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THE GLORIOUS DAY OF Priesthood Restoration

*How grateful we should be that the Lord has restored
His Church and His priesthood to the earth.*

When the Savior Jesus Christ came to earth, one of the first things He did was organize His Church. The New Testament tells us that He “went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” When He came down the next morning, He called His disciples together. “And of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles” (Luke 6:12–13).

Later on He took Peter, James, and John up into a mount apart, and there Peter received the keys of the priesthood (see Matthew 17:1–9; see also 16:18–19). Peter became the one responsible for holding all the keys on earth in leading the Church after the departure of the Savior.

Obedying the Savior’s injunction (see Mark 16:15), the Apostles preached the gospel and organized branches of the Church. In many cases, they had the opportunity of visiting branches only once, which gave them little opportunity to teach and train. Paganistic ideas soon crept in, and different aspects of the Savior’s doctrine were changed or modified (see Isaiah 24:5). As apostasy spread, it became necessary for the Lord to take the priesthood from the earth. As a result, the earth was without the blessings of the priesthood for quite a period of time.

To establish His kingdom again on the earth with the powers of the priesthood, the Lord restored the gospel.

Remember the Restoration

As Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon and Oliver Cowdery was acting as his scribe, they came across the story in 3 Nephi of the resurrected Savior visiting the Western Hemisphere. As they learned of His teachings about baptism (see 3 Nephi 11:23–28), they wondered about the many forms of baptism being used in their day and about who had authority to baptize.

Joseph and Oliver decided to appeal to the Lord, praying in the woods near Joseph and Emma’s home. There, the great revelation occurred wherein John the Baptist appeared, put his hands on their heads and said: “Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness” (D&C 13:1).

That was a glorious event. I hope all priesthood bearers remember May 15, 1829, as a sacred event in the history of the Church and as a special event in the history of the world.

The Articles of Faith tell us “that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof” (Articles of Faith 1:5).

Men are not called randomly; they are called by inspiration and prophecy. There’s a direct line of inspiration from the Lord to those who are called to exercise the priesthood. That is the way the Lord governs His Church, and that is the way He called the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Be Worthy of the Priesthood

Receiving the priesthood is not a rite of passage that comes automatically in accordance with age. We have to be worthy and “faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods” (D&C 84:33). We should carefully read the oath and covenant of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which specifically points out conditions we must understand and agree to in order to accept the priesthood:



“Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved.

“But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come” (D&C 84:40–41).

That’s pretty serious. You might think men would shy away from the Aaronic and the Melchizedek Priesthoods, but the next verse says, “Wo unto all those who come *not* unto this priesthood” (D&C 84:42; emphasis added).

If we accept the priesthood and live worthy of it, we receive the blessings of the Lord. But if we break our covenant and turn from our priesthood, we will not receive the Lord’s blessings or become “the elect of God” (D&C 84:34).

The Aaronic Priesthood, which is received by covenant, helps prepare young men to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is the greater priesthood received by oath *and* covenant.

Reach Out in Service

The priesthood is a great brotherhood—probably the greatest brotherhood on earth. The relationships among our priesthood brothers should be greater than any other relationships except for those within our individual families. In addition to being a brotherhood, the priesthood is

a service organization where we give of ourselves to help others and make things better.

From the time a young man receives the Aaronic Priesthood and is ordained a deacon or a teacher or a priest, he belongs to a quorum. That quorum brotherhood continues when he receives the Melchizedek Priesthood and is ordained an elder. Quorums in the priesthood are vital.

Recently a young man going on a mission spoke in sacrament meeting. In his talk he explained that he and four friends had started out together in the deacons quorum. He said the friendship and support they gave each other as they faced challenges and moved forward through the ranks of the Aaronic Priesthood helped them to reach their goal of serving full-time missions.

I belong to a quorum. It's a very special quorum. It's made up of men from all different types of occupations and professions. But when we act as a quorum, we're united in purpose.

When quorum members agree unanimously on a course to follow and act together under the influence of the Holy Ghost, they act in accordance with the Lord's will. Unless

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you have complete agreement by members of a quorum, you do not proceed. Think of how that can protect you throughout life.

Every quorum leader ought to have a list of the members of his quorum, and he should be conscious of those who are having trouble defining the way they should be living. If a number of such young men belong to the quorum, the leader prioritizes his list, giving attention to those in most urgent need of nurturing. Then he and other quorum members start visiting them, making them friends and associates of the quorum in a way that draws them back into the fellowship.

A priesthood quorum has the duty and responsibility “to warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59). Service in a priesthood quorum is essential to our development here on earth. Therefore, all quorum members should consider these duties as part of

their service obligation in our Father in Heaven's kingdom.

We all know that we face challenges in our mortal probation. Unless we have support to help us as we proceed through life, we will find ourselves without a firm plan, a firm direction, or a firm roadmap to lead and guide us. A properly functioning quorum helps us form a plan and a roadmap that will lead us back to the presence of our Father in Heaven.

Be Grateful

Bishops hold priesthood keys to preside over their ward, including the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. The bishop, in fact, is the president of his ward's priests quorum. He helps the young men to be worthy to receive and advance in the Aaronic Priesthood and to prepare for the Melchizedek Priesthood. He helps them understand the obligations and blessings that come to bearers of the priesthood. He helps them learn to magnify the priesthood by giving them assignments that help them serve and minister to others.

The keys belonging to the Aaronic Priesthood remind us that we should always be grateful for the restored priesthood, with its power, authority, and responsibilities: “The power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic Priesthood, is to hold the keys of the ministering of angels, and to administer in outward ordinances, the letter of the gospel, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, agreeable to the covenants and commandments” (D&C 107:20).

I challenge young men to honor the priesthood they hold and to prepare to advance in each office of the Aaronic Priesthood as they prepare for the additional blessing of receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood, serving the Lord as full-time missionaries and eventually marrying in His holy temple.

I testify that no mortal man leads this Church. It is the Savior's Church, and He directs it through the priesthood, which He delegates to men on earth so they can act as His agents in leading His Church and performing sacred ordinances. How grateful we should be that the Lord has restored His Church and His priesthood to the earth. ■