

Divine Authority, Sublime Young Men

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Pule Paia, Alii Talavou Maoae

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Peresitene Aoao o Alii Talavou

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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 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!”

E faavavau ona ou faafetai ia i latou e umia le Perisitua Arona, faatasi ai ma ona mana, sauniga, ma tiute, e faamanuia ai i tatou uma.

Faafetai Elder Andersen, mo lena faaalua mataina o le pule o le perisitua ma le mana o le Togiola a le Faaola.

I se tasi o taeao o le Aso Sa ia Ianuari talu ai nei, sa o ou saofai i le sauniga faamanatuga, sa silia ma le toasefululua alii talavou na lagolagoina e siitia i le Perisitua Arona. Sa ou lagonaina le suia o le lalolagi i lalo ifo o o tatou vae.

Na faafuasei ona ou lagonaina, i le lalolagi atoa, i taimi o sone taitasi, i sauniga faamanatuga e pei o lea foi, e fiasefulu afe tiakono, aoao, ma ositaulaga—e pei o le uo a Elder Holland i lenei taeao, o Easton—na lagolagoina ina ia faauuina i auaunaga faaleperisitua i le olaga atoa o le a soo ai le umi ma le lautele o le faapotopotoina o Isaraelu.

O Ianuari taitasi, e faaee ai lima i luga o ulu o le tusa ma le 100,000 alii talavou, e faafesootai ai i latou e ala i le sauniga i se laina susulu o le pule e tau atu i tua i le taimi o le Toefuataiga ia Iosefa ma Oliva, iā Ioane le Papatiso, ma iā Iesu Keriso.

Ia, O la tatou ekalesia, e le o se ekalesia e faalialia vale i taimi uma. O iinei tatou te le faia i le vaaiga faaletagata.

Ae tusa lava, o le vaaia o le savavali atu faapei o le taalililili o le faititili i latou ua faatoa faauuina i le perisitua i le salafa o le lalolagi, sa ou toma-natu ai—i se tulaga pei o se “ekalesia o le olioli” pe ua le tatau ona taumanuō mai tumutumu o fale. “O le asō,” sa ou mafaufau ai, “ua tatau ona i ai ni pu ma ni sumepalo tagitagi ma lamepa mūsaesae a Roma. E tatau ona i ai ni solouumi!”

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.

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 Atonement.

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.

O le iloa ai o le mana o le Atua mo le mea moni e avea aia, sa tatou molimauina ai le faasalaveia o mamanu moni a lenei lalolagi ina ua lolovaia le lalolagi i le pule faaleatua.

O nei faauuga ua amata faalauiloa atu ai nei alii talavou i olaga o le auauna atu, aua o le a i ai i latou lava i taimi ma nofoaga e tatau ai, o le a matua'i taua ai lava lo latou i ai ma tatalo ma mana o le perisitua a le Atua ua latou umia.

O lenei filifili pulea lelei o tali na amata i se agelu o auaunaga na auina mai le Atua. Na faaali atu Ioane le Papatiso o aso anamua ua toetu, ia Iosefa ma Oliva, ma tuu ona lima i luga o o la'ua ulu ma faapea atu, "I Luga o ouluga o u uso a auauna e, i le suafa o le Mesia, ou te faaee atu i ai le Perisitua o Arona, ua umia ki o le auaunaga a agelu, ma o le talalelei o le salamo, ma o le papatisoga i le faatofuina mo le faamagaloina o agasala" (Mataupu Faavae ma Feagaiga 13:1).

Na ta'ua e Ioane lea pule o le "Perisitua o Arona," i le uso o Mose ma le soa faaleperisitua. O aso anamua, o i latou na umia lenei perisitua a Arona, sa tatau ona aoao atu ma fesoasoani i sauniga—sauniga na taulai atu le avea ma soo i le Mesia o le lumanai, le Alii o Iesu Keriso (tagai i le Teuteronome 33:10).

O loo atofa manino foi e le tusi o Numera ia ē umia le perisitua o Arona ia galuega o le tauli-maina o ipu o sauniga. "E te faalatalataina mai foi Arona ma ona atalii ... o lo latou faiva o le ... o le la'o'ai ... ma mea o i le mea paia latou te auauna a'i" (Numera 3:10, 31).

O le sauniga i le Feagaiga Tuai o taulaga e osi i manu sa faataunuuina ma ua suia i le soifua ma le Togiola a le Faaola. O lenei sauniga anamua, na suia i le sauniga ua tatou faaigoaina nei o le faamanatuga o le Talisuaga a le Alii.

Ua valaau mai le Alii ia i latou o umia le perisitua o Arona i ona po nei e faia mea lava ia e tasi na latou faia i aso anamua: e aoao atu ma faatautaia ia sauniga—o ia mea uma ia faamanatu mai ai ia i tatou Lana Togiola.

