



AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

Reflecting on Our Chartered Course

Elder Ian S. Ardern
Philippines Area Presidency

Calendars across the world are marked with significant dates. June 12th marks the Philippines' National Day in recognition of the country's independence and April 6th is remembered as the day The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized. January 1st marks a New Year and a new beginning which gives us the opportunity to reflect on the year that has passed and to focus on the year ahead. Alma invited us to take an inward look when he asked, "Have ye walked, keeping yourselves blameless before God?" (Alma 5:27) Each of us will benefit as we reflect on our chartered course and determine to make any needed improvements. Recording our New Year resolutions on our calendars and making a plan of action to achieve them is a worthy and



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rewarding undertaking. As an Area Presidency, we ask with hope that you ensure your spiritual well-being and that of your family is a priority throughout the year. Prophets have taught that more than any time in our history, we have need for greater spirituality. A way to develop greater spirituality is to feast upon the words of Christ. Scripture teaches us to "feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3). Each family member owning their own

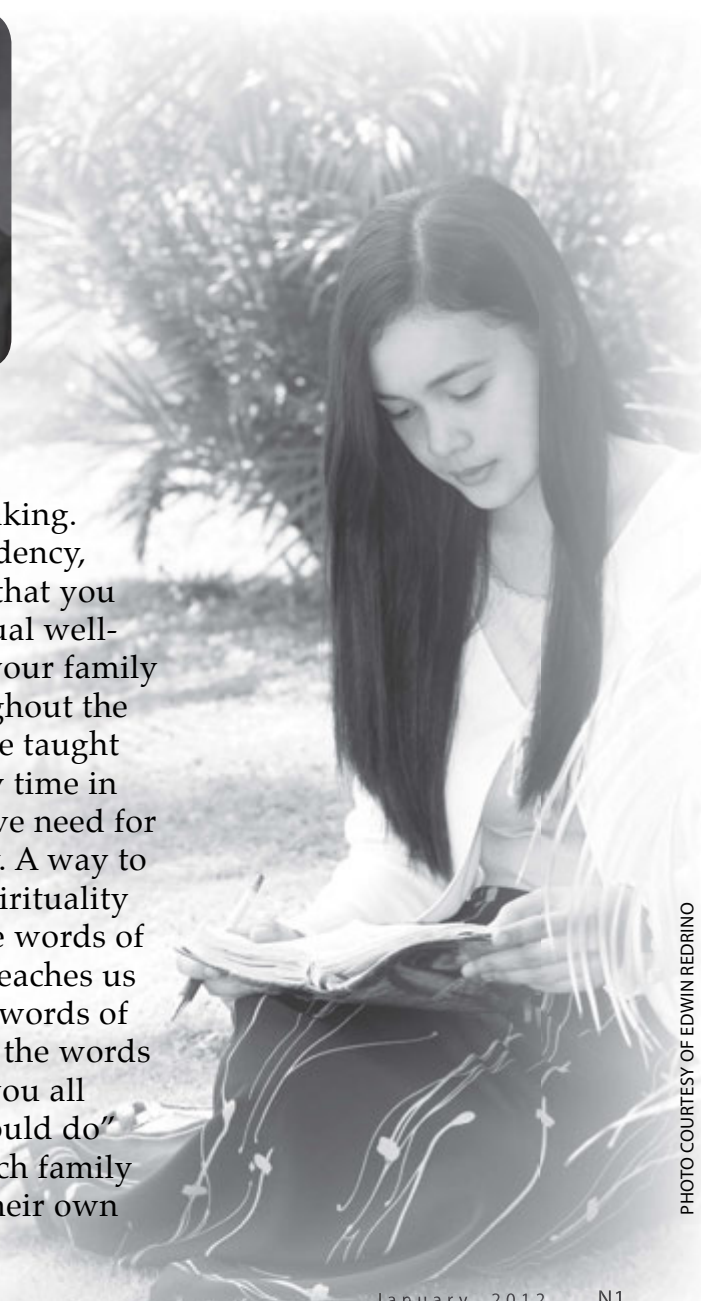


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scriptures and reading from them daily will increase personal spirituality, which will in turn bring an increase of peace and happiness that money cannot buy.

