

Divine Authority, Sublime Young Men

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Fahefan' Andriamanitra, zatovolahy tena tsara

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I am forever grateful that holders of the Aaronic Priesthood, with its powers, ordinances, and duties, do bless all of us.

Thank you, Elder Andersen, for that remarkable expression of priesthood power and of the power of the Savior's Atonement.

One Sunday morning this January, as I sat in sacrament meeting, over a dozen young men were sustained to be advanced in the Aaronic Priesthood. I felt the world changing beneath our feet.

It struck me that all around the world, time zone by time zone, in sacrament meetings just like that one, tens of thousands of deacons, teachers, and priests—like President Holland's friend this morning, Easton—were being sustained to be ordained into lifelong priesthood ministries that would span the length and breadth of the gathering of Israel.

Each January, hands are laid on the heads of about 100,000 young men, connecting them through ordinance to a bright line of authority stretching back through the Restoration epoch to Joseph and Oliver, to John the Baptist, and to Jesus Christ.

Now, ours is not always a very demonstrative church. Here, we do understatement.

But still, seeing this rolling thunder of newly ordained priesthood holders spreading across the

Feno fankasitrahana mandrakizay aho fa mitahy antsika rehetra ireo mpihazona ny fisoronana Aharôna, amin'ny alalan'ny heriny, ôrdônansy ary andraikitra mifandraika amin'izany.

Misaotra anao ry Loholona Andersen noho izany fanehoana mahavariana momba ny herin'ny fisoronana sy ny herin'ny Sorompanavotan'ny Mpamonjy izany.

Indray alahady maraina tamin'ny janoary teo, raha teo am-panatrehana fivoriana fanasan'ny Tompo aho, dia nanatri-maso fanohanana sy fandrosoana zatovolahy am-polony tamin'ny fisoronana Aharôna. Nahatsapa toy ny nitsingevaheva ny tongotro.

Nanaitra ahy ny nahita fa eran'izao tontolo izao, isaky ny zarakasinora, ao anatin'ny fivoriana fanasan'ny Tompo tahaka ilay iray natrehiko dia diakona sy mpampianatra ary mpisorona an'aliny, tahaka an'i Easton ilay naman'ny Filoha Holland aninkeo maraina, no notohanana mba ho tendrena ao amin'ny asa fanompoan'ny fisoronana mandritra ny androm-piainany izay manitatra sy mampiely ny fanangonana an'Isiraely.

Isaky ny volana janoary, dia ametrahan-tanana ireo zatovolahy efa ho iray hetsy isa mba hampifandraisana azy ireo amin'ny alalan'ny ôrdônansy, amin'ny fitohizam-pahefana mazava tsara mianotra mankany amin'ny vanim-po-toanan'ny Famerenana amin'ny laoniny, tamin'i Joseph sy Oliver—mankany amin'i Jaona Mpanao Batisa sy i Jesoa Kristy.

Nefa tsy fiangonana tia sehoseho ny antsika. Tsy manamaivana na manome lanja be izany isika.

Kanefa indray, eo am-pahitana ny dian'ireo mpihazona fisoronana vao notendrena izay toy

earth, I wondered—in a “church of joy” kind of way—if it shouldn’t be shouted from the rooftops. “Today,” I thought, “there should be trumpets and crashing cymbals and blazing Roman candles. There should be parades!”

Knowing God’s power for what it truly is, we were witness to the disruption of the very patterns of this world by godly authority spreading across the earth.

These ordinations launch these young men into lifetimes of service as they will find themselves in consequential times and places where their presence and prayers and the powers of the priesthood of God they hold will profoundly matter.

This controlled chain reaction began with a ministering angel sent of God. The resurrected John the Baptist of ancient times appeared to Joseph and Oliver, placed his hands on their heads, and said, “Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins” (Doctrine and Covenants 13:1).

John called this authority the “Priesthood of Aaron,” after Moses’s brother and priesthood companion. Anciently, the holders of this priesthood of Aaron were to teach and assist with ordinances—ordinances that focused discipleship on the future Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (see Deuteronomy 33:10).

