

# **The First Rome Italy Stake Application**

by Craig A. Cardon

## **INTRODUCTION**

The first formal application to create a Rome Italy Stake was prepared by the Italy Rome Mission and presented to the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with a cover letter dated February 20, 1986. Word that the application had been rejected was received in the mission on March 27, 1986. While the rejection was disappointing, the temporal and spiritual miracles that occurred within the mission and more specifically within the Rome and Naples Districts of the Church from 1983 to 1986 are a testament of the love of the Lord for His saints in Italy and of His hand being made powerfully manifest in preparing the way for the eventual creation of the first stake in Rome, the fourth stake in Italy, on May 22, 2005.

Knowing that these events and circumstances will otherwise be lost to history, and knowing of the Lord's command to remember to future generations what He has done for His people,<sup>1</sup> the following is an attempt to record as accurately as possible the workings of the Spirit of the Lord in bringing about the miraculous temporal and spiritual blessings that were evidenced in the acquisition and dedication of physical facilities, more firmly establishing the Church within the Italy Rome Mission, and in the first application for a stake in Rome. The narrow focus of this account is not intended to be a comprehensive history of the Italy Rome Mission, nor is it a history of the Church in Italy, although some relevant contextual information will be shared.

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<sup>1</sup> 3 Nephi 26:12; 27:23; Revelation 1:19.

## MISSION BEGINNINGS

During the October 1849 general conference of the Church, President Brigham Young announced the opening of a mission in Italy. By assignment from President Young, Elder Lorenzo Snow of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, joined by Joseph Toronto, traveled to England where Elder Snow called T. B. H. Stenhouse to join them. These three continued their journey, arriving in Italy in June 1850. Not long thereafter, Brother Toronto traveled to Palermo to preach among his friends and family while Elder Snow and Brother Stenhouse began to concentrate their efforts among the Waldensians in the Piedmont region of northwestern Italy who were living in the mountains and valleys of the Alps separating France and Italy. In September 1850, Elder Snow and Brother Stenhouse were joined by Jabez Woodard, who Elder Snow had also called while in England to join them to assist with the work in Italy. The day after Brother Woodard's arrival, Elder Snow, Brother Stenhouse, and Brother Woodard ascended a mountain known as Mount Vandalino, rising above the town of Torre Pellice, and positioned themselves near a prominent rock outcropping known as Castelluzzo where Elder Snow dedicated Italy for the preaching of the gospel and formally organized the church in Italy. In honor of these sacred events, Elder Snow proposed that among the saints, the mountain thereafter be known as "Mount Brigham," and the outcropping as "The Rock of Prophecy."

The work of the Lord continued in the Italy Mission until active proselyting ended in 1862.<sup>2</sup> Without continuing activity, the mission was eventually closed officially in 1867. During these 17 years, approximately 180 persons were baptized with many immigrating to the United States. At the time of the closure, only six members remained in Italy.<sup>3</sup>

Nearly eight decades later, amid the circumstances of World War II, Latter-day Saint military personnel from the United States were stationed in Italy and later assigned to military bases in Italy. They formed groups for Sunday worship. Over time, a few native Italians joined the church while visiting neighboring countries where missionaries from the church were proselyting.<sup>4</sup> In 1964, Italy was organized as a district of the Swiss Mission. The Swiss Mission reported that there were then approximately 229 members of the Church in Italy. The following year the mission organized an Italian Zone and once again began active proselyting in Italy.

In November 1966, Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles rededicated the land of Italy for the preaching of the gospel and the Italy Mission was organized, eventually headquartered in Florence Italy. In 1971 the Italy Mission was divided into the Italy North Mission (later the Italy Milan Mission) and the Italy South Mission (later the

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<sup>2</sup> "The Church in Italy," New Era, March 2019. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2019/03/rome-italy-temple-dedication/the-church-in-italy?lang=eng>

<sup>3</sup> "Italy: Church Chronology," Gospel Library App / Library / Church History / Global Histories / Italy. <https://churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/global-histories/italy/it-chronology?lang=eng>

<sup>4</sup> "Latter-day Saints in Italy—A Legacy of Faith," Ensign, June 2014. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2014/06/latter-day-saints-in-italy-a-legacy-of-faith?lang=eng>

