

The Plan of Mercy

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Ilay drafitry ny famindram-po

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The Lord is merciful and our Heavenly Father's plan of salvation is truly a plan of mercy.

Feno famindram-po ny Tompo ary ny drafitry ny famonjen'ny Ray any An-danitra dia tena drafitry ny famindram-po.

A Prophet's Invitation

Last April, soon after the joyful news that the Church had acquired the Kirtland Temple, President Russell M. Nelson invited us to study the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, recorded in section 109 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The dedicatory prayer, said President Nelson, “is a tutorial about how the temple spiritually empowers you and me to meet the challenges of life in these last days.”

I am sure your study of section 109 yielded insights that blessed you. This evening, I share a couple of things I learned as I followed our prophet's invitation. The peace-giving path down which my study led reminded me that the Lord is merciful and that our Heavenly Father's plan of salvation is truly a plan of mercy.

Newly Called Missionaries Serving in the Temple

As you may be aware, “newly called missionaries are encouraged to receive the temple endowment as soon as possible and to attend the temple as often as circumstances allow.” Once endowed, they also “may serve as temple ... work-

Fanasana avy amin'ny mpaminany

Tamin'ny volana Aprily farany teo, fotoana fohy taorian'ilay vaovao mahafaly fa lasa fananan'ny Fiangonana ny Tempolin'i Kirtland dia nanasa antsika ny Filoha Russell M. Nelson mba handalina ny vavaka fanokanana ny Tempolin'i Kirtland izay voarakitra ao amin'ny fizarana 109 ao amin'ny Fotopampianarana sy Fanekempihavanana. Nilaza ny Filoha Nelson fa ilay vavaka fanokanana dia: “fampianarana momba ny fomba hanomezan'ny tempoly anao sy ahy hery ara-panahy hiatrehana ireo fanambin'ny fiainana amin'izao andro farany izao.”

Resy lahatra aho fa ny fandalinanao ny fizarana 109 dia nanolotra hevi-baovao izay nitahy anao. Anio hariva aho dia hizara zavatra vitsivitsy izay nianarako rehefa nanaraka ny fanasana nomen'ny mpaminanintsika. Ilay lalam-piadanana izay nitondran'ny fandalinako ahy dia nampahatsiahy ahy fa ny Tompo dia feno famindram-po ary ny drafitry ny famonjen'ny Raintsika any An-danitra dia tena drafitry ny famindram-po tokoa.

Misiônera vao nantsoina manompo ao amin'ny tempoly

Araka ny mety efa fantatrarao dia “entanina ireo misiônera vao nantsoina handray hain-gana araka izay azo atao ny fanafiana masina any amin'ny tempoly ary handeha any amin'ny tempoly matetika araka izay azo atao.” Rehefa avy

ers before they begin missionary service.”

Time in the temple before entering the missionary training center (MTC) can be a wonderful blessing for new missionaries as they learn more about temple covenants before sharing the blessings of those covenants with the world.

But in studying section 109, I learned that in the temple, God empowers new missionaries—indeed, all of us—in an additional, sacred way. In the dedicatory prayer, given by revelation, the Prophet Joseph Smith prayed that “when thy servants shall go out from thy house ... to bear testimony of thy name,” the “hearts” of “all people” would “be softened”—both the “great ones of the earth” and “all the poor, the needy, and [the] afflicted.” He prayed that “their prejudices may give way before the truth, and thy people may obtain favor in the sight of all; that all the ends of the earth may know that we, thy servants, have heard thy voice, and that thou hast sent us.”

This is a beautiful promise for a newly called missionary—to have prejudices “give way before the truth,” to “obtain favor in the sight of all,” and to have the world know they are sent by the Lord. Each of us surely needs these same blessings. What a blessing it would be to have hearts softened as we interact with neighbors and co-workers. The dedicatory prayer does not explain exactly how our time in the temple will soften others’ hearts, but I am convinced it is bound up with how time in the house of the Lord softens our own hearts by centering us on Jesus Christ and His mercy.

The Lord Answers Joseph Smith’s Plea for Mercy

mandray ny fanafiana masina izy ireo dia “afaka manompo, manao mpanatanteraka [asa] ... any amin’ny tempoly mialoha ny hanombohan’izy ireo ny asa fitoriana.”

Afaka ny ho fitahiana miavaka ho an’ireo mpitory ny filazantsara vaovao voantso ny fotoana hidirana ny tempoly alohan’ny hidirana ny Foiibe Fiofanana ho Misiônera rehefa mianatra kokoa momba ireo fanekehampihavanan’ny tempoly izy ireo alohan’ny hizarana ireo fitahiana avy amin’ireo fanekehampihavanana ireo amin’izao tontolo izao.

