wife and I traveled from Cleveland to Painesville for seven years. In that space of time, we baptized many and have a beautiful Church there now and a very wonderful group of our people there and many were the blessings we shared with our new converts. The Church there is located on Route 84 in the township of Perry, on three acres of land. Much of the work was done by our young brothers Piccuito, Brother Kline and Brother Ranieri; our Sisters worked hard

as well; we all pitched in. Brother Albert Ventura helped the building of the Church there. Brother Romano and Brother Carlini did the plastering of the building. Brother William Gennaro and his wife came often to help with the work in Painesville. Brother Gennaro was an Apostle of the Church, too. We all enjoyed his help.

In the very beginning of the work there, we met in Brother and Sister Piccuito's home. We were in one accord and the blessings of God did accompany us. We also met in Brother and Sister Ranieri's home. Then, prior to building, we met in the Grange Hall on Route 84 in Painesville. We made many sacrifices and God's blessings were felt by us all.

As requested to do this writing of a portion of my life before I met the Church and after I met the Church, I shall endeavor to do so, hoping God's blessings will be felt by all that will read this.

With God's help, we've done much spiritual work since I returned from California. I feel sure that God has blessed us and prospered us both spiritually and temporally.

By the revelation of God, I was called to the office of an Apostle. Brother Robert Anderson came to me; he gave me a letter and told me to read it. These were the words: "You are called to be one of the twelve Apostles." I then awoke from my dream. At this time, I did not know that Brother Robert Anderson had passed on to his reward. Also one of the Apostles had a revelation that a pillar of the Church had fallen and in his dream I came near the fallen pillar with outstretched arms, I told that Apostle that I would hold that end where the pillar had fallen. In July General Conference of 1939 I was called and ordained that Conference. Brother Isaac Smith washed my feet and Brother Alma B. Cadman ordained me. And, during Conference I was elected Secretary of the Quorum of Twelve, holding that office for 25 years. I held the office of Vice President and President of the Quorum for several years. I feel it was the will of God for us to return East from California. We had much spiritual success, my wife and I worked very hard both spiritually and naturally and God blessed us immensely. We have three wonderful children, two sons and one daughter, Matthew, Robert and Kathryn. We have nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild. We are very proud of all of them. We have two wonderful daughters-in-law and a very wonderful son-in-law.

I have kept in touch with Italian brothers and sisters since my two trips to Italy. And we hope with God's help to return this August 1978 to help the work of God in Italy, with Brother Gorie Ciaravino, General Church first councilor and both of our wives. Our wives both understand and speak Italian which will be a great help to us both.

I thank God for the Gospel Restored, and for touching my heart to the obedience of the Gospel. The Restored Gospel that we read of in the Book of Revelations written by John Devine, Chapter 14 Verses 6 & 7, which reads:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come, and worship Him that made the heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters,"

surely God's judgment is much closer now.

We find in the Prophet Isaiah, Chapter 2, Verse 4:

"And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

Also, in Isaiah, Chapter 11, Verse 6, the Prophet foresaw what will come to pass in the latter days, what a blessing will be for the people of God.

I've been ordained in the priesthood since 1923. I like the quotation of Paul the Apostle to Timothy. 2nd Timothy, Chapter 4, Verses 5, 6, 7 & 8:

"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry, For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

I hope and pray, to live my life to the end, acceptable to my maker.