

Opening the Heavens for Help

By President Russell M. Nelson

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Let us put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ into action!

What a unique and wonderful session this has been! Thank you, dear Laudy and Enzo. You represented the magnificent young women and young men of the Church so very well.

My dear brothers and sisters, we have heard much today about the Restoration of the Church—the very Church that our Savior, Jesus Christ, established during His earthly ministry. That Restoration began 200 years ago this spring when God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to the young Joseph Smith.

Ten years after this transcendent vision, the Prophet Joseph Smith and five others were called as founding members of the Lord’s restored Church.

From that small group assembled on April 6, 1830, has come a global organization of more than 16 million members. The good this Church accomplishes around the world to alleviate human suffering and provide uplift for humankind is widely known. But its prime purpose is to help men, women, and children follow the Lord Jesus Christ, keep His commandments, and qualify for the greatest of all blessings—that of eternal life with God and their loved ones.¹

As we commemorate the event that was launched in 1820, it is important to remember that while we revere Joseph Smith as a prophet of God, this is not the church of Joseph Smith, nor is it the church of Mormon. This is the Church of Jesus Christ. He decreed exactly what His Church should be called: “For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”²

I have spoken previously about a needed course correction in the way we refer to the name of the Church.³ Since that time, much has been done to accomplish this correction. I am very grateful to President M. Russell Ballard and the entire Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who have done so much to lead these efforts as well as those related to another initiative that I will announce this evening.

Church leaders and departments, related entities, and millions of members—and others—now use the correct name of the Church. The Church’s official style guide has been adjusted. The Church’s principal website is now ChurchofJesusChrist.org. Addresses for email, domain names, and social media channels have been updated. Our beloved choir is now the Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square.

We have gone to these extraordinary efforts because when we remove the Lord’s name from the name of *His* Church, we inadvertently remove *Him* as the central

focus of our worship and our lives. When we take the Savior's name upon us at baptism, we commit to witness, by our words, thoughts, and actions, that Jesus is the Christ.⁴

Previously, I promised that if we would "do our best to restore the correct name of the Lord's Church," He would "pour down His power and blessings upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints, the likes of which we have never seen."⁵ I renew that promise today.

To help us remember Him and to identify The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the *Lord's Church*, we are pleased to introduce a symbol that will signify the central place of Jesus Christ in His Church.

This symbol includes the name of the Church contained within a cornerstone. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone.⁶

At the center of the symbol is a representation of Thorvaldsen's marble statue the *Christus*. It portrays the resurrected, *living* Lord reaching out to embrace all who will come unto Him.

Symbolically, Jesus Christ is standing under an arch. The arch reminds us of the resurrected Savior emerging from the tomb on the third day following His Crucifixion.

This symbol should feel familiar to many, as we have long identified the restored gospel with the *living*, resurrected Christ.

The symbol will now be used as a visual identifier for official literature, news, and events of the Church.⁷ It will remind all that this is the Savior's Church and that all we do as members of His Church centers on Jesus Christ and His gospel.

Now, my dear brothers and sisters, tomorrow is Palm Sunday, as Elder Gong has so eloquently taught. Then we enter the special week that culminates with Easter. As followers of Jesus Christ, living in a day when the COVID-19 pandemic has put the whole world in commotion, let us not just talk of Christ or preach of Christ or employ a symbol representing Christ.

Let us put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ into action!

As you know, members of the Church observe the law of the fast one day each month.

The doctrine of fasting is ancient. It has been practiced by biblical heroes from the earliest days. Moses, David, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Isaiah, Daniel, Joel, and many others fasted and preached of fasting.⁸ Through Isaiah's writings, the Lord said: "Is *not* this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free?"⁹

The Apostle Paul admonished Saints in Corinth to "give yourselves to fasting and prayer."¹⁰ The Savior Himself declared that certain things go "not out *but* by prayer and fasting."¹¹

I said recently in a social media video that “as a physician and surgeon, I have great admiration for medical professionals, scientists, and all who are working around the clock to curb the spread of COVID-19.”¹²

Now, as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, I *know* that God “has all power, all wisdom, and all understanding; he comprehendeth all things, and he is a merciful Being, even unto salvation, to those who will repent and believe on his name.”¹³

So, during times of deep distress, as when illness reaches pandemic proportions, the most natural thing for us to do is to call upon our Heavenly Father and His Son—the Master Healer—to show forth Their marvelous power to bless the people of the earth.

In my video message, I invited all to join in fasting on Sunday, March 29, 2020. Many of you may have seen the video and joined in the fast. Some may have not. Now we still need help from heaven.

So tonight, my dear brothers and sisters, in the spirit of the sons of Mosiah, who gave themselves to much fasting and prayer,¹⁴ and as part of our April 2020 general conference, I am calling for another worldwide fast. For all whose health may permit, let us fast, pray, and unite our faith once again. Let us prayerfully plead for relief from this global pandemic.

I invite *all*, including those not of our faith, to fast and pray on Good Friday, April 10, that the present pandemic may be controlled, caregivers protected, the economy strengthened, and life normalized.

How do we fast? Two meals or a period of 24 hours is customary. But you decide what would constitute a sacrifice for you, as you remember the supreme sacrifice the Savior made for you. Let us unite in pleading for healing throughout the world.

Good Friday would be *the* perfect day to have our Heavenly Father and His Son hear *us*!

Dear brothers and sisters, I express my deep love for you, along with my testimony of the divinity of the work in which we are engaged. This *is* The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He stands at its head and directs all that we do. I know that He will respond to the pleadings of His people. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.