

Welcome to the Church of Joy

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Tonga soa ato amin'ny Fiangonan'ny fifaliana

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Because of the redeeming life and mission of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, we can—and should—be the most joyful people on earth!

I was baptised into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Christmas Eve of 1987, nearly 37 years ago. That was a truly wonderful day in my life and in my eternal journey, and I'm profoundly grateful for the friends who prepared the way and brought me to the waters of that new birth.

Whether your baptism was yesterday or years ago, whether you meet in a large multiward Church building or under a thatched canopy, whether you receive the sacrament in remembrance of the Saviour in Thai or Swahili, I would like to say to you, welcome to the church of joy! Welcome to the church of joy!

The Church of Joy

Because of the loving plan of our Heavenly Father for each of His children, and because of the redeeming life and mission of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, we can—and should—be the most joyful people on earth! Even as the storms of life in an often-troubled world pound upon us, we can cultivate a growing and abiding sense of joy and inner peace because of our hope in Christ and our understanding of our own place in the beautiful plan of happiness.

Noho ilay fiainan'ny Mpamonjintsika, i Jesoa Kristy, sy ny asa manavotra nanirahana Azy, dia afaka, ary tokony mihitsy aza, ho vahoaka feno fifaliana indrindra eto an-tany isika!

Vita batisa tato amin' Ny Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy ho an'ny Olomasin'ny Andro Farany aho nanomboka tamin'ny misasakalin'ny Krismasy 1987, efa ho 37 taona izay. Andro iray nahafinaritra teo amin'ny fiainako sy teo amin'ny diako ho amin'ny mandrakizay tokoa izany, ary feno fankasitrahana lalina aho noho ireo namana izay nanomana ny lalana sy nitondra ahy ho ao amin'ilay ranon'ny fahaterahana indray.

Na vao omaly na efa taona maro lasa izay ny batisanao, na miangona ao amin'ny trano Fiangonana iray lehibe ihaonan'ny paroasy maro na ao amin'ny trano tafo bozaka ianao, na mandray ny fanasan'ny Tompo ho fahatsiarovana ny Mpamonjy amin'ny fiteny Thailandais na Swahili ianao, dia te hiteny amina aho hoe: Tonga soa ato amin'ny Fiangonan'ny fifaliana! Tonga soa ato amin'ny Fiangonan'ny fifaliana!

Ny Fiangonan'ny fifaliana

Noho ilay drafitra feno fitiavan'ny Ray any An-danitra ho an'ny zanany tsirairay, ary noho ilay fiainan'i Jesoa Kristy sy ny asa nanirahana manavotra nataony, dia afaka, ary tokony mihitsy aza, ho vahoaka feno fifaliana indrindra eto an-tany isika! Na dia mifofofoto eo amintsika aza ny tafiotry ny fiainana ao amin'ity tontolo mikorontana matetika ity, dia afaka mambohy fahatsapana fifaliana sy fiadanana anaty mitombo hatrany sy mitoetra isika noho ny fanantenantsika ao amin'i Kristy sy ny fahatakarantsika ny

The Lord's senior Apostle, President Russell M. Nelson, has spoken of the joy that comes from a life centered on Jesus Christ in nearly every address he has given since becoming the President of the Church. He summed it up so concisely: "Joy comes from and because of Him. ... For Latter-day Saints, Jesus Christ is joy!"

We are members of the Church of Jesus Christ. We are members of the church of joy! And nowhere should our joy as a people be more apparent than when we gather together each Sabbath in our sacrament meetings to worship the source of all joy! Here we assemble with our ward and branch families to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, our deliverance from sin and death, and the Saviour's powerful grace! Here we come to experience the joy, refuge, forgiveness, thanksgiving, and belonging found through Jesus Christ!

Is this spirit of collective rejoicing in Christ what you find? Is this what you bring? Maybe you think this doesn't have much to do with you, or perhaps you are simply used to how things have always been done. But we can all contribute, no matter our age or our calling, to making our sacrament meetings the joy-filled, Christ-focused, welcoming hour they can be, alive with a spirit of joyful reverence.

