



María José de Araújo, who volunteers daily in the Recife Brazil Temple, "is a good example of serving others," says temple recorder Cleto P. Oliveira, pictured at right with María.

My Privilege to Serve

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Before the doors of the Recife Brazil Temple open for another day of administering saving ordinances, 70-year-old María José de Araújo arises to prepare for another day of selfless service.

To get to the temple, María must travel an hour and a half on four separate buses from her home in Cabo de Santo Agostinho, south of Recife, on Brazil's northeast coast. But before she can leave, she prepares food and other necessities for a blind cousin she cares for in her home.

"María is a good example of serving others," says Cleto P. Oliveira, temple recorder. "Since the temple was dedicated in December 2000, she has volunteered to serve here every day the temple has been open. She even comes on holidays."

From 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. every Tuesday through Saturday, María works in the temple cafeteria, washing dishes and making salads. She would work longer, she says, but with a long bus ride home, she must leave early enough to return before dark.

Brother Oliveira tells María she doesn't need to come to the temple every day, but he admits that he would need two people to replace her. "She just smiles and says she has dedicated her life to the Lord," he says.

For María, serving in the temple daily is a great privilege.

"My Father in Heaven has blessed me with good

health, and my goal is to continue to come every day as long as my health permits," she says. "I have made a covenant to dedicate all of my talents and abilities to serve the Lord. When I arrive home after serving in the temple, I don't feel tired. The Lord has blessed me in that way."

Previously, while serving for six years in her ward's family history center, María researched her family line. Then, on numerous Saturday mornings before going to work in the temple cafeteria, she completed vicarious temple work for four generations of her female ancestors. She also had the work completed for four generations of male ancestors.

When she began researching her family history, María felt that the task was impossible—especially when she was unable to determine the names of two great-grandparents. But one night their complete names were revealed to her in a dream. At first she wondered whether the names could be correct, but as she searched among her mother's records, she found the names and was able to make family connections that had eluded

her. She believes the dream came as a blessing for her efforts to serve the Lord and His children.

"The temple is my life," María says. "People who don't come to the temple are missing out on a great opportunity and blessing. By serving in the temple, we come to understand the real meaning and power of the temple." ■



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