

STRENGTH TO FOLLOW THE LORD



From an interview with Elder Claudio D. Zivic of the Seventy, currently serving in the South America South Area Presidency; by Sarah Cutler



At age 9

I, the Lord, . . . delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth (D&C 76:5).

Running was one of my favorite activities when I was young. I was on the track and field team, and my specialty was the 800-meter dash. That meant I ran two laps around the track.

My dream was to be in the Olympics. My trainer had been an Olympic athlete. He thought I was talented enough to go to the Olympics if I practiced hard.

I practiced a lot and ran in many races. When I was 15, I was the second-place champion for my category in the whole country of Argentina. I hoped that if I continued working, perhaps I could go to the Olympics.

But there was a problem. Often our races were on Sunday. Soon I realized that I could not continue competing. So I chose to stop running.

The choice was hard. I had to give up my dream of being in the Olympics. My trainer didn't understand why I stopped. But I knew I had made a good decision. Even though sports are a good thing, choosing to follow the Lord and His Church is better.

Later, while I was serving in the military, I was sent to a regiment (a military

unit) near the Andes Mountains. When I received my assignment, I felt that the Lord had something special for me to do there. I prayed a lot, asking, "What is my purpose here?"

After I had been there three months, our officer said, "I want to organize a club for the soldiers." He wanted a place for us to read, listen to music, play games, write letters, and rest. The Holy Ghost helped me know that this was what the Lord wanted me to do. I was asked to be the club president. Getting the club ready was a lot of work. We painted and furnished a building to meet in.

At the club's opening ceremony, I was asked to talk in front of the officers and soldiers. I had the opportunity to share my testimony of the gospel and my feelings about the Church with many of the soldiers who did not live the standards of the gospel. They all knew I was a "Mormon boy" who lived my standards. I didn't do the things they did, but they respected me. The officers respected me too. One of them said to me, "I admire you for your standards."

Never be afraid to tell people what you believe in and what your standards are. You don't need to hide who you are. I know the Lord will bless you when you are courageous enough to follow Him. ●

Right: Elder Zivic and his family in 2007. Below: At age 15, crossing the finish line of an 800-meter dash in Buenos Aires, Argentina