Italy Rome Mission). In subsequent years, the Italy Padova Mission and the Italy Catania Mission were formed from, and subsequently again consolidated with the Milan and Rome missions.<sup>5</sup>

## THE NEW RENAISSANCE

The membership of the Church grew in Italy at a slow yet steady pace. In 1983 there were approximately 11,000 members of the Church in Italy. At this same time, the Italy Rome Mission was comprised of four member districts: Rome, Naples, Florence, and Sardegna. Because there were no stakes within the mission, the mission presidency presided over all member and missionary matters within the mission. The Rome District was comprised of seven branches: Rome-EUR, Rome-Nomentano, Rome-Trionfale, Rome-Tuscolano, Ostia, Pescara, and Terni.<sup>6</sup> The Rome-Centro Branch was formed in November 1984. The Naples District was comprised of five branches: Naples, American, Caserta, Flegreo, and Salerno.<sup>7</sup> The Naples branch was divided to form the Naples-Centro and Naples-Nazionale Branches in March 1985. The Avellino Branch was formed in September 1985.

As of July 1983, with the Church having had an active presence in Rome—the capitol of Italy (and some would say the capitol of the world, The Eternal City)—for approximately 18 years, there were two church-owned buildings being used as chapels in Rome, neither of which had been dedicated, and one of which was poorly located.<sup>8</sup> Buildings housing other branches were rented. However, rental laws in Rome made finding an edifice suitable for use as a chapel very difficult and the rented facilities were generally less than desirable.

Nonetheless, renting buildings to provide meeting houses for smaller church units was the option afforded local congregations by general Church guidelines. Those same guidelines specified membership and meeting attendance thresholds, as well as local building fund contribution thresholds for purchasing and renovating buildings and for building new structures. In Rome, and elsewhere, these membership and attendance thresholds for owning meeting houses simply had not been met. The local building fund contribution thresholds also had not been met and seemed far beyond the financial capacity of the saints. With these realities, it appeared that it would be some time before the Church would be more fully established temporally and spiritually in Rome.

The faithfulness and devotion of the Lord’s sons and daughters who had been gathered to the fold over the years in Italy and would yet be gathered, were known to Him. The faith, prayers, and labors of the many church leaders, missionaries, and members over the years were also known to Him. On this foundation of what had gone before, during the early months of 1983, prior to the normal triennial change in mission leadership scheduled for July, the Lord began to instruct the newly called Rome mission president on the work and blessings He had in

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<sup>5</sup> “The Saints in Italy,” Liahona, April 1980. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/1990/04/the-saints-in-italy?lang=eng>

<sup>6</sup> Rome District Annual History, 1983, 1984.

<sup>7</sup> Naples District Annual History, 1985.

<sup>8</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 1 October 1983.

store for His people. The instructions dealt with temporal and spiritual matters associated with more fully establishing His kingdom within the boundaries of the mission, all founded on faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In May 1983, through inspiration the Lord provided a title for this effort, “Il Nuovo Rinascimento” (“The New Renaissance”), that drew upon the storied history of this special part of His creation.<sup>9</sup> This theme consideration occurred decades prior to the prophetically standardized global proselyting theme of “Preach My Gospel,” and at a time when there was much more localized flexibility and even encouragement in defining local themes around which to organize the Lord’s work.

Adopting the spirit of the divine guidance and spiritual awakening that influenced the world-changing Renaissance from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, much of which had occurred within the geographic boundaries of the Italy Rome Mission, Il Nuovo Rinascimento, the new rebirth, would see the hand of the Lord made powerfully manifest in the lives of His sons and daughters in Italy. When the new mission president arrived in July 1983, the theme was introduced to the missionaries of the Italy Rome Mission. During the succeeding months, it was also introduced to the members in the branches and districts in the mission.

