

Go Forward in Faith

By President Russell M. Nelson

President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

I bless you with peace and increasing faith in the Lord.

My beloved brothers and sisters, as we come to the end of this historic conference, we express our gratitude to the Lord. The music has been sublime and the messages inspiring.

During this conference, we have experienced many highlights. On this bicentennial anniversary, we have introduced a proclamation to the world declaring the reality of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness.

We commemorated the Restoration with the Hosanna Shout.

We unveiled a new symbol signifying our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for visual recognition of official Church information and materials.

We have called for a global day of fasting and prayer, that the present pandemic may be controlled, caregivers protected, the economy strengthened, and life normalized. This fast will be held on Good Friday, April 10. What a great Friday that will be!

Next Sunday is Easter Sunday, when we will again commemorate the Atonement and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of His Atonement, His gift of resurrection will come to all who have ever lived. And His gift of eternal life will come to all who qualify by fidelity to ordinances and covenants made in His holy temples.

The many inspiring components of this April 2020 general conference—and the sacred week that we now begin—can be summarized by two divinely decreed words: “Hear Him.”¹ We pray that your focus on Heavenly Father, who spoke those words, and on His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, will loom largest in your memories of all that has transpired. We pray that you will begin anew *truly* to hear, hearken to, and heed the words of the Savior.² I promise that decreased fear and increased faith will follow.

Thank you for your desire to make your homes true sanctuaries of faith, where the Spirit of the Lord may dwell. Our gospel study curriculum, *Come, Follow Me*, will continue to bless your lives. Your consistent efforts in this endeavor—even during those moments when you feel that you are not being particularly successful—will change your life, that of your family, and the world. We will be strengthened as we become even more valiant disciples of the Lord, standing up and speaking up for Him, wherever we are.

Now, let's talk about temples. We have 168 dedicated temples across the world. Others are at various stages of planning and construction. When plans are announced to erect a new temple, it becomes part of our sacred history.

It may seem odd to announce new temples when all our temples are closed for a while.

More than a century ago, President Wilford Woodruff foresaw conditions such as ours today, as recorded in his dedicatory prayer of the Salt Lake Temple, given in 1893. Some of you may have recently seen excerpts from this remarkable prayer on social media.

Hear these pleadings from a mighty prophet of God: “When Thy people shall *not* have the opportunity of entering this holy house ... and they are oppressed and in trouble, surrounded by difficulties ... and shall turn their faces towards this Thy holy house and ask Thee for deliverance, for help, for Thy power to be extended in their behalf, we beseech Thee, to look down from Thy holy habitation in mercy ... and listen to their cries. Or when the children of Thy people, in years to come, shall be separated, through any cause, from this place, ... and they shall cry unto Thee from the depths of their affliction and sorrow to extend relief and deliverance to them, we humbly entreat Thee to ... hearken to their cries, and grant unto them the blessings for which they ask.”³

Brothers and sisters, during times of *our* distress when temples *are* closed, you can still draw upon the power of your temple covenants and endowment as you honor your covenants. Please use this time when temples are closed to continue to live a temple-worthy life or to become temple worthy.

Talk about the temple with your family and friends. Because Jesus Christ is at the center of everything we do in the temple, as you think more about the temple you will be thinking more about Him. Study and pray to learn more about the power and knowledge with which you have been endowed—or with which you will yet be endowed.

Today we are pleased to announce plans to construct eight new temples in the following locations: Bahía Blanca, Argentina; Tallahassee, Florida; Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Benin City, Nigeria; Syracuse, Utah; Dubai, United Arab Emirates; and Shanghai, People's Republic of China.

In all eight locations, Church architects will work with local officials so that the temple will harmonize with and be a beautiful addition to each community.

The plan for a temple in Dubai comes in response to their gracious invitation, which we gratefully acknowledge.

Context for the plan for Shanghai is very important. For more than two decades, temple-worthy members in the People's Republic of China have attended the Hong Kong China Temple. But in July 2019, that temple was closed for long-planned and much-needed renovation.

In Shanghai, a modest multipurpose meeting place will provide a way for Chinese members to continue to participate in ordinances of the temple—in the People’s Republic of China—for them and their ancestors.⁴

In every country, this Church teaches its members to honor, obey, and sustain the law.⁵ We teach the importance of the family, of being good parents and exemplary citizens. Because we respect the laws and regulations of the People’s Republic of China, the Church does *not* send proselyting missionaries there; nor will we do so now.

Expatriate and Chinese congregations will continue to meet separately. The Church’s legal status there remains *unchanged*. In an initial phase of facility use, entry will be by appointment only. The Shanghai Temple will *not* be a temple for tourists from other countries.

These eight new temples will bless the lives of many people on both sides of the veil of death. Temples are a crowning part of the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In God’s goodness and generosity, He is bringing the blessings of the temple closer to His children *everywhere*.

As the Restoration continues, I know that God will continue to reveal many great and important things pertaining to His kingdom here on earth.⁶ That kingdom *is* The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Dear brothers and sisters, I express my love for you. During this time of tension and uncertainty, and invoking the authority vested in me, I would like to confer upon you an apostolic blessing.

I bless you with peace and increasing faith in the Lord.⁷

I bless you with a desire to repent and become a little more like Him each day.⁸

I bless you to know that the Prophet Joseph Smith is the prophet of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness.

Should there be illness among you or your loved ones, I leave a blessing of healing, consistent with the will of the Lord.

I so bless you, adding once more my expression of love for each of you, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.