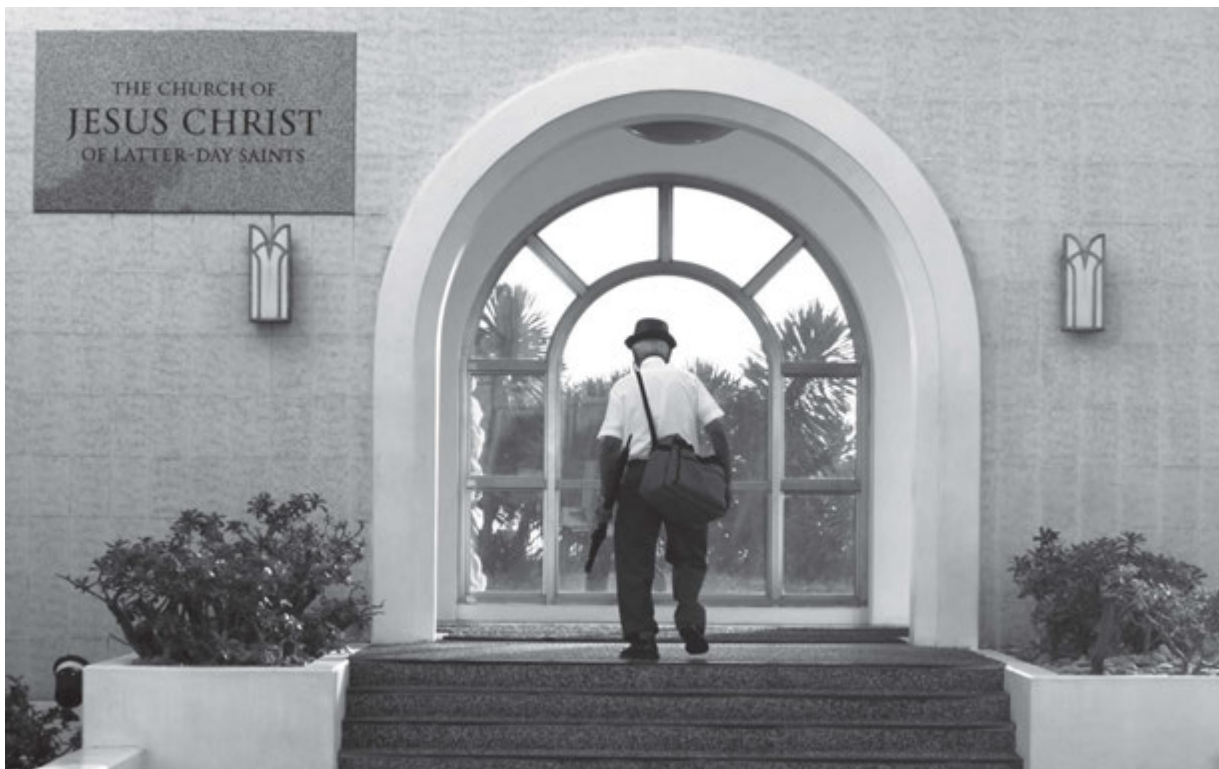
In addition to daily reading, pondering and application of scripture we invite you throughout the year to be participants in the rescue effort that President Thomas S. Monson speaks of so often. Too many of our dear Filipino brothers and sisters are no longer sitting with us at church. You may know someone in that situation and so we invite you to renew your friendship with that 'someone' and help him or her back to church. You will find an increase of happiness with friend(s) back at your side as you participate in your Church meetings. It

is time we went to the rescue of the "lost sheep" so they can be in the arms of the Master Shepherd once more.

