

Cemetery 25th Anniversary Remembrance

Nauvoo, Illinois – Smith Family Cemetery

Saturday, August 6, 2016

Elder M. Russell Ballard is an Apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and a Co-Chair with President Wallace B. Smith of the Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith Family Foundation.

Elder Ballard:

We are honored again to be with you in this beautiful spot. I want to express my appreciation to Lach Mackay. You have been so good to work with.

Our appreciation to Dan and Rosemarie Larsen for all you have done along with your sister Anina and other Joseph Smith family members who come here every year to plant the flowers and make the cemetery beautiful.

We all need to continue in being generous in contributing to the Foundation's Cemetery Fund. The reason is that it requires resources in order to keep it beautiful. I think one of the things I am so anxious to see happen long after I am gone is that this place will always be beautiful. There is no one who has ever lived in my judgement, with the exception of the Savior, who is more entitled to rise up on the day of resurrection in a glorious and beautiful garden. I have always felt deeply that Joseph, Hyrum, Emma, and Father and Mother Smith, Samuel, Don Carlos and other family members will rejoice together on the day of resurrection. They all played important roles at an important time in our history.

Now our association would not be what it is today if it were not for Karl Anderson. If there are accolades and applause to be given this morning it would be for Karl and his dear wife Joyce. Karl calls me often and when the phone rings I say, "Hello Karl—Now what." He is our dear friend and keeps us moving forward. I also thank Frances and Steven for their watch-care over the reunion.

Here we are in Nauvoo at the family cemetery. I would hope that there would not be any of your children or grandchildren that will not have an opportunity at some time to come here and feel what we feel here. When you are close to the burial place of the prophet Joseph, Hyrum, Emma, and Father and Mother Smith you feel their love for us. All family members ought to come and feel the spirit of this place at least once. So that when we talk about Nauvoo and we talk about the cemetery, they will remember how they felt when they walked in these gardens.

We have said a lot about Joseph, Hyrum, Emma, and other family members so far in our time together. There is so much more we could say. I sense that the deepest feelings in their hearts is us. I believe the power of the prophet Elijah turns our hearts turned towards our fathers and their hearts towards us. The bonding power of the Holy Priesthood has been restored through the prophet Joseph from Peter, James, and John. So we have all of the sacred ordinances, doctrines, and principles to guide our lives.

So, let our hearts be with our forefathers and mothers for the rest of the day as we join one another in the streets and the buildings and here in old Nauvoo. We ask the Lord now that he will continue to bless this place that this cemetery will be a sacred special place for all who come here – member or those that are not yet member. That the grounds will be protected. That the cemetery will be watched over and cared for.

I leave you my testimony that the Savior Jesus Christ lives. His atonement makes it possible for us to have the hope and a clear understanding of the promised and eternal life for all repent and follow his commandments. Which testimony I leave with you in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.