

Welcome to the Church of Joy

By Elder Patrick Kearon
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Afio Mai Ia i Le Ekalesia o le Olioli

Saunia e Elder Patrick Kearon
O Le Korama a Aposetolo e Toasefululua

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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.

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

Ona o le soifua togiola ma le misiona a lo tatou Faaola, o Iesu Keriso, ua mafai ai—ma e ao ai lava—ona avea i tatou ma tagata sili ona fiafia i le lalolagi!

Na papatisoina a'u i Le Ekalesia a Iesu Keriso o le Au Paia o Aso e Gata Ai i le aso na sosoo ma le Aso Kerisimasi o le 1987, ua toeitiiti 37 tausaga ua mavae. Sa o se aso moni matagofie lena i lo'u olaga, ma i la'u malaga e faavavau, ma ou te faafetai loloto mo uo sa saunia le ala ma aumaia a'u i vai o lena fanaufouina.

Pe o lou papatisoga o ananafi po o tausaga e tele ua mavae, pe tou te faapotopoto i se faletele o le Ekalesia e toatele ni uarota e i ai, po o lalo o se fale atolau, pe o e taliaina le faamanatuga e faamanatu ai le Faaola i Tai po o Suahili, ou te fia fai atu ia te outou, afio mai ia i le ekalesia o le olioli! Afio mai ia i le ekalesia o le olioli!

O Le Ekalesia o le Olioli

Ona o le fuafuaga alofa a lo tatou Tama Faalelagi mo Lana fanau taitoatasi, ma ona o le soifua togiola ma le misiona a lo tatou Faaola, o Iesu Keriso, ua mafai ai ona tatou—ma e ao ai lava ona avea i tatou ma tagata e sili ona fiafia i le lalolagi! Tusa lava foi pe fesasaa'i i o tatou luga afā o le olaga i se lalolagi e tele ina pagatia, e mafai lava ona tatou atia'e se lagona faatupula'ia ma mausali o le olioli ma se toafilemu i totonu ona o lo tatou faamoemoe ia Keriso ma lo tatou malamalama i lo tatou lava tulaga i le fuafuaga matagofie o le fiafia.

Na saunoa le Aposetolo sinia a le Alii, o Pere-sitene Russell M. Nelson, e uiga i le olioli e maua mai se olaga e faatotonugalemu ia Iesu Keriso, i le

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, bowing our heads, closing our eyes, and holding still—indefinitely! 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.

toetoe o lauga uma lava na ia tuuina mai talu ona avea ma Peresitene o le Ekalesia. Sa ia aoteleina faapuupuu e faapea: “E oo mai le olioli mai ia te Ia ma ona o Ia. ... Mo le Au Paia o Aso e Gata Ai, o Iesu Keriso o le olioli lea!”

O i tatou o tagata o le Ekalesia a Iesu Keriso. O i tatou o tagata o le ekalesia o le olioli! Ma e leai se isi mea e tatau ona sili ona manino ai lo tatou olioli o se nuu nai lo le taimi tatou te faapototo faatasi ai i Sapati taitasi i a tatou sauniga faamanatuga e tapuai i le faapogai o le olioli uma! O iina tatou te faapotopoto ai ma aiga o la tatou uarota ma paranesi e faamanatu le faamanatuga o le Talisuaga a le Alii, lo tatou laveaiina mai le agasala ma le oti, ma le alofa tunoa mamana o le Faaola! O iina tatou te o mai ai ia maua le olioli, malutaga, faamagaloga, faafetai, ma le avea ma ni ō lea e maua e ala ia Iesu Keriso!

Pe o le agaga lea o le olioli faatasi ia Keriso o le mea lea tou te maua? Pe o le mea lea tou te aumaia? Atonu e te manatu e leai sau feau tele i lea mea, pe atonu ua na ona e masani lava i mea sa masani ona fai. Ae e mafai ona tatou tofu sao, e le afaina pe o le a lo tatou matutua po o o tatou valaauga, i le faia o a tatou sauniga faamanatuga ia faatumulia i le olioli, taulai ia Keriso, talileleia o isi i le mea e mafai ai, ae ao lava ona faia ma se agaga o le migao e tumu i le olioli.

Migao e Tumu i le Olioli

Migao e tumu i le Olioli? “Se mea moni lena mea?” atonu e te fesili ai. Ioe, e moni! E loloto lo tatou alolofa, faamamalu, ma faaaloalo i lo tatou Atua, ma e tafe mai lo tatou migao mai se agaga e olioli i le alofa tele, alofamutimutivale, ma le faaolataga o Keriso! O lea migao e tumu i le olioli i le Alii, e ao ona avea ma uiga o a tatou sauniga paia o le faamanatuga.

Peitai, o le toatele, o le migao e na o le pau lea o lona faauigaina: mau o le piilima, punonou o tatou ulu, moeiini, ma ffilemu—mo se taimi umi! Atonu o se ala lea e fesoasoani e aoao ai fanau laiti tiotio, ae a o tatou tuputupu a’e ma aoao, ia tatou iloa o le migao e matuai tele atu isi mea nai lo lenei. Pe o le tulaga lena e tatau ona tatou i ai pe ana faapea o loo tatou i ai ma le Faaola? E leai, aua “i [Lona] afioaga o i ai le atoaga o le olioli”!