We wish each of you a very happy New Year and may it be one full of increased personal spiritual growth. ■



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Arise and Shine Forth



A Refuge in the Church

I was 5 years old when my father left home to work abroad and I have never heard from him since. My mother also went to work abroad when I was 13 leaving me and my four siblings to our non-LDS relatives. Life was indeed difficult having no parents to love and guide us. I then turned to the Church, which I considered my home and refuge. The Young Women class, the Personal Progress program of the Church and the seminary classes inspired me to “arise and shine forth” even though I am alone in this world

of temptations. I feel Heavenly Father’s love abide in me and my siblings.

In the absence of my parents, daily scripture study has been the source of my strength and guidance. It reminds me to pray always, be honest and to choose good friends. My favorite scripture is found in D&C 82:3. It inspires me to choose and do what is right. A daily dose of scripture study is my way of life and my source of energy in facing the challenges of mortality. ■

Jorimie C., 15 years old
Butuan Philippines Stake



Jorimie C.

By Small and Simple Things

Doctrine and Covenants 115:5 reminds me of a quote by President Ezra Taft Benson to the youth of the Church. He said that “there are great moments of eternity which lie ahead. You have our love and our confidence. We pray that you will be prepared for the reins of leadership.” (“To the Rising Generation,” *New Era*, June 1986)

When we are commanded to “arise and shine forth” and be a light unto the world, we must live on this earth but not partake of the sins and sicknesses of the world. We are expected to live a beautiful, peaceful and spiritual life and not in one bit entertain the thought of sinning. We let our light shine so bright

that we may be seen throughout the whole world, because we, as Latter-day Saints, are the prime examples of Zion.

I try to arise and “shine forth” through small and simple things, like when I am around my friends, I converse with them using pure and clean language. I also stay away from alcohol, tea, wine and others as outlined by our leaders.

If we do these things, we will be blessed spiritually and physically. Though we will not be famous for it, all things we do for the gospel are recorded in heaven. ■

Kevin Nohea R., 17 years old
Quezon City Philippines Stake



Kevin R.

Standing Up and Standing Out

As a young woman in the Church, I learned the standards that Latter-day Saint youth should maintain. In my school, my classmates are divided into informal groups according to their interests. I do not belong to any of them. My classmates know that I am a Latter-day Saint because I told them. I told them about our standards and try do all I can to live them. In time, they have learned to accept me even if I do not belong to any of the groups. They respect me for my beliefs and practices. I know that I can

influence my classmates to do good when I do well myself. In that way, I can introduce them to the Church and to the blessings of living the gospel.

For me, to “arise and shine forth” means standing up for what you believe, even if it means standing out and not belonging to a group. It is in trying to live up to our standards that we can become a standard to others. As youth of the Church, we know where we belong. ■

Clarissa B.
Tabaco Philippines District



Clarissa B.



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Rise Above

When I was a deacon, I was asked to lead the hymn in the priesthood meeting opening exercises in our ward. As I stood in front, my hands began to shake. It was my first time to lead the music in front of people, most of them older than me. I had some inclination to music but I am



Vic Michael R.

shy in front of many people. I thought of all the people who must have been in my shoes—a shy, musically inexperienced young man in front of a group, trying to lead them in song. Somehow I got through the experience and the next time I was asked to play the piano. I did terribly at first. One of my priesthood leaders encouraged me to practice one hymn until I perfected it. It was very boring to practice the same hymn again and again but practice really pays off. With the Lord's help, I was successful.

I am now 17 and a priest. I now play the piano and violin. I can now play in front of a crowd. I have been blessed with the opportunity to teach others to play as well. If I did not accept the invitation to

lead the music or play the piano in my priesthood class years ago, I would not have discovered my talent or overcome my shyness.

The Lord has commanded us to “arise and shine forth.” I know that positive thinking and perseverance in developing one's talent is an effective way to do that. Rising above our personal weaknesses is a way to “arise” and encouraging others to develop their talents by our own example is a way to “shine forth.” I am now looking forward to going on my mission (paid for in part by teaching piano lessons) and helping to share His gospel, His “light as a standard to the nations.” ■

Vic Michael R.
Legazpi Philippines Stake

The Power of “No”

In school, I always have the opportunity to share the gospel with others through my example.