Joyful Reverence

Joyfulreverence? "Is that a thing?" you may ask. Well, yes, it is! We deeply love, honour, and respect our God, and our reverence flows from a soul that rejoices in Christ's abundant love, mercy, and salvation! This joyful reverence to the Lord should characterise our sacred sacrament meetings.

However, for many, reverence only means this: folding our arms tightly around our chests,

toerantsika manokana ao amin'ily drafitry ny fahasambara mahafinaritra.

Ny Apôstôlin'ny Tompo efa ela niasana indrindra, ny Filoha Russell M. Nelson, dia niresaka mikasika ny fifaliana izay azo avy amin'ny fiainana iray mifantoka amin'i Jesoa Kristy efa ho tamin'ny hafatra rehetra nozarainy hatry ny niantsoana azy ho Filohan'ny Fiangonana. Nofeheziny tsara izany hoe: "Tonga avy Aminy sy noho ny Aminy ny fifaliana. ... Ho an'ny Olomasin'ny Andro Farany dia i Jesoa Kristy no fifaliana!"

Mpikamban'ny Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy isika. Mpikamban'ny Fiangonan'ny fifaliana isika! Ary tsy misy toerana hahitana soritra kokoa ny fifaliantsika amin'ny maha-vahoaka antsika noho ny fotoana hiangonantsika isaky ny Sabata mandritra ireo fivoriana fanasan'ny Tompo mba hitaoka ilay Loharanon'ny fifaliana rehetra! Mivondrona ao miaraka amin'ireo fianakaviam-ben'ny paroasy sy sampana isika mba hankalaza ny fanasan'ny Tompo sy ny fanavotana antsika tamin'ny fahotana sy fahafatesana ary ny fahasovan'ny Tompo mahery vaika! Tonga ao isika mba hiaina fifaliana, fialofana, famelan-keloka, fanehoana fisaorana, ary fahatsapana fiombonana amin'ny alalan'i Jesoa Kristy!

Moa ve izany fanahin'ny fiaraha-mifaly ao amin'i Kristy izany no hitanao? Moa ve izany no hoentinao? Angamba heverinao fa tsy misy ifandraisany loatra aminao izany, na mety efa zatra ireo fanao hatrizay tsotra izao ianao. Saingy na firy taona isika, na inona antsontsika, dia afaka mifarimbona mba ho fotoana feno fifaliana sy mifantoka amin'i Kristy ary misokatra ho an'ny rehetra ireo fivoriana fanasan'ny Tompo, velomin'ny fanahin'ny fanehoana fanajana feno fifaliana.

Fanehoana fanajana feno fifaliana

Fanehoana fanajanafeno fifaliana? "Misy ve ny toy izany?", hoy ianao manontany. Eny, misy mihitsy! Tiantsika ary omentsika laza sy haja lalina tokoa ny Andriamanitsika, ary ny fanehoantsika fanajana dia mikoriana avy amin'ny fanahy iray izay mifaly ao amin'ny fitiavan'i Kristy sy ny famindram-pony ary ny famonjeny lehibe! Tokony mameno ny toetoetran'ireo fivoriana fanasan'ny Tompo izany fanehoana fanajana ho an'ny Tompo feno fifaliana izany.

Kanefa ho an'ny maro izany fanehoana fanajana izany dia midika fotsiny hoe: manambatra

bowing our heads, closing our eyes, and holding still—indeinitely! This might be a helpful way to teach energetic young children, but as we grow and learn, let us see that reverence is so much more than this. Is that how we would be if the Saviour were with us? No, for “in [His] presence is fulness of joy”!

Well, for many of us this transformation in sacrament services will take practice.

Attending versus Worshipping

We do not gather on the Sabbath simply to attend sacrament meeting and check it off the list. We come together to worship. There is a significant difference between the two. To attend means to be present at. But to worship is to intentionally praise and adore our God in a way that transforms us!

On the Stand and in the Congregation

If we are gathering in remembrance of the Saviour and the redemption He has made possible, our faces should reflect our joy and gratitude! Elder F. Enzio Busche once told the story of when he was a branch president and a young boy in the congregation looked at him on the stand and asked loudly, “What is the man with that mean face doing up there?” Those who sit on the stand—speakers, leaders, choirs—and those who gather in the congregation communicate to each other this “welcome to the church of joy” through the expressions they wear on their faces!