Kanefa rehefa nandalina ny fizarana 109 aho dia nianatra fa manome hery ireo misiônera vaovao—isika rehetra raha ny marina—Andriamanitra ao amin’ny tempoly, amin’ny fomba iray hafa sy masina. Tao amin’ily vavaka fanokanana izay nomena tamin’ny alalan’ny fanambarana dia nivavaka i Joseph hoe “rehefa mivoaka avy ao an-tranonao ireo mpanomponao ... ho vavolombelona manambara ny anaranao,” ny “fon”ny “vahoaka rehetra”—na “ireo olona lehibe amin’ny tany” na ny “mahantra rehetra, ny sahirana ary [ny] olona mijaly.” Nivavaka izy mba “hisava eo anoloan’ny fahamarinana ny hevi-draviny, ary mba hahazoan’ny vahoakanao sitraka eo imason’ny rehetra; mba hahazoan’ny faran’ny tany rehetra mahafantatra fa izahay mpanomponao dia efa nandre ny feonao, ary efa nirahinao izahay.”

Fampanantenana mahafinaritra izany ho ana misiônera vao nantsoina iray—mba “hisava eo anoloan’ny fahamarinana ny hevi-draviny,” mba “hahazo sitraka eo imason’ny rehetra,” ary mba mahafantaran’izao tontolo izao fa ny Tompo no maniraka azy ireo. Azo antoka fa isika tsirairay avy dia mila ireo fitahiana ireo. Tena fitahiana tokoa ny manana fo nohalefahana rehefa mifandray amin’ny mpifanolobodirindrina sy mpiara-miasa isika. Ilay vavaka fanokanana dia tsy tena manazava tsara ny fomba hanalefahan’ny fotoana laniansika ao amin’ny tempoly ny fon’ny hafa kanefa resy lahatra aho fa mifamatotra amin’ny fomba hanalefahan’ny fotoana laniansika ao amin’ny tranon’ny Tompo ny fontsika manokana izany amin’ny alalan’ny fampifantohana antsika amin’i Jesoa Kristy sy ny famindram-pony.

Mamaly ireo fiangaviana famindram-po ataon’i Joseph Smith ny Tompo

As I studied the Kirtland dedicatory prayer, I was also struck that Joseph again and again pleaded for mercy—for the members of the Church, for the enemies of the Church, for the leaders of the country, for the nations of the earth. And, very personally, he pleaded with the Lord to remember him and to have mercy upon his beloved Emma and their children.

How must Joseph have felt when, one week later, on Easter Day, April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple, the Savior appeared to him and Oliver Cowdery and, as recorded in section 110 of the Doctrine and Covenants, said, “I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house.” This promise of mercy must have had special meaning to Joseph. And as President Nelson taught last April, this promise also “applies to every dedicated temple today.”

Finding Mercy in the House of the Lord

There are so many ways in which we each can find mercy in the house of the Lord. This has been true since the Lord first commanded Israel to build a tabernacle and to place at its center the “mercy seat.” In the temple, we find mercy in the covenants we make. Those covenants, in addition to the baptismal covenant, bind us to the Father and the Son and give us increased access to what President Nelson has taught is “a special kind of love and mercy ... called *hesed*” in Hebrew.

We find mercy in the opportunity to be sealed to our families for eternity. In the temple, we also come to understand with greater clarity that the Creation, the Fall, the Savior’s atoning sacrifice, and our ability to enter again into our Heavenly Father’s presence—indeed, every part of the plan of salvation—are manifestations of mercy. It might be said that the plan of salvation

Rehefa nandalina ilay vavaka fanokanana ny Kirtland aho, dia talanjona koa aho fa niangavy famindram-po ombieny ombieny—ho an’ireo mpikamban’ny Fiangonana, ho an’ireo fahavalon’ny Fiangonana, ho an’ireo mpitondra ny firenena, ho an’ireo firenena rehetra eto an-tany i Joseph. Ary niangavy manokana ny Tompo mba hahatsiaro azy ary mba hamindrany fo amin’i Emma vadiny malalany sy ireo zanany.

