

SERVICE THAT CAME FULL CIRCLE

When I was a college freshman, I would go with my roommate to visit her 98-year-old great-great-uncle, whom we affectionately called Uncle Joe. He lived alone and was lonely, so we tried to visit him as often as possible. During our visits he would tell us stories about when he lived in Mexico and in several border towns in Arizona, including Nogales.

Uncle Joe lived alone and was lonely. So my roommate and I tried to visit him as often as possible.

When my roommate temporarily moved back home, I felt prompted to continue visiting Uncle Joe. He became a close friend, and I visited him until he passed away a year and a half later. I was sad to lose my friend but grateful for the valuable time we had spent together.

Ten years after Uncle Joe passed away, I was reading through my

great-grandmother's journal. The journal told of her husband leaving her with no money, \$30 due in rent, and nine mouths to feed.

Then she wrote: "In Bisbee [Arizona] the people were so good to us. Even when we lived out of town south of Bisbee, they brought us home [from church]. Brother Joseph Kleinman, who lived in Mexico,



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRADLEY H. CLARK

COULD I CONFESS?

brought us home many times, and not only that, but [his family] took us all to eat dinner with them. They served fried rabbit with all the trimmings, which we enjoyed very much. They were transferred to Nogales . . . and they let us have their rabbits, pretty white ones, and we sure had all we could eat then.”

As I read this entry, I realized that the Joseph Kleinman who had helped my great-grandmother was Uncle Joe! I felt the Spirit whisper that I had been inspired to continue visiting Uncle Joe as a small thank-you for the kindness he had shown to my great-grandmother and her family.

I was thrilled to be a part of a story of love and service that came full circle. I know the Lord is aware of His children. If we heed the promptings of the Holy Ghost, we can bless the lives of others and in return be blessed ourselves. ■

Krisi Church Summers, Utah, USA

As I sat across from a member of the stake presidency, my heart started pounding. I had felt jumpy since the stake clerk had called to set an appointment. *Would he know I was not worthy to serve?*

I had decided that some sins would be easier to take to the judgment bar of God than to reveal here on earth, thinking it would be selfish to disclose things that would bring pain or embarrassment to my wife. Better to overcome them by myself and live with the burden. The only problem was that I couldn't overcome them on my own.

I sat there as the counselor in the stake presidency extended a call to serve. He asked, “Brother, would you accept this calling?” How I wanted to shout, “Yes!” Instead, almost involuntarily, I heard myself say, “I cannot; I need to clear up some sins.”

Anxiety and relief poured into me simultaneously as I confessed the general nature of the sin. He asked if I had spoken with my bishop. “No.” My wife? “No.” He shook my hand, smiled, told me he was proud of me for confessing, and directed me to talk with the bishop and my wife.

I obeyed, telling my wife first—thereby eliminating my biggest fear. She still loved me! Yes, she was upset, and we would have to work out some things, but she loved me and encouraged me to visit the bishop.

When I went to see the bishop, he immediately welcomed me into his office. With difficulty, I tried to articulate why I was there. After hiding my sins so long, I hardly knew where to start. He lovingly encouraged me to come clean. I explained the general nature of my sins and asked for time to provide the full inventory of my misdeeds. He readily agreed.

I still had yet to fully confess, but I felt the weight of the world lifting from my shoulders. I also felt a renewed hope of freedom, finally, from this burden.

I spent the next weeks praying, reading the scriptures, and creating my inventory to present to both my bishop and my Heavenly Father. First I took my list to Heavenly Father, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, to let Him know I was sorry and sincerely desired to change. I set another appointment with the bishop and shared my list in its entirety. He didn't frown, yell, or chastise me; instead, he gave me a big hug. He let me know of his love and the Lord's love, informing me that I was now on the path of true repentance. I knew it was true.