Hymn Singing

As we sing, are we joining together to praise our God and King no matter the quality of our voices, or are we just mumbling or not singing at all? Scripture records that “the song of the righteous is a prayer unto [God]” in which His soul

mafy ny tanantsika eo amin’ny tratra, manondrika ny lohantsika, manakipy ny masontsika, ary mitony, dia toy izany hatrany ihany! Mety manampy amin’ny fampianarana ireo ankizy kely mpibitabita izany, saingy rehefa mihalehibe sy mianatra isika, dia aoka isika haka antoka fa ny fanehoana fanajana dia mihoatra lavitra noho izany. Moa ve isika ho toy izany raha toa ka nira-raka tamintsika teo ilay Mpamonjy? Tsia, satria “havokisam-pifaliana no eo anatreha[ny]”!

Mety mila fanazarana izany fiovana ao amin’ny fivoriana fanasan’ny Tompo izany ho an’ny maro amintsika.

Ny hoe manatrika raha ampitahaina amin’ny hoe mitsaoka

Tsy hoe miangona amin’ny andro Sabata isika mba hanatrika ny fivoriana fanasan’ny Tompo fotsiny ary hanisy hoe vita iny ao amin’ny lisitry ny zavatra atao. Miara-mivondrona isika mba hitsaoka. Misy fahasamihafana lehibe eo amin’ireo anankiroa ireo. Ny hoemanatrikadia midika hoe tonga eo amin’ily toerana. Fa kosa nymitsaokadia midera sy mankalaza ilay Andriamanitsika an-tsirapo amin’ny fomba izay manova antsika!

Ny eny amin’ny lampihazo sy ny daholobe

Raha miangona isika ho fahatsiarovana ny Mpamonjy sy ny fanavotana nataony ho azo sitrahana, dia tokony maneho ny taratry ny fifaliansika sy ny fankasitrahantsika ny endritsika! Ny Loholona F. Enzio Busche indray andro dia nitantara fotoana iray tamin’ny naha filohan’ny sampana azy ka nisy zazalahy iray tao amin’ny daholobe nijery azy teny amin’ny lampihazo ary nanontany mafy hoe: “Inona no ataon’io lehilahy sorena endrika io eny ambony eny?” Ireo izay mipetraka eny amin’ny lampihazo, ny mpan-daha-teny, ny mpitarika, ny amboaram-peo, sy ireo mpiangona mpanatrika dia mifampizara ity “tonga soa ato amin’ny fiangonan’ny fifaliana” ity, amin’ny alalan’ny endrika asehon’izy ireo.

Fihirana

Rehefa mihira isika, moa ve isika mi-ara-miredona midera ilay Andriamanitsika sy Mpanjakantsika, na manao ahoana ny kalitaon’ny feontsika, sa mingonongonana fotsiny na tsy mihira mihitsy aza? Voarakitra ao amin’ny soratra

delights. So let's sing! And praise Him!

Talks and Testimonies

We center our talks and testimonies on Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and the fruits of humbly living Their gospel, fruits that are “sweet above all that is sweet.” Then we truly “feast ... even until [we] are filled, that [we] hunger not, neither ... thirst,” and our burdens become lighter through the joy of the Son.

The Sacrament

The glorious focal point of our services is the blessing and receiving of the sacrament itself, the bread and the water representing the atoning gift of our Lord and the whole purpose of our gathering. This is “a sacred time of spiritual renewal” when we witness anew that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and make again the covenant to always remember the Saviour and keep His commandments.

In some seasons of life, we may approach the sacrament with heavy hearts and overwhelming loads. At other times, we come free and unburdened from cares and troubles. As we listen intently to the blessing of the bread and water and partake of those sacred tokens, we may feel to reflect on the sacrifice of the Saviour, His agonies in Gethsemane, His anguish on the cross, and the sorrows and pains He endured on our behalf. That will be what relieves our souls as we connect our suffering to His. At other times, we will feel to wonder with grateful awe at the “exquisite and sweet” joy of what Jesus’s magnificent gift has made possible in our lives and in our eternities! We will rejoice for what is yet to come—our cherished reunion with our beloved Father and risen Saviour.

masina fa “ny hiran’ny marina dia vavaka ho an’ [Andriamanitra]” ary finaritra amin’izany ny Fanahiny. Koa ‘ndao ary hihira! Sy hidera Azy!