The book of Numbers explicitly assigns to holders of the priesthood of Aaron the tasks of handling the vessels of the ordinances. “And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons ... and their charge shall be ... the table ... and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister” (Numbers 3:10, 31).

The Old Testament ordinance of animal sacrifice was fulfilled and replaced through the Savior’s life and Atonement. That ancient ordinance was replaced with the ordinance we now call the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

ny feon’ny kotrobaratra miparitaka manerana ny tany, dia nanontany tena aho—araka ilay hoe “fiangonan’ny fifaliana” raha toa aza ka tsy tokony natao antso avo teny an-tampon-trano izany. “Androany maraina,” dia nieritreritra aho fa “tokony hisy trompetra sy kipantsona mi-karantsana ary tafondro fanapoaka amina fety. Tokony hisy matso mihitsy é!”

Amin’ny fahafantarana ny herin’ Andriamanitra tena izy, dia manatri-maso ny fiovan’ny sori-dalam-piainan’ity izao tontolo izao ity isika amin’ny alalan’ny fielezan’ny hery avy any ambon’ny miparitaka manerana ny tany.

Ireo fanendrena ireo dia mampiditra ireo zavotolahy ho ao amin’ny asa fanompoana mandritra ny androm-piainany rehefa hikatsaka ary koa hirona any amin’ny fahafahana manompo izay hisian’ny maha-zava-manan-danja be ny maha eo azy ireo sy ny vavaka ataony ary ny fisoronan’ Andriamanitra izay hazoniny.

Niatomboka tamin’ny fandefasan’ Andriamanitra ny fitohitohizan’ny zava-nitranga. Niseho tamin’i Joseph sy Oliver izy, sy nametraka ny tanany teo ambony lohan’izy ireo, ary nilaza hoe: “Ianareo ry mpiara-manompo amiko, amin’ny anaran’ny Mesia, no tolora ny Fisoronan’i Aharôna, izay mihazona ny fanalahidin’ny fanompoan’ny anjely sy ny an’ny filazantsaran’ny fibebahana ary ny an’ny batisa asitrika ho famelana ny fahotana” (Fotopampianarana sy Fanekem-pihavanana 13:1).

Ny “Fisoronana Aharôna” no niantsoan’i Jaona io fahefana io, araka ny rahalahin’i Mosesy sy ireo mpiara-mihazona ny fisoronana amin’ny. Fahagola, dia nampianarina sy namafisina tamin’ny ôrdônansy—ôrdônansy izay mifantoka amin’ny maha mpianatr’i Mesia, ny Tompo Jesoa Kristy—ireo mpihazona ny fisoronana Aharôna (jereo ny Deuteronomia 33:10).

Manome mazava tsara anjara asa ho an’ireo mpihazona ny Fisoronana Aarôna amin’ny fikirakirana ireo fanaka momba ny ôrdônansy ny bokin’i Nomery. “Ary homena an’i [Aharôna] sy ny zananilahy ... ary ny anjara raharahany dia ... ny latabatra ... ary ny fanaky ny fitoerana masina, izay fanaovana fanompoam-pivavahana” (Nomery 3:10, 31).

Tanteraka tamin’ny fiainana sy ny Sorompanavotan’ny Mpamonjy ny fanaovana ôrdônansy sorona biby natao tamin’ny fotoan’ny Testamenta Taloha. Izany ôrdônansy tranainy izany dia efa nosoloina ilay ôrdônansy izay antsointsika hoe:

The Lord entrusts today's bearers of the priesthood of Aaron to do very much the same things they did anciently: to teach and to administer ordinances—all to remind us of His Atone-ment.

When deacons, teachers, and priests help with the sacrament, they receive its blessings just like everyone else: by keeping the covenant they make as they individually partake of the bread and the water. But in the performance of these sacred duties, they also learn more about their priesthood roles and responsibilities.