Confessing my sins, formerly my biggest fear, became one of the most beautiful experiences of my life. It was the first step for me to truly understand the gift and the healing power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. ■

Name withheld

WE FOLLOWED THE PATH

In the last area of my mission, my companion and I served in two villages located in the interior of the state of São Paulo, Brazil. Between the two villages was a shortcut through the forest we had never taken because we felt it was dangerous and that we weren't likely to meet anyone there.

One afternoon as we approached the shortcut, the Holy Ghost touched my heart, telling me that we should enter the forest. I looked at Elder Andrade and told him about the impression I had just received. He told me he had felt the same thing.

Shortly after we had started down the unfamiliar trail, we saw a woman walking toward us. The trail was narrow, and as we passed her, we couldn't help but notice that she was crying.

When she looked up, she invited us to follow her to her home, where we met her husband. Immediately we began teaching the receptive couple the gospel. After a few weeks we invited them to be baptized. We were excited when they readily accepted because it had been a year since the ward's last baptism. We were grateful we had acted on the prompting to enter the trail that day.

A short time before their baptism, however, the wife said she needed to talk to us. She said that for years she had had a recurring dream. In her dream she found herself waiting in the center of São Paulo. An older man

approached her and said two young men were coming to change her life. She would then see two young men approaching, but her dream always ended at that point.

One day a few weeks earlier, she was sweeping the floor in her house when a voice told her that two young men were approaching and that she needed to go at that moment to the shortcut trail, where we had first seen her. Not understanding the prompting but wanting to know the answer to her dream, she dropped her broom and walked to the trail.

As she walked, the images of her dream came to her mind as if in a

movie that ended with her finally seeing the faces of the two young men. She also saw that each wore a black name badge. Moments later, she said, Elder Andrade and I appeared before her on the trail. Emotion overtook her, and she could not help but weep.

Today, remembering that sacred experience, I feel the Spirit and again see in my mind the tear-streaked face of that sister who embraced the gospel. Gratefully, my companion and I had the sensitivity and the courage to follow the path the Lord wanted us to take that day. ■

Rut de Oliveira Marcolino, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil

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WOULD YOU LIKE SOME FLOWERS?

One day after a particularly hard shift in the hospital's pediatrics unit, I was tired and grumpy. As I walked to the security desk, I noticed some beautiful flowers. When I commented to the person at the desk how beautiful they were and how good they smelled, she told me I could have them.

I was so happy! I thought that surely Heavenly Father wanted me to have the flowers to brighten my day.

Walking out of the hospital, I found myself behind a woman in a wheelchair. I grew impatient with her but finally was able to pass her as we exited the building. As I passed, she lifted her head and said, "Oh, what beautiful flowers." I thanked her and hurried toward my husband, who was waiting in our car. I was excited to show him my flowers.

Suddenly I felt the Holy Ghost tell me that the woman needed the flowers more than I did. I was reluctant to give them to her, but I followed the prompting. When I asked if she would like them, I hoped she would say no.

"Oh, yes!" she replied. "I would love them. They are beautiful."

I handed them to her, but as I turned to leave, she began to sob. When I asked if she was all right, she told me that her husband had passed away several years ago and that it had been more than a year since any of her children had visited her. She said she had been pleading with God to show her a sign of His love.

"You are an angel sent from God to give me my favorite flowers," she said. "Now I know that He loves me."

My heart broke. I had been so selfish. This woman needed a loving word, and I didn't even want to talk to her. I was no angel. As we parted, I also started to cry.

When I reached the car, my husband asked what was wrong and why I had given away my flowers. He seemed confused but then relieved as I related the story.

"I sent you roses today. I felt that you needed them," he said. "I was worried you had just given them away. If those weren't the flowers I sent you, where are they?"

It turned out that the floral shop had forgotten to deliver the roses, so we drove to the shop. My husband went in and soon came out with a beautiful bouquet.

I couldn't help but cry again. Heavenly Father had asked me to sacrifice those flowers, knowing that there was something better waiting for me and also that His lonely daughter needed a reminder of His love. ■

Cindy Almaraz Anthony, Utah, USA

