

# A New Destination

By Amancay Kotecka-Miño

Sometimes my life feels like one continuous plane flight. My mother is Ecuadorian and my father is Polish. I was born in Ecuador, but when I was 10 years old we moved to Spain. We lived there just two years. When I was 12 that plane took off again, this time for Poland. I yearned for stability, for friends and family nearby, and to be done with good-byes.

## Initial Encounters with the Elders

There was knocking at our door. I opened it to find two young men standing there. Tactlessly, I closed the door before they could say anything.

"Open the door again and say you are sorry," my father's voice commanded from the back of the house. "We did not teach you to treat people this way!"

Feeling a little ridiculous, I opened the door. "I'm sorry," I mustered.

"I want to know about you, about your beliefs. Please come in," my father invited. The young men introduced themselves as missionaries

from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Reluctantly, I listened to their message—at age 13, I had no choice but to participate.

For four months those missionaries visited my home, teaching the doctrines of the restored Church of Jesus Christ. "We respect and admire your courage, but we will never change our religion," my father finally told them, and we never saw those elders again.

## A Desire to Find the Truth

Two years passed, and changing family circumstances forced me into a profound sadness. My father had left Poland in search of work so our family was divided. I felt desperate, searching for God. My prayers became more sincere, pleading with Heavenly Father to help me find His presence.

One day my mother told me, "Some person by the name of Garling asked for you. I told him to call back next week." She knew that it was a missionary and wasn't interested in the message, so she didn't feel it necessary to respond quickly.

**My whole life felt like never-ending plane rides. I yearned for peace and stability but never found them until I truly turned to the Lord.**

That Friday night I again heard knocking at the door. This time I gave the emissaries a sincere welcome and a smile. "You are welcome in my home, but you need to know I will never become a Mormon," I told them.

These elders taught me anyway—every Friday afternoon for six months. Loads of my mom's cookies and thousands of questions later, all my deepest questions began to be answered. It seemed like every time the missionaries visited, another piece of life's puzzle came together. Intrigued, I finally did what the elders had asked me to do: pray and ask Heavenly Father if their words and the Book of Mormon were true. They assured me that God answers prayers.

## **Confirmation and Hesitation**

As I prayed and studied the scriptures more deeply, these doctrines became sweet to my soul. For months I hesitated, feeling that I needed solid evidence, needed to know everything about the gospel before joining this Church. Finally, the words of the

world and became fearful that my choice to be baptized wouldn't be accepted by loved ones.

Little by little, mistakes and decisions made me deaf to the whisperings of the Spirit. My scriptures ended up in the deepest part of my trunk and I even stopped praying.

That prayer marked the beginning of my return to the Church, which I knew would require repentance. That Sunday, for the first time in nearly a year, I attended sacrament meeting. The next day I again decided to be baptized.

The Lord helped me through my difficult process of returning to what I had once known to be true. I now define those difficult circumstances as some of the sweetest blessings from God. He did not forget me. He listened to my prayers and waited for me to recognize His answer. He helped me through all the suffering I endured, strengthening and protecting me. In the process I gained greater clarity on the meaning of Christ's divine mission and His Atonement.

I was baptized in April 2011. My plane has taken off since—I now reside in France, which means more changes. However, I am now grateful to Him for my life and for the circumstances that He had me live through. Because of my testimony of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, I now understand that I am not alone, no matter what destinations life brings next. I don't know if my plane will take off again. The only thing I do know is that my new destination is that straight path that leads to life eternal with Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. ■

*The author lives in France.*



Savior in John 20:29 spoke to my soul: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." I decided to be baptized.

My parents required that I wait until I was an adult to be baptized, but the time waiting helped in my progression and knowledge of the gospel. Sadly, as my baptism date drew closer, I lost confidence in my answer. I got into the things of the

## **The Blessing of Repentance**

My life was not turning out—too many tears and disappointments. It was hard to understand why my family had to undergo so many trials. Right before my last year of high school, my parents had to leave Poland. The prospect of relocating again caused me anguish. Finally, I again knelt in prayer, truly meaning my words: "Heavenly Father, Thy will be done, not mine."