The Aaronic Priesthood is called the preparatory priesthood partly because its ordinances allow them to experience the weight and the joy of being on the Lord's errand, preparing them for future priesthood service, when they may be called upon to minister in unforeseeable ways—including pronouncing inspired blessings in times when hopes and dreams, and even life and death, hang in precarious balance.

Such serious expectations require serious preparation.

The Doctrine and Covenants explains that deacons and teachers are “to warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:59). In addition to these opportunities, priests are to “preach ... and baptize” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:50).

Well, all that sounds like a lot, but in the real world, these things happen naturally and all over the world.

One bishop taught his new deacons quorum presidency these duties. So the young presidency began to talk about what that might look like in their quorum and in their ward. They decided they should start visiting elderly ward members to see what they needed and then do that.

ny Fanasan'ny Tompo.

Mandidy ireo mpitondra ny fisoronana Aharôna maoderina ny Tompo androany mba hanao zavatra betsaka tahaka ny nataon'ireo tany aloha, dia ny: mampianatra sy manatanteraka ôrdônansy—izy rehetra, mba hampahatsiahy antsika ny Sorompanavotany.

Rehefa manampy ao amin'ny fanasan'ny Tompo ireo diakona sy mpampianatra ary mpisorona, dia mandray ny fitahiana avy amin'iza ny tahaka ireo hafa rehetra: amin'ny alalan'ny fanajana ireo fanekempihavanana izay ataony eo am-pandraisana ho an'ny tenany manokana ny mofo sy rano. Fa amin'ny alalan'ny fanaovana ireo adidy ireo ihany koa dia mianatra izy ireo momba ireo anjara asany sy andraikiny ao amin'ny fisoronana.

Nantsoina amin'ny ampahany hoe fisoronana fanomanana ny fisoronana Aharôna satria ireo ôrdônansy dia mamela azy ireo hiaina ao anatina lanjan'ny hafaliana amin'ny fanatanterahana ireo ôrdônansy masina anaty fanompoana ny Tompo, manomana azy ireo asa fanompoana ao amin'ny fisoronana amin'ny ho avy, rehefa azo antsoina hanompo amin'ny fomba izay tsy afaka ambara mialoha—anisan'izany ny fanononana tsodrano entanim-panahy mandritra ny fotoana izay tsy maha-marin-toerana ny fanantenana sy ny nofinofy, ary eny fa na dia ny fiainana sy ny fahafatesana aza.

Mitaky fiomanana matotra ny fiandrindrana zavatra goavana toy izany.

Manazava ny Fotopampianarana sy Fanekempihavanana fa ireo diakona sy mpampianatra “dia ... hampitandrina, hanazava, hanentana ary hampianatra sy hanasa ny rehetra hanatona an'i Kristy” (Fotopampianarana sy Fanekempihavanana 20:59). Ny an'ny mpisorona, ho fanampin'ireo fahafahana voalaza ireo, dia ny “mitory, mampianatra, manazava, manentana ary ny manao batisa” (Fotopampianarana sy Fanekempihavanana 20:50).

Eny, toa betsaka izany rehetra izany, saingy araka ny toe-javatra iainana, ireo zavatra ireo dia miseho ho azy, manerana ny tany manontolo.

Nampianatra ireo fiadidian'ny kôlejin'ny diakona vaovao ny eveka iray. Nanomboka niresaka momba ny mety ho fomba hanaovana izany ao amin'ny kôlejy sy ny paroasin'izy ireo izany fiadidiana vao izany. Nanapa-kevitra izy ireo ny hamangy ireo mpikambana zokiolona ao amin'ny paroasy mba hahafantarany ny zavatra ilain'izy

Among those they served was Alan, a rough, often profane, and sometimes hostile neighbor. Alan's wife, Wanda, became a member of the Church, but Alan was, as we say, something of a piece of work.

Still, the deacons went to work, comically ignoring his insults, while they shoveled snow and took out trash. Deacons can be hard to hate, and Alan eventually began to love them. At some point they invited him to church.

"I don't like church," he responded.

"Well, you like us," they said. "So come with us. You can just come to our quorum meeting if you want."

And with the bishop's approval, he came—and he kept coming.