Inona no mety ho tsapan’i Joseph rehefa niseho taminy sy i Oliver Cowdery ny Tompo, herinandro taty aoriana, ny marainan’ny Paska ny 3 aprily 1836 tao amin’ny Tempolin’i Kirtland ary araka ny voarakitra ao amin’ny fizarana 110 ao amin’ny Fotopampianarana sy Fanekempihavanana, nilaza hoe: “Fa indro efa nekeko ity trano ity ary ho eto ny anarako; ary izaho haneho ny tenako amin’ny vahoakako amin’ny famindram-po, ao amin’ity trano ity.” Ity fampanantenana famindram-po ity dia azo antoka fa nidika zavatra manokana ho an’i Joseph. Ary araka ny nampianaran’ny Filoha Nelson tamin’ny volana aprily farany teo dia “mihatra amin’ny tempoly voatokanarehetraihany koa io fampanantenana io ankehitriny.”

Mahita famindram-po ao amin’ny tranon’ny Tompo

Tena maro tokoa ireo fomba ahafahantsika tsirairay mahita famindram-po ao amin’ny tranon’ny Tompo. Marina hatrany izany hatramin’ny fotoana voalohany nandidian’ny Tompo an’i Isiraely ny hananganan’izy ireo tabernakely iray ary ny mba hametrahan’izy ireo ilay “fitoeran’ny famindram-po” eo amin’ny ivon’izany.” Mahazo famindram-po ao anatin’ireo fanekempihavanana izay ataontsika ao amin’ny Tempoly isika. Mamatotra antsika amin’ny Ray sy ny Zanaka ireo fanekempihavanana ireo, miaraka amin’ny fanekempihavanan’ny batista ary manome fahafahana kokoa antsika handray ilay nampianarin’ny Filoha Nelsona hoe “karazana fitiavana sy famindram-po manokana ... antsoina hoe *hesed*” amin’ny fiteny Hebreo.

Mahita famindram-po isika ao anatin’ny fahafahana ho fehezina amin’ny fianakaviansika mandrakizay. Lasa takatsika mazava kokoa ao amin’ny tempoly fa ny Fahariana sy ny Fahalavoana sy ny sorona fanavotan’ny Mpamonjy ary ny fahafahantsika hiverina indray eo anatrehan’ny Raintsika any An-danitra, ny ampahan’ny rehetra amin’ny drafity ny famonjena, dia

is a plan of happiness precisely because it is a “plan of mercy.”

Seeking Forgiveness Opens the Door to the Holy Ghost

I am grateful for the beautiful promise in section 110 that the Lord will manifest Himself in mercy in His temples. I am also grateful for what it reveals about how the Lord will manifest Himself in mercy whenever we, like Joseph, plead for mercy.

Joseph Smith’s plea for mercy in section 109 was not the first time his pleas for mercy prompted revelation. In the Sacred Grove, young Joseph prayed not just to know which Church was true, but he also said that he “cried unto the Lord for mercy, for there was none else to whom I could go [to] obtain mercy.” Somehow his recognition that he needed mercy that only the Lord could provide helped open the windows of heaven. Three years later the angel Moroni appeared, following what Joseph said was his “prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies.”

This pattern of revelation following a plea for mercy is a familiar one in the scriptures. Enos heard the voice of the Lord only after praying for forgiveness. King Lamoni’s father’s conversion begins with his prayer, “I will give away all my sins to know thee.” We may not be blessed with these same dramatic experiences, but for those who sometimes struggle to feel answers to prayer, seeking the Lord’s mercy is one of the most powerful ways to feel the witness of the Holy Ghost.

Pondering God’s Mercy Opens the Door to a Testimony of the Book of Mormon

fanehoana famindram-po. Marina tokoa fa mety ho azo lazaina hoe drafitry ny fahasambaranana ny drafitry ny famonjena, indrindra satria “drafitry ny famindram-po” izany.

Manokatra ny varavarana ho an’ny Fanahy Masina ny fikatsahana famelan-keloka

Feno fankasitrahana aho noho ilay fampanantenana mahafinaritra ao amin’ny fizarana 110 fa ny Tompo dia haneho ny tenany amin’ny famindram-po ao amin’ireo tempoliny. Feno fankasitrahana ihany koa aho noho ny zavatra ambaran’izany mikasika ny fomba hanehoan’ny Tompo ny tenany amin’ny famindram-po isaky ny mangataka famindram-po tahaka an’i Joseph isika.

Tsy ny fiangaviana famindram-po nataon’i Joseph Smith tao amin’ny fizarana 109 no fotoana voalohany nahatonga ireo fiangaviana ny famindram-po hiteraka fanambarana. Tsy nivavaka mba hahafantatra fotsiny ihany hoe iza ny Fiangonana marina i Joseph tao amin’ily Alakely Masina fa nilaza ihany koa izy fa “nitalaho tamin’ny Tompo mba hahazoany famindram-po satria tsy nisy azoko anatonana mba hahazoako famindram-po.” Mahagaga fa ny faneken’ny ho nila famindram-po izay ny Tompo irery ihany no afaka nanome izany dia nanampy nanokatra ny varavarana’ny lanitra. Telo taona taty aoriana dia niseho ny anjely Môrônia, araka ny nolazain’i Joseph fa nivavaka sy nitalaho tamin’ Andriamanitra Tsitoha ho famelana ny fahotako sy ny hadalako rehetra.”

