

MESSAGE FROM A MEMBER OF THE SEVENTY

## Let Us Live Our Covenants

By Elder Julio César Acosta

Of the Seventy

Being members of the Church means that a change has taken place in us. We were blessed with the opportunity to have a friend or a couple of elders or sister missionaries come to our home with something that we did not think would have such a great impact in our lives—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A feeling of faith and a desire to change and to repent were the first fruits of that message, followed by a desire to enter into the waters of baptism as a sign that we had “entered in by the way” (2 Nephi 31:18).

Through the ordinance of baptism, we covenanted with our Father in Heaven that we were willing to “mourn with those that mourn; . . . and to stand as witnesses of God at all times” (Mosiah 18:9), and to live according to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. It is very common to think that because

we have been baptized, everything is done and that we have reached our goal. In reality, however, the covenants that we made through the ordinance of baptism are only “the gate by which [we] should enter” (2 Nephi 31:17).

I learned about the gospel together with my family in Barahona. One day, the missionaries came to our home. I was 11 years old. Somehow, I was delighted by what they taught us. Right now I do not remember all my feelings clearly, but what I can tell you is that I liked what they taught. We felt very good; they brought a very special spirit into our home. Thus, when the missionaries invited us to be baptized, I did not doubt; I accepted and entered the waters of baptism together with my mother. That was how I entered into the way and made my baptismal covenants with the Lord.



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There are other important covenants that follow baptism, such as ordination to the Aaronic Priesthood and the Melchizedek Priesthood. After our baptism, we can go to the temple to do baptisms for the dead. However, once we have been members of the Church for a year, we can go to the temple to make temple covenants including being sealed together with our family for this life and for eternity. The promised blessings for obeying these covenants are eternal in scope.

A Gospel Topics essay explains the following about covenants:

“A covenant is a sacred agreement between God and a person or group of people. God sets specific conditions, and He promises to bless us as we obey those conditions” (“Covenant,” topics.lds.org).

There are some covenants that are not directly related to a specific ordinance. Such is the case with keeping the Sabbath day holy (see Exodus 31:16).

There are other responsibilities as well that will come to us as members of the Church, which, though not derived from an ordinance, will bring us great blessings. These include the opportunity to hold callings; serve a mission; and keep the law of tithing, fasting, and offerings, just to name a few.



## LOCAL PAGES

Keeping the commandments and being faithful to the covenants that we have made with Heavenly Father is the most meaningful way to show our love, both to Him and to Jesus Christ. As we mold our lives in accordance with these covenants, we will overcome the weaknesses of this world and lead our lives and those of our families toward a deeper communion with God.

The Savior declared, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Samuel reminded Saul that “to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Samuel 15:22).

A deeper conversion will show in the steadfastness with which we live each of the covenants that we have made with Him.

Brothers and Sisters, may we live according to our covenants.<sup>1</sup> Let us not be moved to and fro by the waves of the sea (see James 1:6). May we strive to reach “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13) so “the times of refreshing” (Acts 3:19) will come that Peter announced to those listening to him outside the temple.

The Savior said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace” (John 16:33). There is no greater peace than that which comes from living His gospel. May the Lord bless us as we seek to live each day according to the covenants that we have made with Him. ■

### NOTA

1. See the Caribbean Area Plan 2016.

# The Temple Is the Literal House of God

Source: [mormonnewsroom.org/jm](http://mormonnewsroom.org/jm)

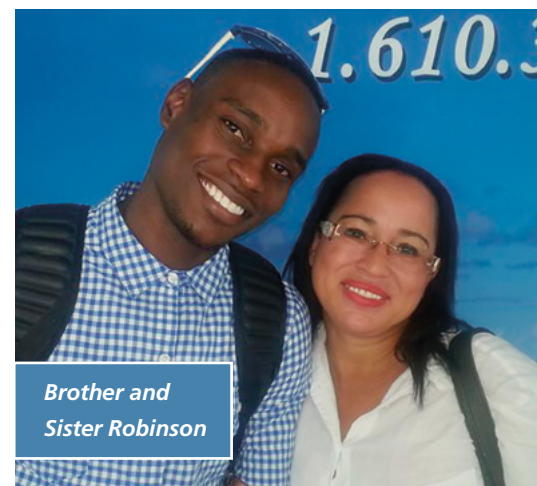
The temple is the literal house of God for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is the place where sacred ordinances are performed. It is a place all Latter-day Saints strive to attend on a regular basis. Unfortunately for some, a temple may not be walking distance away or even driving distance. In fact, for some, temples are not even in their country. This is the situation for Jamaicans. The closest temple to Jamaica is the Santo Domingo Dominican Republic Temple. With the view and the goal to attend the temple, 152 members from the different congregations across Jamaica went to the Santo Domingo Temple on July 20th–25th, 2015. Making that trip was one of great effort and tremendous sacrifice for those who attended.