The deacons became teachers, and as they continued to serve him, he taught them to work on cars and to build things. By the time these deacons-turned-teachers became priests, Alan was calling them "my boys."

They were earnestly preparing for missions and asked him if they could practice missionary lessons with him. He swore that he would never listen and never believe, but, yeah, they could practice at his house.

And then Alan got sick. And he softened.

And one day in quorum meeting, he tenderly asked them to pray for him to quit smoking, and so they did. But then they followed him home and confiscated all of his tobacco stash.

As his failing health put Alan into hospitals and rehab centers, "his boys" served him, quietly exuding powers of priesthood and of love unfeigned (see Doctrine and Covenants 121:41).

The miracle continued when Alan asked to

ireo, ary handeha hanao izany avy eo.

Anisany tamin'ireo notompoin'izy ireo i Alan izay mpiara-monina tsy misy fanajana, mpaniratsira matetika ary indraindray feno fankahalana. Lasa mpikamban'ny Fiangonana i Wanda vadin'i Alan, fa i Alan kosa, araka ny voambara, dia olona tsy mba nahafinaritra.

Mbola nandeha niasa ihany anefa ireo dia-kona, nampiasa vazivazy mba hanamaivanana ny tevatevany, teo am-panalana ny ranomandry teny amin'ny lalana sy ny sisin-dalana, sy fanakisahanana ny dabam-pako hankeo amoron-dalana. Toa sarotra ny hankahala ireo diakona, ary i Alan koa nanomboka nankafy ny fisian'izy ireo tamin'ny farany. Nisy fotoana iray nanasan'izy ireo azy ho any am-piangonana.

"Tsy tia fiangonana aho," hoy izy namaly.

"Eny e, fa ianao tia anay," hoy izy ireo. "Koa andao hiaraka aminay. "Afaka tonga ao amin'ny fivorian'ny kôlejinay fotsiny ihany ianao."

Niaraka tamin'ny fankatoavan'ny eveka, dia tonga izy—ary nanohy tonga hatrany.

Lasa mpampianatra ireo diakona, ary rehefa nanohy nanompo azy izy ireo dia nampianariny hanamboatra fiara sy hanangan-javatra. Tamin'ny fotoana nahalasa mpisorona an'ireo diakona lasa mpampianatra ireo, dia niantso azy ireo hoe: "zanako lahy" i Alan.

Niomana mafy ny handeha hanao asa fitori-ana izy ireo, ary nanontany azy raha toa ka afaka hanao fanazaran-tena miaraka aminy momba ny lesona misiônera. Nianiana izy fa tsy hihaino sy tsy hino velively izany, kanefa, afaka tonga ao an-trano ianareo raha hanao izany fanazaran-tena izany.

Narary i Alan nony avy eo. Dia nihanalefaka izy.

Indray andro, tao amin'ny fivorian'ny kôlejy dia nangataka azy ireo tamim-pitiavana izy mba hivavaka ho azy ho afaka amin'ny fifohana sigara, dia nataon'izy ireo izany. Fa narahin'izy ireo tany an-tranony izy avy eo mba hangalan'izy ireo ny ambin-tsigarany.

Noho ny fahasalamany niharatsy dia nentina nankany amin'ny hopitaly sy ivon-toerana fanabeazana ara-pahasalamana i Alan, tsy nitsahatra ny fahagagana teo am-panompoan'ireo 'zanakalahin'i Alan" azy, nampiseho mangingina ny herin'ny fisoronana sy ny fitiavana tsy mi-hatsaravelatsihy (jereo ny Fotopampianarana sy Fanekehampihavanana 121:41).

Nitohy ny fahagagana rehefa nangataka ny

be baptized—but then he passed away before it could happen. At his request, his deacons-turned-priests were the pallbearers and the speakers at his funeral, where they—fittingly—warned, expounded, exhorted, taught, and invited all to Christ.

And later, in the temple, it was one of “Alan’s boys” who baptized that erstwhile deacons quorum president in proxy for Alan.

