



FOR A BURNT OFFERING



When I was admitted to the university, I shouted for joy. How could I then sacrifice my education to serve a mission?

BY JOSEPH RAY BRILLANTES

And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife . . . I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her. . . . Then Abraham fell upon his face, and [rejoiced]" (Genesis 17:15–17; see Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 17:23).

I shouted for joy. My whole high school must have heard. Other students stared at me, wondering what had made me shout, but I could not contain my delight when I saw my name on the list of students admitted to the Philippines' premier university. I truly felt blessed.

"And thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him" (Genesis 17:19).

When people learned that I would be attending the university, they looked at me in awe. In moments of reflection, I couldn't help smiling. My future was set. I was very grateful to the Lord for helping me succeed in the qualifying examinations.

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did [test] Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: . . . Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, . . . and offer him . . . for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:1–2).

"Heavenly Father, I can't go on a mission right now. There is so much for me here. Let me continue my studies. After I get my degree, I will go and proclaim Thy gospel.



And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, . . . Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou has not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.”

“I need to continue studying, Father. I need this for my future.

“Thou knowest that I have tried to persuade the department head to grant me a leave of absence for two years. She would not allow it. She told me I had to apply for an honorable dismissal from the university if I choose to go.

“Heavenly Father, I can’t go on a mission right now. I need this for my future.”

“And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together” (Genesis 22:6).

My heart was heavy as I approached the office door of the college secretary. He would tell me that I was out of my mind, that I would be sacrificing a promising future. How could I explain to him that the Lord had called me?

“And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son” (Genesis 22:9–10).

“I am here to see the college secretary.”

“It is about applying for an honorable dismissal.”

“No, I am in good academic standing.”

“No, I have not been involved in any criminal offense.”

“The reason? I have received a call from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to serve a full-time proselytizing mission. I need to give up my studies at the university to serve the Lord.”

“No, the mission cannot be postponed, and I will serve for two years.”

“I know that means I cannot return.”

“And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, . . . Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou has not withheld thy son, thine only son from me” (Genesis 22:11–12).

“What? I can apply for a leave of absence? My department head said that I had to leave the university because a leave of absence can be granted for only one year.”

“The university policy was recently changed? She must not have known that, nor did I.”

“Thank you very much.”

“And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven . . . and said, . . . in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Genesis 22:15–18).

After I served in the Philippines Ilagan Mission from 2000 to 2002, I resumed my studies at the University of the Philippines in Quezon City and then transferred to Brigham Young University–Hawaii. I look forward to marrying and raising a family in the gospel.

The Lord would have us sacrifice everything to Him. That does not mean we cannot receive the desires of our heart. Sometimes He just wants to see if we will put Him first. ■