



Feast Like a

FLAMINGO

By Whitney Hinckley

These funny birds taught me a lesson about being a recognizable member of the Church.

The first time I saw flamingos in real life, I loved their beautiful, rich pink color—it was very different from the bubblegum pink of the plastic lawn ornaments I'd seen.

I was at an aquarium and learned that flamingos' bright pink color comes from the food they eat, which contains high amounts of beta carotene—a pigment that causes an orange, pink, or yellow color. That means that if flamingos don't feast on the algae

and brine shrimp they usually eat, their feathers will eventually become white—and we might not even recognize the white birds as flamingos!

After that day, I started to think about those flamingos in a way I never would have expected.

I thought about what *I* feast on and if it changes how others identify *me*. In 2 Nephi 31:20, we are encouraged to “press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ.” I thought



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about the stories of how people not of our faith describe the members they know as having a “glow” around them or a light in their eyes. Could it be that by our feasting, instead of turning pink like a flamingo, we receive that light from Christ? We receive the Lord’s image in our countenances when we are born of the Spirit (see Alma 5:14). We are recognized as disciples of Christ because of that identifying factor.

If pink flamingos are any indication of good feasting, the opposite is also true. When a flamingo stops eating the nutrient-rich food he needs, he becomes ill and pale. When we stop feasting on the word of Christ, we also slowly become spiritually ill and lose our bright, godly countenances. Eventually, we

would no longer be recognized as faithful followers of Christ.

The more I thought about this, the more applicable the flamingos in the aquarium became to me. They were pink because they were doing everything right. They were not ashamed to be pink—they are supposed to be pink, and because they feasted they were pink. They were beautiful. They were identifiable.

As children of our Heavenly Father, we can all be beautiful too! It’s a beauty that comes from inside, by feasting on the right things. We should want to have Christ’s image in our countenances. We can be just as identifiable as members of the Church as a flamingo is for being a flamingo. **NE**



AN APPETITE FOR THE GOSPEL

“For The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to fulfill its divine mission to assist in bringing ‘to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’ [Moses 1:39], *all* members need to generate an appetite for gospel sustenance. We must ‘hunger and thirst after righteousness’ [Matt. 5:6] before we can be filled. We need to cultivate spiritual strength within ourselves before we can ever hope to engender it in others. . . . We must have personal, spiritual experiences to anchor us. These come through seeking them in the same intense, single-minded way that a hungry person seeks food.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Feasting at the Lord’s Table,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 80.