Everything John the Baptist said to do, they did. They did what deacons, teachers, and priests do all over this Church and all over this world.

One of the things holders of the priesthood of Aaron are charged to do involves the ordinance of the sacrament.

Last year I met an inspired bishop and his wonderful wife. On a recent Saturday morning, they were driving to their son’s baptism and suffered the tragic and sudden loss of their darling two-year-old daughter, Tess.

The next morning their ward members gathered for sacrament meeting filled with compassion, also suffering over the loss of this perfect little girl. No one expected the bishop’s family to be at church that morning, but a couple of minutes before the meeting started, they quietly entered and took their place.

The bishop went to the stand and walked past his usual seat between his counselors and sat down instead between his priests at the sacrament table.

During that anguished and sleepless night before of searching for understanding and peace, he had received a strong impression of what his family most needed—and what his ward most needed. It was to hear the voice of their bishop, their ward Aaronic Priesthood president, their grieving father, pronounce the promises of the sacramental covenant.

mba hatao batisa i Alan, saingy nodimandry izy talohan’ny nitrangan’izany. Tao amin’ny fan-gatahany dia ireo diakona lasa mpisorona no ho mpilanja azy sy ho mpandahateny amin’ny fandevenana azy, ary teo izy ireo—izay fotoana mety indrindra—no nampitandrina, nanazava, nanentana ary nampianatra sy nanasa ny rehetra hanatona an’i Kristy.

Ary taorian’ny fe-potoana izay tsy maintsy nilaina dia mazava ho azy fa ny iray tamin’ireo zanakalahin’i Alan dia nataon’ny filohan’ny kôlejin’ny diakona teo aloha batisa hisoloana tena tany amin’ny tempoly, ho an’i Alan.

Ny zavatra rehetra nolazain’i Jaona Mpanao Batisa fa tokony hatao dia nataon’izy ireo. Nanao ny fanaon’ny diakona, mpampianatra ary mpisorona manerana ny Fiangonana sy manerana izao tonolo izao izy ireo.

Iray amin’ireo andraikitra ataon’ny mpihazona ny fisoranana Aharôna ny ôrdônansin’ny fanasan’ny Tompo.

Tamin’ny herintaona dia nifanena tamina eveka feno fitaomam-panahy sy ny sy ny vadiny mahafinaritra aho. Indray sabotsy maraina vao tsy ela dia nondaosin’ny fahafatesana tampoka ny zanakavavin’izy ireo vao roa taona, raha iny izy ireo handeha hanatrika ny batisan’ny zanany lahy iny.

Ny ampitso maraina, ireo mpikambana tao amin’ny paroasiny izay nivory ho amin’ny fanasan’ny Tompo dia feno fangorahana, nangirifiry koa izy ireo noho ny fahalasan’ity zazavavy kely tsy misy tsiny ity. Tsy nisy nieritreritra fa ho avy any am-piangonana ny fianakavian’ny eveka, kanefa minitra vitsy talohan’ny fiantombohan’ny fotoana dia niditra tamim-pahanginana izy ireo ary nandray toerana.

Nandeha nankeo amin’ny lampihazo sy nandalo teo anoloan’ny sezany mahazatra eo afovoan’ireo mpanolotsainy ilay eveka, fa nipetraka kosa teo afovoan’ireo mpisorony teo amin’ny latabaty ny fanasan’ny Tompo.

Nandritra ilay alina feno alahelo sy tsy nahan-tory talohan’ny fitadiavana fahatakarana sy fiadanana, dia nandray fahatsapana mahery vaika izy momba ny zavatra tena ilain’ny fianakaviany—sy ny zavatra tena ilain’ny paroasiny. Izany dia ny mandre ny feon’ny evekany, ny filohan’ny Fisoronana Aharônan’ny paroasiny, ary ny feon’ily dadan’izy ireo mbola misaona manonona ireo fampanantenan’ny fanekempihavanan’ny fanasan’ny Tompo.

So, in due course, he knelt with those priests and spoke to His Father. With the pathos of that occasion, he pronounced some of the most powerful words that anyone is ever allowed to say out loud in this lifetime.