Ia, o le toatele o tatou o lenei suiga i a tatou tapuaiga faamanatuga o le a moomia ona faa-ta’ita’i.

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 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

Na o le Auai ma le Tapuai Moni

Tatou te le faapotopoto i le Sapati e na ona auai i le sauniga faamanatuga ma maka ese mai le lisi. Tatou te potopoto faatasi e tapuai. E tele lava le eseese o ia mea e lua. Ina ia auai lona uiga ia nofo ai. Ae i atapuaio le vivii a’e lea ma le loto i ai ma faamanū atu i lo tatou Atua i se ala e faaliliu ai i tatou!

I Luga o le Tulaga ma i le Potopotoga

Afai tatou te faapotopoto ina ia faamanatuina le Faaola ma le togia o Ia na mafai ai, e ao ona atagia mai i o tatou foliga lo tatou olioli ma le lotofaafetai! Sa faamatala e Elder F. Enzio Busche se tala i le taimi a o avea o ia ma peresitene o se paranesi, ma sa tilotilo atu se tamaitiiti ia te ia i luga o le tulaga ma fesili leotele atu, “O le a le mea a le la tamaloa foliga pāu e fai i luga i o?” O i latou e nonofo i luga o le tulaga—le aufailauga, o ta’ita’i, aufaipese—ma i latou e faapotopoto i le potopotoga e fesootai atu le tasi i le isi i lenei “susū mai i le ekalesia o le olioli” e ala i o latou foliga vaaia!

Usuina o Viiga

A o tatou pepese, pe o tatou aufaatasi ea e vivii atu i lo tatou Atua ma le Tupu, tusa lava po o le a le tulaga o o tatou leo, pe na ona tatou memumemuina upu po o le lē pepese foi? O loo tusia i le mau e faapea “o le pese a le amiotonu o se tatalo lea i le [Atua]” e fiafia i ai Lona agaga. Ia, tatou pepese! Ma vivii atu ia te Ia!

Lauga ma Molimau

Tatou te faatotonugalemu a tatou lauga ma molimau i le Tama Faalelagi ma Iesu Keriso ma fua o le ola ma le lotomaualalo i la La’ua talalelei, o fua e “sili ona suamalie i mea suamalie uma.” Ona tatou “taumamafa [moni lea] ... seia oo ina [tatou] maoona, o le a [tatou] le fia aai, pe ... fia feinu ai,” ma māmā a tatou avega e ala i le olioli o le Alo.

O Le Faamanatuga

O le itu mamalu e taulai i ai a tatou tapuaiga o le faamanuaina ma le taliaina o le faamanatuga lava ia, o le areto ma le vai e suitulaga i le meaalo-fa togia o lo tatou Alii ma le faamoemoega atoa o lo tatou potopoto ai. “O se taimi paia lenei o le toefaafouina faaleagaga” pe a tatou molimau atu ua tatou naunau e tauave i o tatou luga le suafa o

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.

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!

Iesu Keriso ma toe osia le feagaiga e manatua pea le Faaola ma tausi i Ana poloaiga.

I nisi o mafuaaga o le olaga, atonu tatou te faalatalata atu i le faamanatuga ma ni loto ua mamafa ma ni avega lofituina. O isi taimi, tatou te o mai e leai ni avega mai gaogaosa ma faa-lavelave. A o tatou faalogologo ma le toto’a i le faamanuiaga o le areto ma le vaima taumamafa i na faatusa paia, tatou te lagona le manao e manatunatu i le taulaga a le Faaola, o Ona puapuaga i Ketesemane, o Lona mafatia i luga o le satauro, ma faanoanoaga ma tiga na Ia onosaia mo i tatou. O le mea lena e mapu ai o tatou agaga, a o tatou faafesootai atu o tatou mafatiaga i Ona [mafatiaga]. O isi taimi, o le a tatou lagona ai le taumanatunatu ma le maofa e faafetai i le maoae o le “olioli matagofie” i le mea na faia e le meaalofo maoae a Iesu i o tatou olaga ma i o tatou faavavau! O le a tatou olioli mo mea o le a oo mai—lo tatou toe faatasiga faapelepele ma lo tatou Tama pele ma le Faaola toetu.

Atonu ua tatou masani i le manatu faapea o le faamoemoega o le faamanatuga o le nofo i le nofoa ma mafaufau i na o ala uma na tatou faaletonu ai i le aluga o le vaiaso. Ae tatou faaliliuina lena faiga i le mea e tatau ona fai. I le taaligoligoa o le siomaga o le faamanatuga, e mafai ona tatou manatunatu loloto i le tele o mea na tatou vaai o tulimatai pea lava pea e le Alii i tatou i Lona alofa matagofie i lena vaiaso! E mafai ona tatou tomanatu i le uiga o le “iloaina leoliolio le salamo i aso taitasi.” E mafai ona tatou momoli le faafetai mo taimi na ulufale mai ai le Faaola i a tatou tauiviga ma olioliga ma taimi na tatou lagona ai Lona alofatunoa, faamagaloga, ma le mana na tuuina mai ai le malosi ia i tatou e faatoilalo o tatou faigata ma tauave a tatou avega ma le onosai ma le fiafia.

