

A PROPHET FOR OUR TIME

BY PRESIDENT DIETER F. UCHTDORF

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

I am deeply honored and grateful for the privilege to pay tribute to President Thomas S. Monson, a prophet of God and my cherished friend.

At this tender time, feelings and thoughts run deep and words are inadequate to express my love, gratitude, and sorrow.

Harriet and I express our heartfelt sympathy, condolences, and gratitude to the family, to all who love him, and to the many who so tenderly cared for him. A special word of gratitude goes to Ann Monson Dibb, President Monson's daughter. After the death of President Monson's beloved wife, Frances, Ann's dedicated service, supported by her siblings and family, greatly blessed President Monson in the winter days of his life.

How much I miss him! I considered him a friend long before I met him. I believe that all who knew him, heard him, or saw him, even if only from a distance, considered themselves his friends.

As Sister Uchtdorf and I traveled the world, people would convey their love, gratitude, and prayers to their beloved prophet. These heartfelt greetings came from the young, the elderly, and all the ages in between.

Thomas S. Monson was a man for all seasons, truly a spiritual giant. He abounded in knowledge, faith, love, vision, testimony, courage, and compassion—leading and serving never from a pedestal, but always eye to eye. He had a special place in his heart for the poor and the needy. We will miss his voice, his steadiness, his confidence in the Lord, his smile, his wit, his enthusiasm, his optimism, and his stories, which I consider parables of a modern prophet of God.



It is now 24 years ago when President Monson invited Harriet and me to his office and called me to serve as a General Authority of the Church. Harriet and I struggled to cope with the significance of the moment and its far-reaching impact for our lives.

However, President Monson's warmth, personal interest, encouragement, enthusiasm for the work, and prophetic dignity made us feel calm and at peace. We felt we were in the presence of one who knew the Savior, who

was His servant, who was known by our Heavenly Father.

Germany and its people were especially blessed by President Monson. His strong faith helped to stretch ours during the Cold War years. He not only brought suitcases filled with clothes and other things for the members in East Germany, but his powerful apostolic prayer given in 1975 promised unthinkable spiritual blessings. President Monson came back with then-Elder Russell M. Nelson and followed up on these

divine promises. They were all fulfilled, step by step. A prophet of God had spoken, and God honored His servant's faith and work.

When Harriet and I accompanied President Monson to a conference in Hamburg, he asked about Michael Panitsch, a former stake president and patriarch, one of the stalwart pioneers of the Church in Germany. Brother Panitsch was

the bedridden brother, and President Monson gave him a wonderful priesthood blessing, thanked him for his life of dedicated service, and cheered him up with a smile.

Whenever I think about this experience, I am reminded of what the Apostle Peter said of Jesus, his friend and teacher: "[He] went about doing good."¹

about to leave after a visit in the prophet's home, President Monson stopped us and said, "I love the Savior Jesus Christ. And I know that He loves me." What a tender and powerful testimony by the prophet of God.

President Monson was truly a prophet for our time. He was a man for all seasons. All that we know and love about President Thomas S.



The General Auxiliary Presidencies stand as the casket leaves the Conference Center.

seriously ill, bedridden, and unable to attend our meetings. Nevertheless, President Monson wanted to visit him.

Just prior, President Monson had undergone foot surgery and could hardly walk without pain. Brother Panitsch lived on the fifth floor of a building with no elevators. We would have to climb many steep steps. Yet President Monson insisted, so we went.

It was a very painful climb for President Monson, but he cheerfully went on. We reached

The same can be said of the man we love, respect, and sustained as the prophet of God, our friend and God's friend, Thomas Spencer Monson.

It has been a most satisfying and spiritually rewarding experience to serve as one of President Monson's counselors in the First Presidency of the Church. It has included happiness and heartache, laughter and sorrow, deep conversations, and many inspired prophetic moments.

Recently, as President Eyring and I were

Monson will continue. His spirit has gone home to God, our Father in Heaven, who gave him life. Wherever I go in this beautiful world, a part of this cherished friend will always go with me.

I offer an affectionate farewell to our beloved prophet: Thank you, President Thomas S. Monson. May God be with you till we meet again. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer, amen. ■

NOTE

1. Acts 10:38.