Mahazatra ity endrika fanambarana aorian’ny fiangaviana famindram-po ity ao amin’ny soratra masina. Rehefa nivavaka mba hangataka famelana ihany i Enosa vao nandre ny feon’ny Tompo. Nanomboka tamin’ny vavaka nataony ny fiovam-pon’ny rain’i Lamônia Mpanjaka: “Hafoko ny fahotako rehetra hahafantarako Anao.” Mety tsy ho voatahy hiaina zavatra mampitolagaga tahaka izany isika kanefa iray amin’ireo fomba mahery vaika indrindra hahatsapana ny tenivavolombelon’ny Fanahy Masina ny fikatsahana ny famindram-pon’ny Tompo ho an’ireo izay tsindraindray sahirana mahatsapa valiny amin’ireo vavaka ataon’izy ireo.

Manokatra varavarana ho an’ny Fijoroana ho vavolombelona momba ny Bokin’i

A similar principle is beautifully taught in Moroni 10:3–5. We often shorthand these verses to teach that through sincere prayer, we can learn whether the Book of Mormon is true. But this shorthand can neglect the important role of mercy. Listen to how Moroni begins his exhortation: “I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, ... that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.”

Moroni urges us not only to read these things—the records he was about to seal up—but also to ponder in our hearts what the Book of Mormon reveals about “how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men.” It is pondering upon the Lord’s mercy that prepares us to “ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true.”

As we ponder on the Book of Mormon, we might ask: Is it really true, as Alma taught, that God’s plan of mercy assures that every person who ever lived on this earth will be resurrected and that they will “be restored to their ... perfect frame”? Is Amulek right—can the Savior’s mercy satisfy all the bitterly real demands of justice that we would otherwise be obligated to pay and instead “[encircle us] in the arms of safety”?

Is it true, as Alma testified, that Christ suffered not only for our sins but for our “pains and afflictions” so that He could “know ... how to succor his people according to their infirmities”? Is the Lord really so merciful, as King Benjamin taught, that as a free gift, He atoned “for the sins of those ... who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned”?

Môrmôna ny fisaintsainana ny famindram-pon’ Andriamanitra.

Misy fitsipika mitovy amin’izany izay ampianarina tsara ao amin’ny Môrônia 10:3–5. Matetika isika no manafohy ireto andininy ireto mba hampianarana fa amin’ny alalan’ny vavaka amin-kitsim-po dia afaka mahafantatra raha toa ka marina ny Bokin’i Môrmôna. Saingy izany fanafohezana izany dia mety hanao tsirambina ny maha-zava-dehibe ny anjara asan’ny famindram-po. Henoy ny fomba hanombohan’i Môrônia ny famporisihana nataony: “Ta hamporisika anareo aho, rehefa hamaky ireto zavatra ireto ianareo, ... mba hahatsiarovanareo ny naha-feno famindram-po ny Tompo tamin’ny zanak’olombelona, hatry ny nahariana an’i Adama ka hatramin’ny fotoana izay handraisanareo ireto zavatra ireto sy ny hisainanareo izany ao am-ponareo.”

Tsy mamporisika antsika hamaky ireo zavatra ireo fotsiny ihany i Môrônia—ireo rakitsoratra izay handeha hofeheziny—fa mbahisaintsaintsika ihany koa ao am-pontsika ny zavatra izay ambaran’ny Bokin’i Môrmôna momba ny “naha-feno famindram-po ny Tompo tamin’ny zanak’olombelona.” Ny fisaintsainana ny famindram-pon’ny Tompo no manomana antsika “mba [hanontany] an’ Andriamanitra, Ilay Ray Mandrakizay, amin’ny anaran’i Kristy, raha tsy marina ireto zavatra ireto.”

Rehefa misaintsaina momba ny Bokin’i Môrmôna isika dia mety hanontany isika hoe : tena marina araka ny nampianarin’i Almà tokoa ve fa ny dafitr’ Andriamanitra ho an’ny famindram-po dia manome antoka fa ny olona rehetra izay niaina teto ambonin’ity tany ity dia hitsangana amin’ny maty ary haverina amin’ny endriny tsirairay avy sy tomombana ny zava-drehetra? Marina ve ny tenin’i Amioleka fa ny famindram-po dia afaka manefa ny fitakianarehetran’ny fahamarinana sy mamihina [antsika] amin’ny sandrin’ny fiantohana”?