Ireo lahateny sy fijoroana ho vavolombelona

Mampifantoka ireo lahateny sy fijoroana ho vavolombelona amin’ny Ray any An-danitra sy i Jesoa Kristy ary ireo vonkazo avy amin’ny fiainana feno fanetrentenan’ny filazantsaran’ Izy Ireo isika, voany izay “mamy manaoatra noho ny rehetra izay mamy.” Avy eo isika dia tena “hivoky ... mandra-pahavoky [antsika] ka tsy ho noana [isika] sady tsy hangetaheta,” ary ho mora ny zio-gantsika amin’ny alalan’ny fifalian’ily Zanaka.

Ny fanasan’ny Tompo

Ilay zava-manan-danja feno voninahitra ifantohan’ireo fivoriam-bavaka ataontsika dia ny fanamasinana sy ny fandraisana ny fanasan’ny Tompo, ny mofo sy ny rano maneho an’ohatra ilay fanomezana manavotra avy amin’ny Tompo ary ny tanjona manontolon’ny fihaonantsika. Izany dia “fotoana masina fanavaozana fanahy-” rehefa vavolombelona indray isika fa nanaiky an-tsitraro ny handray ny anaran’i Jesoa Kristy eo amintsika ary manao fanekempihavanana indray fa hahatsiaro ny Mpamonjy mandrakariva sy hitandrina ny didiny.

Misy fotoana eo amin’ny fiainana mety manatona ny fanasan’ny Tompo amin’ny fo mavesatra sy entana sarotra lanjaina isika. Amin’ny fotoana hafa dia manatona amin’ny fahatsapana ho afaka sy nohamaivanina tamin’ny ahiahy sy olana isika. Rehefa mihaino omban’ny finavian’ny fo marina ny fanamasinana ny mofo sy ny rano isika ary mandray ireo tandidona masina ireo, dia afaka ny hahatsapa fitaomana mba handinika ny sorona nataon’ny Mpamonjy, ny fangirifiriany tao Getsemane, ny tebitebiny teo amin’ny hazofijaliana, ary ny alahelo sy fanaintanana niaretany teo amin’ny toerantsika. Izany no hanamaivana ny fanahintsika rehefa mampifandray ny fijalintsika amin’ny fijaliany isika. Amin’ny fotoana hafa isika dia hahatsapa fitaomana mba hitolagaga sy ho talanjona omban’ny fankasitrahana manoloana ilay fifaliana “mahafinaritra sy mamy tokoa” noho ireo zavatra izay nataon’ny fanomezana lehiben’i Jesoa ho azo tanterahina eo amin’ny fiainantsika sy ny mandrakizaintsika. Hifaly amin’ireo zavatra mbola hoavy koa isika—dia ny fihaonana ma-

We may have been conditioned to suppose that the purpose of the sacrament is to sit in the pew thinking only about all the ways we messed up during the week before. But let's turn that practice on its head. In the stillness, we can ponder the many ways we have seen the Lord relentlessly pursue us with His wonderful love that week! We can reflect on what it means to "discover the joy of daily repentance." We can give thanks for the times the Saviour entered into our struggles and our triumphs and the occasions when we felt His grace, forgiveness, and power giving us strength to overcome our hardships and bear our burdens with patience and even good cheer.

Yes, we ponder the sufferings and injustices inflicted upon our Redeemer for our sin, and that does cause sober reflection. But we sometimes get stuck there—in the garden, at the cross, inside the tomb. We fail to move upward to the joy of the tomb bursting open, the defeat of death, and Christ's victory over all that might prevent us from gaining peace and returning to our heavenly home. Whether we shed tears of sorrow or tears of gratitude during the sacrament, let it be in awesome wonder at the good news of the Father's gift of His Son!

Parents with Children Who Are Young or Have Special Needs

Now, for parents of children who are young or have special needs, there is often no such thing as a time of stillness and quiet reflection during the sacrament. But in small moments throughout the week, you can teach by example the love, gratitude, and joy you feel for and from the Saviour as you constantly care for His little lambs. No effort in this pursuit is wasted. God is so aware of you.

hatehotia amin'ny Ray be fitia sy ny Mpamonjy nitsangana tamin'ny maty.