During our lunch break, my classmates offered me a glass of iced tea. It took courage for me to say no. They insisted, telling me to “try it. Just a drop won’t hurt you.” Still I said NO. I would not dare drink it because I knew it would be harmful to my body.

They became curious and wanted to know why I would not drink tea so I shared with them the Word of Wisdom.

They became more interested so I invited them to attend institute class with me. We enrolled together and I am glad that they are still attending institute with me and they are continually learning more about the gospel. They have also lost the desire to take anything harmful to their bodies.

Even if people laugh at me because of my beliefs, I don’t lose the courage to say “No,” and to stand for what I know is right and keep the standards. ■

Rizzia Romo A., 17 yrs. Old
Fairview Philippines Stake



Rizzia A.

Being an Example

During the first years of being a young woman in the Church, I read a verse from the Doctrine and Covenants which settled in my mind. From the fifth verse of the 115th section, it states “Verily I say unto you: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations.”

This passage served as a reminder for me to be an example to others. As Latter-day Saints, we are a peculiar people—unique and different from others. Being LDS is not easy because we can never choose how people see us. We believe in a lot of things which others have

a hard time doing, but despite these things we are advised to “arise and shine forth.” We need to stand for what we know is true and be a good example to other people. We are all torches and give light to the people around us. We should not let our light grow dim; instead we must strive to make it brighter. We are sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father and He loves us. Let us show to Him that we love Him too by arising and shining forth, that our light may be the standard for the nations. ■

Xayezi P., 17 years old
Manila Philippines Stake



Xayezi P.

A Different Standard

Stand for truth and righteousness—this is what I strive to do despite the lowering standards of the world today. In my own, simple way, I strive to follow the law of chastity, although at times my nonmember friends would tease me and say that I am too conservative. Friends at school would also brag about different alcoholic drinks that they have tried but I proudly say that I do not drink any of those nor take cigarettes. As a young woman,

I do face a lot of challenges and trials especially as a student but I strive to always be positive, patient and cheerful. I may not be perfect and do have a lot of weaknesses but I always look up to the living prophets. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is one of the best examples as I strive to rise up high and let my light shine forth. ■



Krystelle T.

Krystelle Anne T.
Bacolod North Philippines Stake

WORDS TO LIVE BY

Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created.
D&C 29:34

How comforting it is to gain perspective from the Lord that in Him everything is spiritual. This offers meaning to everything we do and how we do things. What a blessing and a guide this is for anyone needing to define purpose in their lives. ■

Joenee Briones
Angeles Philippines Stake



Standing as a Witness

“Yea, and are willing to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life—”
Mosiah 18:9

I always love to share my

testimony when given the opportunity. But expressing it is not always easy. There are moments when I just sit there and try to stay put and not bear my testimony because I’m afraid people are tired of me getting up there on the stand. I don’t think that we are taught by the church that testimonies are limited to three or five things. Members should also tell how a principle

of the gospel affected their lives. This scripture motivates me to continue what I have started and hope that others can find strength in it. ■

Prince Diofrey H. Arellano
Dipolog Philippines District

Charity Towards All Men

And now I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; ... being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times; asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal; always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive.

And see that ye have faith, hope, and charity, and then ye will always abound in good works.

Alma 7:23-24

I love this passage because it helps me become a more effective servant of the Lord. Being a

full-time missionary is not easy.

We experience a lot of trials and temptations but I was able to overcome all of those because these verses remind me that in my daily work I should develop charity towards my companions and to the people around me.

Developing Christlike attributes is really important in missionary work. I love missionary work and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in the Lord’s vineyard. This work is sacred and I love being a part of God’s eternal plan. ■

Sister Torres
Philippines Tacloban Mission



Sister Torres