Marina ve ny fijoroana ho vavolombelon’i Alma fa nijaly i Kristy tsy noho ny fahotantsika ihany fa noho ny “fanaintainana sy ny fahorian-tsika” mba ahazoany “mamantatra ... ny fomba hanampiana ny vahoakany arakaraka ny rofiny”? Tena feno famindram-po tokoa ve ny Tompo, araka ny nampianarin’i mpanjaka Benjamina fa toy ny fanomezana tsy misy sarany, nanao ny sorompanavotana Izy “noho ny fahotan’ireo izay

Is it true, as Lehi said, that “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy”? And is it really true, as Abinadi testified, quoting Isaiah, that Jesus Christ was “wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed”?

In sum, is the Father’s plan as taught in the Book of Mormon really this merciful? I testify that it is and that the peace-giving and hopeful teachings of mercy in the Book of Mormon are true.

Still, I imagine that some may be struggling, despite your faithful reading and prayers, to realize Moroni’s promise that Heavenly Father “will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.” I know this struggle because I felt it, many years ago, when my own first couple of reads of the Book of Mormon did not yield an immediate and clear answer to my prayers.

If you are struggling, may I invite you to follow Moroni’s counsel to ponder on the many ways the Book of Mormon teaches “how merciful the Lord hath been [to] the children of men”? Based on my experience, I hope that when you do, the peace of the Holy Ghost can enter your heart and you can know, believe, and feel that the Book of Mormon and the plan of mercy it teaches are true.

I express my gratitude for the Father’s great plan of mercy and for the Savior’s willingness to carry it out. I know that He will manifest Himself in mercy in His holy temple and in every part of our life if we will seek Him. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

... efa maty tsy nahalala ny sitrapon’ Andriamanitra momba azy ireo, na izay efa nanota tao amin’ny tsy fahalalana”?

Marina ve araka ny voalazan’i Lehi fa “lavo Adama mba hisian’ny olona ary misy ny olona mba hahazo fifaliana”? Ary marina ve araka ny fijoroana ho vavombelon’i Abinadia, nilaza ny tenin’i Isaia fa Jesoa Kristy dia “noratraina noho ny fandikantsika lalàna, notorotoroina noho ny helotsika; ny famaizana nahatra taminy no nahazoantsika fiadanana; ary ny dian-kapoka taminy no nahasitrana antsika”?

Fehiny, moa ve ny drafitry ny Ray nampianarina ao amin’ny Bokin’i Môrmôna dia tena ity feno famindram-po ity? Mijoro ho vavolombelona aho fa tena izany tokoa ary ireo fampianarana mitondra fiadanana sy fanantenana momba ny famindram-po ao amin’ny Bokin’i Môrmôna dia marina.

Kanefa azoko an-tsaina fa ny sasany aminareo dia mety mbola sahirana, na dia eo aza ny famakiana sy vavaka amim-pahatokiana ataonareo, amin’ny fahatakarana ny fampianantenana nataon’i Môrônia fa Andriamanitra “dia haneho ny fahamarinan’izany aminareo amin’ny herin’ny Fanahy Masina.” Fantatro izany fahasahiranana izany satria efa tsapako, taona maro lasa izay, rehefa tsy nitondra valiny teo no ho eo sy mazava tamin’ny vavaka nataoko ny famakiako voalohany ny Bokin’i Môrmôna.

Raha sahirana ianao, te hanasa anao aho hanaraka ny torohevitr’i Môrônia hisaintsaina fomba maro hampianarin’ny Bokin’i Môrmôna hoe “Toy ny ahoana ny famindram-pon’ny Tompo amin’ireo zanak’Andriamanitra”? Raha araka ny zavatra niainako dia manantena aho fa rehefa hanao izany ianareo dia afaka miditra ao amponareo ny fiadanana entin’ny Fanahy Masina ary afaka ny hahafantatra sy hino ary hahatsapa ianareofa ny Bokin’i Môrmôna sy ny drafitry ny famindram-po izay ampianarin’ny dia marina.

Maneho ny fankasitrahako noho ny drafitry ny famindram-po lehibe an’ny Ray aho sy noho ny fahavononan’ny Mpamonjy hanatanteraka izany. Fantatro fa haneho ny tenany amin’ny famindram-po Izy ao amin’ny tempoliny masina sy eo amin’ny fiainantsika iray manontolo raha hikatsaka Azy isika. Amin’ny anaran’i Jesoa Kristy, amena.