Words of eternal consequence.

Words of ordinance.

Words of covenant.

Instruction that connects us to the very purposes of this life—and to the most magnificent outcomes of Heavenly Father’s plan for us.

Can you imagine what the congregation heard in that chapel that day—what they felt in the words that we hear every Sunday in our chapels?

“O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:77).

And then: “O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this [water] to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:79).

This good father and mother testify that that promise has been fulfilled. They do, in fact, to their everlasting comfort, “have his Spirit to be with them.”

I am forever grateful that holders of the Aaronic Priesthood, with its powers, ordinances,

Tamin’ny fotoana voatokana hoan’izany dia nandohalika niaraka tamin’ireo mpisorona ireo izy, ary niresaka tamin’ny Rainy. Tamin’ny alahelo lehibe no nanononany ny sasany tamin’ireo teny feno hery izay azon’ny olona rehetra tenenina amin’ny feo avo eto amin’ity androm-piainana ity.

Teny manana fiantraikany mandrakizay.

Teny ao amin’ny ôrdônansy.

Tenin’ny fanekempihavanana.

Toromarika izay mampifandray antsika amin’ilay tena tanjon’ity fiainana ity—ary ny vokatra tsara indrindran’ny drafitry ny Ray any An-danitra ho antsika.

Azonao sary an-tsaina ve ny zavatra henon’ny mpiangona tao amin’izany trano fiangonana izany tamin’io andro io, ny zavatra tsapan’izy ireo tao anatin’ireo teny izay fandrentsika isaky ny alahady?

“Andriamanitra Ray Mandrakizay ô, mangataka Anao izahay, amin’ny anaran’ny Zanakao Jesoa Kristy hitahy sy hanamasina ity mofo ity ho an’ny fanahin’ireo rehetra izay mandray amin’izany, mba hahazoany mihinana ho fahatsiarovana ny vatan’ny Zanakao sy hijoroany ho vavolombelona Aminao, Andriamanitra Ray Mandrakizay ô, fa vonona izy ireo ny hitondra ny anaran’ny Zanakao, ny hahatsiaro Azy mandrakariva ary ny hitandrina ny didiny izay efa nomeny azy ireo; mba hananany mandrakariva ny Fanahiny miaraka aminy. Amena” (Fotopampianarana sy Fanekempihavanana 20:77).

Avy eo dia ny hoe: “Andriamanitra Ray Mandrakizay ô, mangataka Anao izahay amin’ny anaran’ny Zanakao Jesoa Kristy, hitahy sy hanamasina ity rano ity ho an’ny fanahin’ireo rehetra izay misotro amin’izany, mba hahazoany manao izany ho fahatsiarovana ny ran’ny Zanakao izay nalatsaka ho azy ireo; mba hijoroany ho vavolombelona Aminao Andriamanitra Ray Mandrakizay ô, fa hotsaroany mandrakariva Izy, mba hananany ny Fanahiny miaraka aminy. Amena” (Fotopampianarana sy Fanekempihavanana 20:79).

Ireto ray sy reny tsara ireto dia mijoro ho vavolombelona fa izany fampanantenana izany dia efa tanteraka. Tanteraka tamin’izy ireo, ny tena marina, ny fampiononana maharitra mandrakizain’izy ireo, dia ny “[f]ananany ny Fanahiny miaraka aminy.”

Mijoro ho vavolombelona aho fa ireo mpihazona ny Fisoronana Aharôna, miaraka amin’ny

and duties, do bless all of us through the keys of the very “ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins” (Doctrine and Covenants 13:1). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

heriny, ny ôrdônansiny, ary ny andraikiny, dia tena mitahy antsika rehetra amin’ny alalan’ny fanalahidin’ny “fanompoan’ny anjely sy ny an’ny filazantsaran’ny fibebahana ary ny an’ny batisa asitrika mba ho famelana ny fahotana” (Foto-pampianarana sy Fanekepihavanana 13:1). Amin’ny anaran’i Jesoa Kristy, amena.