Pe a fesoasoani ia tiakono, aoao, ma ositaulaga i le faamanatuga, latou te mauaina ona faamanuiaga e faapei foi o isi tagata uma: e ala i le tausia o feagaiga latou te osia, a o taitasi i latou ma taumamafa i le areto ma le vai. Peitai i le faatinoina o nei tiute paia, latou te aoao atili ai foi e uiga i o latou matafaioi ma tiutetauave o le perisitua.

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.

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.”

O le Perisitua Arona ua faaigoaina o le perisitua sauniuni o se vaega ona o ona sauniga e mafai ai e i tatou ona lagona le mamafa ma le olioli o le i ai i le feau a le Alii, e saunia ai i latou mo le auaunaga faaleperisitua i le lumanai, pe a valaauina i latou e auauna atu i ni ala e le o ma-vaaia—e aofia ai le fofogaina atu o faamanuiaga musuia i taimi, e maaleale ai ma ono suia faamoemoe ma miti, e oo lava i le ola ma le oti.

O na faamoemoega o'oo'o e manaomia ai tapenaga ma le loto i ai.

O loo faamatala mai e le Mataupu Faavae ma Feagaiga e faapea, o tiakono ma aoao “latou te ... lapatai atu, faamalamalama atu, apoapoai atu, aoao atu, ma valaaulia tagata uma e o mai ia Keriso” (Mataupu Faavae ma Feagaiga 20:59). E faaopoopo atu i nei avanoa, o ositaulaga e tataua ona “talai atu, ... ma papatiso atu” (Mataupu Faavae ma Feagaiga 20:50).

E foliga mai ua matuai tele na'uā na mea, ae i le lalolagi moni lava ia, e tutupu a nei mea faanatura i le lalolagi atoa.

Na aoao atu e se tasi o epikopo ia lana au peresitene fou o le korama a tiakono i tiute nei. O lea sa amata ai ona talanoa le au peresitene talavou pe o a foliga e ono i ai lena mea i le latou korama ma i le latou uarota. Sa tonu ia i latou e tataua ona latou amata asiasi i tagata matutua o le uarota ia iloa ai pe o a mea o latou manaomia ona latou faia lea.

O i latou sa latou auauna i ai sa i ai Alan, o se tuaoi e lē mafaufau, e tele ina palauvale, ma o nisi foi taimi e 'ina'inā. Sa oo ina avea le toalua o Alan, o Wanda ma se tasi o le Ekalesia, ae o Alan, e pei ona matou fai atu, o se tagata faigata.

Ae, sa o lava le au tiakono ma galulue, tali-taliē ma lē amana'ia ana faatausuai, a o latou asuina le kiona ma la'u le lapisi. O tiakono e mafai ona faigata ona e ita i ai, ma sa i'u ina amata fafia Alan ia i latou. Na i ai se taimi na latou valaaulia ai o ia i le lotu.

“Ou te le fafia i le lotu,” o lana tali lea.

“Ae, e te fafia ia i matou,” na latou fai atu ai. “Sau la tatou o. E mafai ona e sau tau lava o le sauniga a le matou korama pe a e manao ai.”

Faatasi ai ma le faamaoniga a le epikopo, na sau ai o ia—ma sa sau sau ai lava o ia.

Na avea tiakono ma aoao, ma a o faifai pea lo latou auauna atu ia te ia, sa ia aoaoina i latou e galulue i le faiga o taavale ma fau ni mea. E oo ane i le taimi ua avea ai nei tiakono ua aoao ma ositaulaga, ua valaau i latou e Alan “o a'u tama.”

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 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

Sa latou tapena ma le naunautai mo ni misiona, ma sa fesili pe mafai ona latou faata’ita’i ia te ia lesona faafaifeautalai. Sa tauto o ia o le a le faalogo lava pe talitonu i ai, ae, ioe, e mafai ona fai a latou faataitaiga i lona fale.

Ona ma’i lea o Alan. Ma ua faamaluluina lona loto.

I se tasi aso, i le sauniga a le korama, sa ia aioi atu ma le lotomomomo ia i latou e tatalo mo ia e tuu le ulaula, ma sa latou faia. Ona latou mulimuli atu lea ia te ia i le fale ma tatiai uma ana faaaputuga tapaa.

A o avea le fāi ifo o lona malosi ma taofia ai Alan i falemai ma nofoaga tutotonu e toetapu’e ai le malosi, sa auauna atu pea “ana tama” ia te ia, ma faapupula lemu atu mana o le perisitua ma le alofa lē faatuaoia (tagai Mataupu Faavae ma Feagaiga 121:41).

Sa faaauau le vavega ina ua talosaga Alan ia papatisoina—ae na maliu o ia a’o lei mafai ona tupu. I lana talosaga, o ana tiakono-ua-ositaulaga nei, o i latou ia na tauaveina lona pusa maliu ma failauga foi i lona falelauasiga, lea na fetai—le-lei ai—lo latou lapatai atu, faamalamalama atu, apoapoai atu, aoao atu, ma valaaulia tagata uma ia Keriso.

