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The Magnificent Aaronic Priesthood

*There is an urgency for you to fulfill your duty to God.
I am confident that you will.*

I am honored tonight to speak to the amazing young men of the Church. I have been blessed to meet many of you throughout the world. Your enthusiasm is contagious.

You face your challenges with extraordinary strength and courage. I express my love to you and the confidence I have in you.

You inspire the people around you more than you can imagine. Listen to the words of a young man who is not of our faith, trying to describe his friend who holds the Aaronic Priesthood: “I do notice something different about Luis. . . . This guy is nothing like . . . other people. It’s just something you see in him. . . . I don’t even know what it is, but he’s different than all of them. It’s just something you feel; it’s not [something] . . . you see visually. You just feel it.”

There is something very important that sets Luis and you apart from other young men. You have received the Aaronic Priesthood. It is a sacred gift, and many do not fully appreciate it. Tonight I will help you see how you can discover for yourselves the magnificence of the Aaronic Priesthood.

I. God Trusts You

When God entrusts you with His sacred priesthood, He shows great confidence in you. He knows He can trust you to use the priesthood to serve others, just as He has trusted other young men to do some of His most important work.

For example, the world would not have the Book of Mormon’s powerful witness of Jesus Christ if it had not been for two young men whom God trusted. Mormon, the prophet who compiled this sacred record, was just 10 years old when he was assigned to observe and later record the history of his people. At age 15, he was “visited of the Lord, and tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus” (Mormon 1:15).

The Book of Mormon was translated and published by Joseph Smith,



who was called to his great work at age 14, when he was visited by Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

President Thomas S. Monson has said: “Great things are expected of you. . . . Like a clarion call comes the word of the Lord to you, to me, and to priesthood holders everywhere: ‘Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence’” (“The Call for Courage,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 54, 57).

II. The New Duty to God Program

To help you respond to that urgent call, the Church is introducing a new Duty to God program, as President Henry B. Eyring announced earlier today. I am excited about this program. Materials will be sent to your bishops and branch presidents beginning in June. You should begin using them as soon as you receive them.

As a deacon, teacher, and priest, you will participate in activities that will help you build spiritual strength and learn and fulfill your priesthood duties. Each activity follows this simple pattern:

First you **learn** about a gospel principle or a priesthood duty. You discover what Heavenly Father wants you to do, and you strive to gain a spiritual witness about why it is important.

Next you make plans to **act** on what you have learned. You are encouraged to base your plans on your own needs, circumstances, and opportunities to serve others. This is a wonderful chance to take responsibility for your own growth and develop spiritual self-reliance.

Then you **share** what you learn and experience with others. As you do so, you will strengthen your testimony and build faith in those around you. You will increase your ability to talk



about the gospel with others.

I am grateful to a young man who shared with me the following experience. He and another Aaronic Priesthood holder were assigned to administer the sacrament to a man who was homebound and very sick. They arrived at his home not realizing that recent medical treatments prevented him from eating any food—even a piece of the sacrament bread. After blessing the bread, the young man presented the sacrament to the frail man. He took a piece of the blessed bread, waited a moment, and then held it against his lips. The young man said when he saw this faithful brother express his reverence for the sacrament, he felt as though he were watching him kiss the feet of the Savior. He could tell that he loved Him.

The significance of the sacrament was impressed upon that young man in an unforgettable way that day. You will have sacred experiences, just as this young man did.

Your parents, leaders, and quorum members play an important role in the Duty to God program. Your Sunday quorum meetings will provide regular opportunities to learn, act, and share. The new Duty to God program will guide you on your journey to fulfill your duty to God and discover

the magnificence of the Aaronic Priesthood.

III. Fulfill Your Duty to God

During the past year I have been on a journey that has forever changed the way I view you and the Aaronic Priesthood. I am excited for you to discover for yourself what I have discovered. You will learn why the Aaronic Priesthood is so important in your life and how vital it is to the Church. You will appreciate why it is referred to as one of the “grand heads” of the priesthood (see D&C 107:6). You will understand better the meaning of priesthood keys, the ministering of angels, and the preparatory gospel (see D&C 13; 84:26).

Satan would have you think that you are too young or that there are too few of you to do significant things with the Aaronic Priesthood. None of that is true.

God’s words to Moses are for you today: “Behold, thou art my son; . . . and I have a work for [you]” (Moses 1:4, 6).

He has given you His power to do great things. As you fulfill your duty to God, you will strengthen and bless your family. This is your greatest priesthood duty. Listen to a mother describe the impact her son has on his

family: “Leo has the priesthood in our home, and it’s a huge blessing. He’s a good example to his siblings; . . . he makes sure they always pray. He passes the sacrament on Sundays. His little brother sees him. He helps . . . with family prayer. I know that he will continue to be a blessing as he gets older. He will be able to baptize his younger brother. It’s a comfort and a gift to us.”

As you fulfill your duty to God, you will reach out to your friends who are not of our faith and help prepare them to join the Church. Like a true brother, you will watch over and strengthen them. You will lead out in the rescue of other young men who have lost their way.

As you fulfill your duty to God, you will be a force for good at all times and in every circumstance. Your righteous example and your faithful priesthood service will be a powerful way to invite all who know you to come unto Christ.

In their most critical time, the Nephites looked to a young man, Mormon, for leadership and inspiration (see Mormon 2:1–2). Today, we look to you to be a great strength to the Church and a force for good on the earth. This is what the Lord expects.

IV. Become a Faithful Priesthood Man

I testify that you will feel your heart changing as you become a faithful priesthood man. You will seek to be completely clean and administer the sacrament worthily. You will treat every young woman with kindness and respect. You will honor your parents. You will avoid offending the Spirit in what you think, say, or do. You will come to know the Lord, whom you serve, and you will ever strive to be like Him.

I testify that your faithful service in the Aaronic Priesthood will change the lives of those you serve. There are people who need your priesthood service. Your family needs you. Your quorum needs you. The Church needs you. The world needs you.

There is an urgency for you to fulfill your duty to God. I am confident that you will.

On a cold morning a few weeks ago, I jogged along the Tagus River in Lisbon, Portugal. I came to a monument dedicated to the Portuguese explorers from centuries past. I stopped as the sun rose and splashed its warm light on the imposing monument and on me. I was inspired as I looked at the determined faces of the explorers gazing out over the water. These were men who were willing to do things that very few had done. They left a familiar and comfortable world and courageously went out into the unknown ocean and discovered new lands. They changed the world.

I see you when I think of that monument of courageous explorers. I see you on a personal journey that few in the world today choose to pursue. I see you fulfilling your duty to God.

I pray that we may all understand the magnificent Aaronic Priesthood and trust, as God does, those who bear it. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■