Ioe, tatou te manatunatu loloto ai i puapuaga ma faamasinoga le tonu na faatietie i luga o lo tatou Togiola mo a tatou agasala, ma o lena e afua ai se matuai mafaufau loloto i ai. Ae o nisi taimi tatou te mau iina—i le faatoaga, i le satauro, i totonu o le tuugamau. Ua le mafai ona tatou agai i luga atu i le olioli o le tuugamau ua matala, le faatoilaloina o le oti, ma le manumalo o Keriso i mea uma e ono taofia ai i tatou mai le mauaina o le filemu ma toefoi atu ai i lo tatou aiga faalelagi. Pe na maligi o tatou loimata o le faanoanoa po o loimata o le lotofaafetai i le taimi o le faamanatuga, ia avea lena o se mafaufauga matagofie i le tala e lelei o le meaalofo a le Tama o Lona Alo!

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.

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.

O Matua e I Ai Fanau e Laiti pe I Ai Manaoga Faapitoa

Ia, mo matua o tamaiti e laiti pe i ai manaoga faapitoa, e tele taimi e leai se mea e igoa o se taimi o le nonofo lelei ma se manatunatuga filemu i le taimi o le faamanatuga. Ae i ni taimi iti i le gasologa o le vaiaso, e mafai ona e aoao atu e ala i faataitaiga o le alofa, lotofaafetai, ma le olioli e te lagonaina mo, ma mai le Faaola a o e tausia pea lava pea Ana tama'i mamoe. E leai se taumafaiga i lenei tulimataiga e maimau. O loo silafia lelei oe e le Atua.

Aufono a Aiga, Uarota ma Paranesi

E faapena foi i le fale, e mafai ona tatou amata faalauleleia o tatou faamoemoe ma talitonuga mo o tatou taimi i le lotu. I fonotaga faaleaiga, e mafai ona tatou talanoaina ai pe mafai faapefea e tagata taitoatasi ona saofagā i ni auala 'anoa e talileleia ai tagata uma i le ekalesia o le olioli! E mafai ona tatou fuafua ma talitonu ia maua se aafiaga fiafia i le lotu.

E mafai e le aufono a le uarota ma paranesi ona vaai mamao ma fatu se aganuu o le migao fiafia mo le itula o la tatou faamanatuga, faailoa ni laasaga faatino ma ni faailo vaaia e fesoasoani ai.

Olioli

E eseese foliga o le olioli mo tagata eseese. Mo nisi, o ni faafeiloai sagisagi fiafia i le faitotoa. Mo isi, atonu o se fesoasoani lē lēoa ia lagona e tagata le mafanafana e ala i le ataata ma le nofo i o latou autafa ma se lototatala ma le alofa. Mo i latou o e lagona le tuulafoaiina po o le i ai i autafa, o le mafanafana o lenei faafeiloaiga o le a taua tele. O le faaiuga lava, e mafai ona tatou fesili ifo ia i tatou lava pe mata o le a se ituaiga itula o le faamanatuga e finagalo ai le Faaola. O le a Sona finagalo i le auala e faafeiloa'ia, vaaia, faafailelei, ma alofaina ai Lana fanau taitoatasi? O le a Sona finagalo i o tatou lagona pe a tatou o mai e faafou e ala i le manatuaina ma tapuai atu ia te Ia?

Faaiuga

I le amataga o la'u malaga o le faatuatua, o le olioli ia Iesu Keriso o le mea sili muamua lea na ou mauaina, ma sa suia ai lo'u lalolagi. Afai e te lei mauaina lenei olioli, oso loa i luga o lenei tulimataiga. O se valaaulia lenei ia maua le meaalofo o le filemu, malamalama, ma le olioli a le Faaola—ia olioli i ai, ia mafaufau i ai, ma ia

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.

fiafia ai, i Sapati taitasi.

O loo faaalia e Amona i le Tusi a Mamona ia lagona o lo’u loto ina ua ia fai mai:

“O lenei pe le ua i ai ea ia te i tatou se pogai tatou te olioli ai? Ioe, ou te fai atu ia te outou, e lei i ai lava [ni tagata] na i ai se pogai tele naua latou te olioli ai e pei o i tatou, talu mai le amata-ga o le lalolagi; ioe, ma ua soona tele lava lo’ u olioli, ua oo lava i le mitamita i lo’ u Atua; ona ua ia te ia le mana uma, ma le poto uma, ma le malamalama uma; ua silafia e ia mea uma, ma o ia o se Tagata alofa mutimutivale, e oo i le olata-ga, o i latou o e e salamo ma talitonu i lona suafa.

“O lenei afai o le mitamitavale lea, o le a faapea lava ona ou mitamita; ona o lo’ u ola ma lo’ u sulu lea, ... o lo’ u olioli ma la’u faafetai sili.”

Afifio mai ia i le ekalesia o le olioli! I le suafa o Iesu Keriso, amene.