Mulimuli ane, i le malumalu, o se tasi lava o “tama a Alan” lea na papatisoina lē na avea ma peresitene o le korama a tiakono e sui mo Alan.

O mea uma na fai mai Ioane le Papatiso e fai, sa latou faia. Sa latou faia mea e faia e tiakono, aoao, ma ositaulaga i lenei Ekalesia atoa ma i le lalolagi atoa.

O se tasi o mea na poloiaina i latou e umia le perisitua o Arona e fai, e aofia ai le sauniga o le faamanatuga.

O le tausaga na te’a nei, sa ou feiloai ai i se epikopo musuia ma lona faletua ofoofogia. I le taeao o se Aso Toonai talu ai nei, a o tietie atu i le papatisoga a le la atalii, sa pagatia ai i le maliu matautia ma le faafuasei o si o la’ua afafine pele e lua tausaga, o Tess.

O le taeao na sosoo ai, sa faapotopoto ai tagata o le latou uarota mo le sauniga faamanatuga ua faatumulia i le mutimuti alofa, ua mafatia foi i latou i le maliu o lenei teineitiiti atoatoa. Sa leai se tasi na faamoemoe e i ai le aiga o le epikopo i le lotu i lona taeao, ae i ni nai minute a o lei amataina le sauniga, sa ulufale filemu atu ai le aiga ma saofafai i o latou nofoaga.

Sa alu le epikopo i le tulaga ma pasi atu i lona nofoaga masani i le va o ona fesoasoani, ma nofo

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.

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 le va o ana ositaulaga i le laulau faamanatuga.

I le aluga o lena po o le lotomafatia ma le le mafai ona moe i le sailiga mo se malamalama ma le filemu, sa ia mauaina ai se uunaiga malosi o le mea sa sili ona manaomia e lona aiga—ma le mea sa sili ona manaomia e lana uarota. O le faalogo-ina lea o le leo o lo latou epikopo, le peresitene o le Perisitua Arona o le latou uarota, lo latou tama lotofaavauvau, o fofogaina folafolaga o le feagaiga o le faamanatuga.

O lea, o le mea lea na tupu, na ia tootuli faatasi ma na ositaulaga ma talanoa atu i Lona Tama. I le faia o lena mea ma le faanoanoa tele, sa ia fofogaina ai nisi o upu sili ona mamana, e fai leotele e se tasi ua faatagaina i lenei olaga.

Upu e faavavau lona taunuuga.

Upu o se sauniga.

Upu o le feagaiga.

Faatonuga e faafesootai ai i tatou i faamoemoega tonu o lenei olaga—ma taunuuga e sili ona matagofie o le fuafuaga a le Tama Faalelagi mo i tatou.

Pe mafai ona outou vaai faalemafaufau i mea na faalogoina e le potopotoga i lena falesa i lena aso—mea na latou lagonaina i upu tatou te faalogoi ai i Aso Sa uma i o tatou falelotu?

“Le Atua e, le Tama Faavavau, matou te ole atu ia te Oe i le suafa o Lou Alo, o Iesu Keriso, ia e faamanuiaina ma faapaiaina lenei areto i agaga o i latou uma o e e fetagofi i ai, ina ia latou taumamafa i le faamanatuina o le tino o lou Alo, ma molimau atu ia te Oe, le Atua e, le Tama Faavavau, latou te loto ina ave i o latou luga le suafa o Lou Alo, ma manatua pea o Ia ma tausi i Ana poloaiga ua Ia tuuina mai ia te i latou; ina ia latou maua pea Lona Agaga e faatasi ma i latou. Amene” (Mataupu Faavae ma Feagaiga 20:77).

Ona sosoo lea: “Le Atua e, le Tamā Faavavau, matou te ole atu ia te oe i le suafa o lou Alo, o Iesu Keriso, ia e faamanuiaina ma faapaiaina lenei [vai] i agaga o i latou uma o e e feinu ai, ina ia latou faia i le faamanatuina o le toto o lou Alo, sa faamaligiina mo i latou; ina ia latou molimau atu ia te oe, le Atua e, le Tamā Faavavau, latou te manatua pea o ia, ina ia latou maua lona Agaga e faatasi ma i latou. Amene” (Mataupu Faavae ma Feagaiga 20:79).

Ua tautino e lenei tamā lelei ma le tina e faapea, ua faataunuaina lena folafolaga. Na la faataunuaina, o le mea moni, mo lo latou faamafanafanaga e faavavau, “ia maua pea lona

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

Agaga e faatasi ma i latou.”

E faavavau lo’u faafetai ona o i latou e umia le Perisitua Arona, faatasi ai ma ona mana, sauniga, ma tiute, latou te faamanuia ai i tatou uma e ala i ki o le “auaunaga a agelu, ma o le talalelei o le salamo, ma o le papatisoga i le faatofuina mo le faamagaloina o agasala” (Mataupu Faavae ma Feagaiga 13:1). I le suafa o Iesu Keriso, amene.