The flight heading to the Dominican Republic left Jamaica at 11:00 in the morning on July 20, 2015. The 152 members were all aboard the flight. For some it would be their first time attending the temple. The flight's departure from the Jamaican shores represented a moment of great joy as they knew that they would be just hours away from entering the house of the Lord—a place where they could make sacred covenants and receive personal revelation.

The feedback from those that attended proved that the sacrifices made so that they could attend the temple were indeed worth it.

When asked to give an account of his experience, Michael Robinson from the Boulevard Ward stated, “It's the most beautiful experience I've ever had.” Michael was baptized on October 6, 2013. He said that having the opportunity to attend the temple helped him see that he can do more to serve the Lord. He also stated, referring to God that, “His love for us is more than we can have here in this life.”

Similarly, Christine Collins from the Boulevard Ward felt equally as blessed with her temple trip experience. She had the opportunity to attend with some of her family members. Her



Brother and  
Sister Robinson



**Brother and  
Sister Collins**

response when asked about her trip was, "It was absolutely amazing!"

Her brother Carlton Collins, from the Junction Branch, one of the few youth who went on the trip, explained that a week before he knew that he was attending, he faced a lot of discouragement from friends. Carlton explained that he realized that the devil wanted to rob him of the experience he would have at the temple. He said that at the end of the trip, his testimony and resolve to serve the Lord had been strengthened.

The question that can be asked to the members who attended is: "What is your story?" For Rohan and Tracy Francis from the Ocho Rios Branch, their story began with Elder Beck and Elder Martin, two missionaries who introduced the gospel to them. Elder Martin, who is from Alberta, Canada, and now home from his mission, along with Elder Beck, who is also off his mission, were able to join the members on the trip. It was a quite a privilege for them to be able to meet up with their converts at the temple.

The story of Rohan and Tracy Francis did not stop there. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is well-known for promoting traditional

families as the fundamental unit of all societies. The Church promotes families, and family history is a major drive for its members. At the temple, Tracy Francis was able to meet Ruth-Ann and Shirlette Brown, two members of the Portmore Ward, who she found out are her great-great-grand-aunt's children. It was an absolutely wonderful experience for the Brown sisters, who did not know that there were other members of their family who were members of the Church.

The story of Antoinette and Christopher Peart, members of the Constant Spring Ward, and Sister Norma Grant from the Kingston Branch is something to be featured. Being able to attend the temple was a great blessing as their previous attendance at the temple was in 1999. Antoinette explained that it was quite an emotional time for her.

We cannot record all the stories and everything that happened,

however, the story of Calvin Dodd from the Hopeton Branch is worth the mention. Calvin Dodd was the oldest member to attend. He is 87 years old and had been baptized on June 15, 1994. Due to health difficulties, previous recent attempts to attend the temple were unfruitful. This trip was indeed a significant milestone for Calvin.

For President Piper, a Church leader for the Mandeville area, his experience was just as significant. He was able to see two sisters from the Negril congregation, whom he had baptized when he was a missionary.

Overall, the trip can be seen as a success. The members were able to perform over 2,000 ordinances during the week they were there. To sum up the whole temple experience for those who attended, in the words of Lacey-Ann Dennis, one of the members, "it was just a reminder that God is real." ■



**Brother and  
Sister Francis**

# The *Liahona* is for the whole family!

We invite the Caribbean members to have in their homes each month a printed issue of the *Liahona* magazine.

Within its pages, every family member will find a message that will bless their home and strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ. In the printed issue of the *Liahona*, you may also find messages from local leaders, stories of faith of the Saints in the Caribbean, and also the most important Church news of the area.

Additionally, the Relief Society and Melchizedek Priesthood lessons of the second, third, and fourth Sunday are now based on topics found in this magazine.

Subscribing is very easy. If you live in the Dominican Republic, you can do so by calling 809-731-2022 or through the online store at [store.lds.org](http://store.lds.org). Members outside the Dominican Republic can subscribe through the online store at [store.lds.org](http://store.lds.org).

Your copy of the magazine will then be delivered each month to the ward or branch where you attend church. ■

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Caribbean Area Local Pages



THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

**COME, FOLLOW ME FOR ADULTS**

The *Liahona* will be a fundamental part of the new 2018 Relief Society and Melchizedek Priesthood teaching program. Now, the **second and third Sunday** lessons will come from the recent General Conference and the **fourth Sunday** topic will be announced in the May and November issues.