

Boa tarde, my friends!!

This week has been so long (no longer than other 7-day weeks) and I enjoyed it so much! But I've been in the MTC for over a week already so the time is going so fast!

In what is perhaps the most eventful thing in my mission thus far, my district started Immersion! This is where all of our teachers only speak in Portuguese and if we have questions, we gotta ask them in Portuguese! It's really difficult but I can definitely testify that the Gift of Tongues is real and through Christ, we can do all things! This week's subject line is a reference to the headache I have after every class!!

Notable Events from this week! (In order of what I remembered this morning as I reflected on this week, and whether or not I considered it a high/low light of the week—essentially, there's no real order y'all)

- We started Immersion (both a good and bad thing)!

- Every Thursday morning, our district has service! This week (and every subsequent week that will follow here in the MTC) the Elders get to clean the bathrooms in one of the buildings! It sounds a lot worse than it is. It was actually a lot of fun doing some good work and service with people I enjoy spending time with!

- I took photos with some USU friends! (Shoutout to Sister Andrus, Sister Cheney, Sister Wright, Elder Wooley, Elder Leishmann, and Elder Cottam!)

- We had a devotional on Tuesday from Elder Kevin R. Duncan! He talked about how we can be the best Missionaries we can be when we go to the field! His wife, Sister Nancy Duncan, talked about the Mission can change young missionaries.

- I got to host some new Missionaries into the MTC this week! I pulled a lot of people away from their cars with tears in their eyes and in their families eyes. That sounds like a bad thing, I know. But in my head, I never think those are tears of sadness and goodbye. I'd like to think of those as tears of joy and pride in the work that we are called to do as Missionaries!

- I received some postcards from my Grandma! That's pretty self-explanatory but it was such an awesome moment when my District Leader gave them to me!

- The former conductor of the Tabernacle Choir (and current Professor of Choral Arts at Utah



State University—Go Aggies!), Brother Craig Jessop, came to our MTC choir rehearsal. I was fangirling the entire rehearsal and then for our last run of the song, he was asked to conduct!

- Also, the song we're singing this week for MTC choir is very fittingly, *'We Thank Thee, O God, For A Prophet'*. The director said that they chose the song over 6 months ago, and it is a true testament to how our Heavenly Father is in every detail (I recommend reading the lyrics of *'His Eye Is On The Sparrow'*)

- I made a mistake and told the Sisters in my district about the Johngee Smith story, so now they're all calling me Elder Gee Smith. Could be worse, honestly

- Half of our district is sick! I somehow have not gotten sick yet which is pretty incredible. But don't be surprised if I start next email with the words, "So Elder Gee got sick!"

- This morning, we had an Endowment Session at the Mount Timpanogos Temple and it was incredible! I've missed the temple so much over this time here at the MTC and I'm glad there are so many ones here in Utah that are available for use!

- As I am sure many of you heard, our beloved Prophet and President of the Church, Russell M. Nelson passed away on Saturday night. I think that he is probably so happy in Heaven and I can only imagine the joy that he is feeling after a literal lifetime of service to the World and to our God!

Spiritual Thought:

Buckle up, y'all. I have a lot of thoughts this week

Someone pointed out to me in my last email that I seem to be having the highest of highs and that they hope that those highs last (thank you by the way!). Fortunately, those highs have

lasted through this week. But, I would be so remiss to not mention that I have gone through some hard times here in the MTC, and that's totally okay!

I want these emails to serve as a record of my mission, and every part of it, to all of those who read them. And I feel it would be dishonest to not include when I struggle, because ladies and gentlemen: I do it all of the darn time.

For most of my life, I've struggled with comparing myself, my abilities, my progress and so so much more to those around me. It likely comes from many of my formative years of my life being spent in the Fine Arts, a very competitive environment, but I feel that it would be unfair to solely chalk it up to that.

Anyway, I shared this concern and worry of mine with one of my teachers and he directed me to Doctrine and Covenants Section 4, Verses 2-3, which read,

2 Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day.

3 Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work

He pointed out that it says "Serve him with all **YOUR** heart, might, mind and strength". You are serving to the best of your abilities, not the Elder-next-to-you's abilities. The Lord wants your best and He certainly doesn't want you comparing every thing you do to the people around you. Comparison is the thief of Joy, while Jesus Christ is the source of all Joy. It's obviously hard to not compare myself to those around me, but I'm trying to be better.

Additionally, this scripture has helped and blessed me a ton!

2 Nephi 4:20 - My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness; and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep.

Our Heavenly Father has a plan for us! He loves us and wants us to return to him. If you lean on God, He will be your support. He will lead you through your afflictions, and out of the darkness of the world.

I would invite y'all to read hymn #1048 - Our Prayer To Thee, one of our new hymns that was written by our late Prophet, President Nelson! I loved reading it and discovering how much we

can pray to God for. He hears all of our struggles, and knows our hearts, and He wants to hear from us!

Obligatory Google Photos album link: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/4P9d4ozmNzrznkWr7> (You should hop on for some absolute fire pics)

Let me know if you have any questions! Sorry this was so long, I really can't guarantee that these will get any shorter as my mission continues. I would love to hear about YOU! Truth be told, I've spent a lot of time reading emails and doomscrolling google photos albums. So please tell me how you've been! I would love to hear all about your lives, your days, your weird interactions with strangers, whatever! Just know that I love you all.



Tchau Tchou!

Pics include:

- A cool view from a window in my Training building
- Some mountain (yes I know what mountain it is, but we're gonna pretend like it's a normal mountain and nothing weird happens) that we can see from the MTC at 6:45 in the morning!
- Mount Timpanogos Temple photo I took this morning



- With Dr. Craig Jessop! (Go Aggies)







