

March 31, 2020

## “The Sweet Spirit of Sacrifice”

*Cristina B. Franco*  
*Second Counselor, Primary General Presidency*

I’m so happy to be speaking to my BYU-Pathway Worldwide student friends. I know how hard you are working toward your education goals and pray you will continue in the “great process of learning.”<sup>1</sup>

I have the unique opportunity to work in a sacred building almost every day. Through the years, this building has been a place of great inspiration to me and all those who enter it. This lovely place is the Relief Society Building in Salt Lake City, Utah. It is the world headquarters for three organizations of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Primary, Young Women, and Relief Society.

While this wonderful building has served for many years, it was also many years in the making. Following the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple in 1893, the Church’s Relief Society leaders desired a building for women to be built near the temple. But it wasn’t until 1945, more than 50 years later, and after a decade filled with sacrifice, fundraising and receiving contributions from sisters worldwide, this hard work became a reality and was dedicated on October 3, 1956, by Church President David O. McKay.

President McKay offered a beautiful dedicatory prayer, and I would love to share a few words from that prayer. “On this memorable occasion,” President McKay prayed, “we praise thy name for the organization of the Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for the thousands of loyal, faithful, beautiful women who compose its membership. Their devotion to duty is never-ending; their loyalty to Thee and to Thy Priesthood unquestioned; their administration to the sick and to the needy, untiring; their sympathetic gentle services give hope to the dying, comfort and faith to the bereaved.”

He dedicated every room, every hallway, every stairway on every floor. His prayer continued, “May the offices occupied by the Presidency and Board Members be hallowed by the sweet influence of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>2</sup>

I testify that today there is indeed still a distinct and sweet spirit as you enter this building. I believe it has to do with the sacrifice of all the women of the Church around the world who applied and believed in its motto, “Charity Never Faileth.”

In this sacred building are books containing the names of the many women who donated to the building construction. Some were unable to donate money and instead sent unique artifacts that are used to beautify the building. They are on display in the reception room to this day.

The Relief Society Building houses several original paintings by Minerva Teichert, including the well-known *Christ in a Red Robe* portraying Christ at His Second Coming with outstretched arms. *His* mission is to accomplish the will of our Heavenly Father — whose work and glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of all of us.<sup>3</sup> One of *our* important responsibilities is to help prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Savior. As women participate in Relief Society, they become vital participants in God’s work of salvation and exaltation.

Like they did with the construction of the Relief Society Building, today many Relief Society sisters sacrifice not only expensive objects and money, but they also sacrifice their time and talents serving others around the world.

President M. Russell Ballard, teaching about the law of sacrifice, wrote, “The two major purposes of the law of sacrifice are to test and prove us and to assist us in coming unto Christ. ... The degree of our love for the Lord and

for our fellowman can be measured by what we are willing to sacrifice for them. Sacrifice is a demonstration of pure love.”<sup>4</sup>

I often think of the sacrifice and demonstration of pure love from our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ. The Father sacrificed by giving His Only Begotten Son so we could return to live with Them one day. The Son sacrificed His life that we might come unto Him and, upon our repentance, be forgiven of our sins.

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught us an important truth. He said, “Sacrifice is the very essence of religion; it is the keystone of happy home life, the basis of true friendship, the foundation of peaceful community living, of sound relations among people and nations. ... Without sacrifice there is no true worship of God. I become increasingly aware of that every day.”<sup>5</sup>

My dear friends, what a blessed opportunity it is to participate in BYU-Pathway. By doing so, you are sacrificing your time, substance, energy, and strength. Your sacrifice will bring you increased blessings — spiritually, socially, emotionally, and intellectually.

I liken your experience to the dear sisters around the world who so generously sacrificed their time, money, exquisite vases, and other fine pieces of art so we can enjoy this beautiful Relief Society Building. Sacrifice truly brings forth the blessings of heaven. You may be in the early stages of building your building of sacrifice. You are still planning and fundraising and looking forward to shoveling that first groundbreaking shovel of dirt. But the day will come. Your building will be built through sacrifice, and you and many others will call it beautiful and blessed.

I testify that our Heavenly Father loves each of us and is desirous to bless us. He cares about the details of our lives. As you continue to grow in every area of your life, you will enjoy the fruits of your labors, and those fruits will be sweet. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley* (2016), 246

<sup>2</sup> David O. McKay Dedicatory Prayer of the Relief Society Building, Oct. 3, 1956

<sup>3</sup> See [3 Nephi 11:10–11](#); [Moses 1:39](#)

<sup>4</sup> M. Russell Ballard, “[The Law of Sacrifice](#),” *Liahona*, March 2002

<sup>5</sup> *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 565