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A Bonus Blessing

My wife, Carmen, and I just had our first child when I was called to be the bishop of our ward. At the time, we struggled financially. It became stressful for me to provide for my family and at the same time watch over and care for the members of our ward.

One Sunday, I noticed a single mother with her four little children in sacrament meeting. She sat on the last bench in the chapel and tried her best to keep her children quiet. I knew she was struggling financially as well, but she never asked for help. Weeks passed, and every Sunday she came to church with her children.

One day, I received my paycheck. Blessed to receive a bonus, I decided to use the extra money to purchase supplies for much-needed repairs on

my house. But while I was heading to the market, this sister and her children came to my mind. I felt I should use the extra money to buy food for them. I called Carmen and told her what I felt I needed to do. She agreed.

As I shopped, my eyes fell on some cookies. I thought that maybe the children would like some sweets. I filled two bags with food and made my way to this sister's house.

I knocked on the worn wooden door several times. When I was about to leave, the door finally opened. "Bishop," the sister said, "I am surprised to see you here." Instantly, her children ran out from behind her.

"I brought you some food," I said.

One of her daughters found the cookies and shouted, "Cookies!" Her brothers and sisters excitedly gathered

around. A seven-year-old daughter hugged me. "Thank you, Bishop!" she said.

I looked inside their home and saw that this sister had been washing clothes in a pan on the floor. The family had no table and slept on a mattress on the floor. I realized how much they were in need. I made arrangements to make sure they would have a table and that each would have a bed.

This experience helped me to recognize that the Lord guides and blesses His servants. We do not need a special calling in order to help our brothers and sisters. We just need to be in tune with the Spirit, recognize who needs our help, and be willing to be instruments in the Lord's hands. ■

Roberto Atúncar Nieto, Lima, Peru