Mety ho nozarina isika hihevitra fa ny tanjon'ny fanasan'ny Tompo dia ny hipetraka eo amin'ny dabiliom-piangonana sady mieritritra fotsiny ireo fomba rehetra nanaovantsika hadisoana ny herinandro teo aloha. Saingy 'ndeha ovaintsika izany fahazarana izany. Ao anatin'ny fitoniana isika dia afaka misaintsaina ireo fomba maro izay nahitantsika ny Tompo tsy mitsaha-mikatsaka antsika amin'ny fitiavany mahafinaritra tamin'ny herinandro iny! Afaka mandinika ny dikan'ny hoe "[miaina] nyfifaliana avy amin'ny fibebahana isan'andro" isika. Afaka maneho fisaorana isika noho ireo fotoana nidiran'ny Mpamonjy an-tsehatra teo amin'ireo fahasarotana sy fandresena natrehantsika ary ireo fotoana izay nahatsapantsika ny fahasavany sy ny famelan-keloka avy Aminy ary ny heriny izay nanome tanjaka antsika mba handresy ireo fahasahiranantsika sy hizaka ny ziogantsika amim-paharetana sy amim-pifaliana mihitsy aza.

Eny tokoa, misaintsaina ireo fijaliana sy tsy fahamarinana nianjady tamin'ny Mpanavotra antsika noho ny fahotantsika isika, ary mahatonga fandinihana lalina izany. Saingy indraindray isika toa mijanona eo, ao amin'ilay saha, eny amin'ilay hazofijalina, ao amin'ilay fasana. Tsy tsaroantsika ny miandrindra any amin'ilay fialiana avy amin'ilay fasana nisokatra sy ilay faharesen'ny fahafatesana ary ny fandresen'i Kristy an'ireo izay mety manakana antsika tsy hahazo fiadanana sy hiverina any amin'ny fonenantsika any an-danitra. Na mandrotsaka ranomason'alahelo isika na ranomasom-pankasitrahana mandritra ny fanasan'ny Tompo, aoka izany ho amin'ny hagagana feno fitalanjonana ho an'ilay vaovao mahafalin'ny fanomezan'ny Ray ny Zanany!

Ireo ray aman-dreny manan-janaka mbola kely na mila fikarakarana manokana

Ho an'ireo ray aman-dreny manan-janaka mbola kely na mila fikarakarana manokana indray dia matetika tsy misy an'izany hoe fotoana handinihana amim-pahatoniana sy amim-pahanginana izany mandritra ny fanasan'ny Tompo. Saingy afaka mampianatra amin'ny alalan'ny ohatra ny fitiavana sy fankasitrahana ary fifaliana tsapanao ho an'ny Mpamonjy sy avy Aminy ianao manditra ny herinandro manontolo rehefa mikarakara an'ireo ondry keliny. Tsy misy ezaka

Family, Ward, and Branch Councils

Likewise at home, we can begin to enhance our hopes and expectations for our time at church. In family councils, we can discuss how each individual can contribute in meaningful ways to welcoming all to the church of joy! We can plan and expect to have a joyful experience at church.

Ward and branch councils can envision and create a culture of joyful reverence for our sacrament hour, identifying practical steps and visual cues to help.

Joy

Joy looks different for different people. For some, it may be exuberant greetings at the door. For others, it might be quietly helping people feel comfortable by smiling and sitting next to them with a kind and open heart. For those who feel left out or on the margins, the warmth of this welcome will be crucial. Ultimately, we can ask ourselves how the Saviour would want our sacrament hour to be. How would He want each one of His children to be welcomed, cared for, nourished, and loved? How would He want us to feel when we come to be renewed through remembering and worshipping Him?

Conclusion

At the start of my journey of faith, joy in Jesus Christ was my first great discovery, and it changed my world. If you have yet to discover this joy, embark on its quest. This is an invitation to receive the Saviour's gift of peace, light, and joy—to revel in it, to wonder at it, and to rejoice in it every Sabbath.

very maina ao anatin'izany fikatsahana izany.
Mahita anao Andriamanitra.

Filankevitra ao amin'ny fianakaviana sy paroasy ary Sampana

Toy izany koa ao an-tokantrano, afaka manomboka mampitombo ny fanantenantsika sy ny fiandrandrantsika ny fotoana any am-piangonana isika. Ao amin'ny filankevi-pianakaviana isika dia afaka mifanakalo hevitra ny amin'ny fomba manan-danja hahafahan'ny tsirairay mandray anjara mba hiarahaba ny rehetra Tonga soa ao amin'ny fiangonan'ny fifaliana! Afaka manao drafitra sy miandrindra ny hiaina fifaliana isika any am-piangonana.

Afaka maminavina sy mamorona kolontsain'ny fanehoana fanajana feno fifaliana ho an'ny fotoanan'ny fanasan'ny Tompo ny filankevitry ny paroasy sy sampana, ary mamantatra ireo dingana azo ampiharina sy fitaovana manintona ny maso afaka manampy.

Fifaliana

Samy hafa ny endrika hisehoan'ny fifaliana ho an'ny tsirairay. Mety ho fiarahabana amim-pitsikiana eny am-baravarana izany ho an'ny sasany. Ho an'ny hafa kosa dia mety ho fanampiana mangina ireo olona mba hahazo aina amin'ny alalan'ny tsiky sy fipetrahana eo anilany miaraka amin'ny hatsaram-panahy sy fandraisana amim-pitiavana. Tena zava-dehibe ilay fandraisana amim-kafanam-po ho an'ireo izay mahatsapa ho adino na voahilika. Afaka manontany tena isika amin'ny farany hoe toy ny ahoana no hitiavan'ny Mpamonjy hizoran'ny fotoanan'ny fanasan'ny Tompo. Ahoana no hitiavany handraisana, hikorakorana, hamokisana, ary hitiavana ireo zanany tsirairay? Ahoana no ho fahatsapana tiany hananantsika rehefa manatona isika mba havaozina amin'ny alalan'ny fahatsiarovana sy fitsaohana Azy?

Famaranana

Tany am-piandohan'ny dian'ny finoako dia ilay fifaliana ao amin'i Jesoa Kristy no zavatra lehibe hitako voalohany, ary nanova ny tontoloko izany. Raha mbola mikaroka izany fifaliana izany ianao dia atombohy ilay dian'ny fikarohana. Fanasana mba handray ny fanomezan'ny fiadanana sy fahazavana ary fifaliana avy amin'ny Mpamonjy ity, mba hankamamy izany, hitolaga-

Ammon in the Book of Mormon expresses the feelings of my heart when he says:

“Now have we not reason to rejoice? Yea, I say unto you, there never were [a people] that had so great reason to rejoice as we, since the world began; yea, and my joy is carried away, even unto boasting in my God; for he 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.

“Now if this is boasting, even so will I boast; for this is my life and my light, ... my joy, and my great thanksgiving.”

Welcome to the church of joy! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

ga ny amin'izany, ary hifaly ny amin'izany isaky ny Sabata.

Nanaho ny zavatra tsapako tato am-poko i Amôna rehefa nilaza izao tao amin'ny Bokin'i Môrmôna:

“Ankehitriny, moa tsy manana antony hifaliana va isika? Eny, lazaiko aminareo, tsy nisy na oviana na oviana [vahoaka] izay nanana antony lehibe loatra hiravoravoana toa antsika, hatry ny niandohan'izao tontolo izao; eny, ary entanim-pifaliana aho ka mampirehareha ahy amin' Andriamanitra; fa ananany ny hery rehetra, ny fahendrena rehetra ary ny fahazavan-tsaina rehetra; azony ny zava-drehetra, ary Izy no llay feno famindram-po ho famonjena ireo izay te hibe-baka sy hino ny anarany.

“Ankehitriny, raha izany no fireharehana, dia hirehareha toa izany aho; fa izany no fiainako sy fahazavako, ... fifaliako sy fanati-tsaotranko lehibe”.

Tonga soa ato amin'ny Fiangonan'ny fifaliana! Amin'ny anaran'i Jesoa Kristy, amena.