In a letter from Italy to his family in Arizona dated July 23, 1983, the new mission president shared the following:

[B]efore coming to Italy, after having been called, but not assigned to a specific mission, yet knowing it would be Italy, I began to pray and ponder over what a theme for our missionary service here could be. I felt the need to find something that could help crystalize in my mind and the minds of the missionaries [and members] the feelings and principles that would accompany the work we were sent to do. After praying and pondering for several months, I still had received no particular impression. While Debbie and I were at the MTC in Provo for that one week to study the language, we happened to be in Allen Ostergar’s office at the end of the week visiting about different things when all at once, it came into my mind as clearly as anything I have ever felt. I excused myself for the distraction, took out my pencil and some paper and wrote the words, “Il Nuovo Rinascimento,” “The New Renaissance.” It was within the confines of this very mission [that] the Renaissance was born, that the world was led out of the Dark Ages (L’Oscurantismo) of temporal and secular darkness, and that the earth was prepared for the restoration of the Gospel. Such men as Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raffaello, Galileo, and others (the Medici) made their homes [and walked along] these very streets. Some of them suffered a great deal under the oppression and tradition of the time, but were courageous enough to give History a Rebirth. Since being here in Italy, I have felt the Spirit of the Lord brooding over the land and this great people. Il Nuovo Rinascimento will be one in which the servants of the Lord do not falter in applying their faith to give this very land a spiritual rebirth, the light of the Gospel bursting forth upon the minds, hearts, and spirits of men, driving away the spiritual darkness that filled this land.

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<sup>9</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, May 21, 1983



As you might guess, this has been the theme of our zone conferences, and I believe will be the theme of our mission. What is Il Nuovo Rinascimento made of? Many, many things, but first and foremost, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We've talked some about this and will need to talk much, much more.<sup>10</sup>

The significance of what the Lord was doing in inspiring and introducing Il Nuovo Rinascimento at this time became more apparent in August 1983 when Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the Seventy and his wife, Sister Marne Tuttle, visited the mission for four days for a mission tour and for local priesthood leadership training. This was prior to the establishing of Area Presidencies to preside over Areas of the Church as exist currently, and Elder Tuttle was what was then known as the Executive Administrator for the Europe Area, of which Italy was a part.

Elder Tuttle had visited the mission just four months earlier and returned in August for a four-day tour of the mission to sustain the work of the Lord and to monitor the transition to a new mission president through missionary zone conferences and member leadership meetings. Conferences and meetings were held in Pisa, Naples, Cagliari, and Rome, in that order. After first being introduced to the meaning and spirit of Il Nuovo Rinascimento in Pisa, he learned much more in subsequent days through conversation with the mission president, the missionaries, and the members, during travel, zone conferences, and member meetings. In these occasions he bore witness that Il Nuovo Rinascimento and all that it encompassed was of the Lord. For example, at the zone conference with the missionaries in the Naples area, Elder Tuttle spoke of what it meant to him personally to have been present when the revelation President Spencer W. Kimball received on priesthood was presented to the General Authorities. He read from his scriptures the following portion of the introductory remarks presented by President N. Eldon Tanner to Official Declaration – 2 when the revelation was presented to the Church on September 30, 1978: “In early June of this year ... this revelation ... was subsequently presented to all other General Authorities, who likewise approved it unanimously.” He showed the missionaries his scriptures where he had written in ink in the margin near those words the following: “I was there and voted in favor.” He shared some thoughts about how it felt to be a part of Church History at that time and then concluded his thoughts by saying how glad he was that he was again going to be able to say that “he was there” as the New Renaissance was begun in Italy. During the succeeding conferences in Cagliari and Rome, he continued to build on this theme.<sup>11</sup>

Elder Tuttle's visit was an answer to prayer. Through him the Lord provided confirming affirmation that He was directing the effort that was beginning to unfold within the mission at this time. With this affirmation, following Elder Tuttle's visit the Lord continued to provide instruction to the mission leaders on matters both temporal and spiritual that would assist in more firmly establishing His kingdom within the Italy Rome Mission.

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<sup>10</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated, July 23, 1983.

<sup>11</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 21 August 1983.

The new mission presidency held their first presidency meeting on Friday evening, July 22, 1983.<sup>12</sup> During this meeting it was noted that some of the physical facilities within the mission were undesirable and in poor condition and it was determined that the mission would begin to give this attention. Along with the spiritual needs, these temporal matters continued to receive attention in subsequent meetings, all of which would prove to have powerful and beneficial spiritual ramifications.

On Saturday, September 17, 1983, the new mission presidency held its first mission council meeting, comprised of the mission presidency and the four district presidencies. The meeting convened at the mission home/office in Via Cimone 95, Roma. The agenda covered many spiritual and temporal matters. For example, for the first time, specific names of young men and women eligible to serve full-time missions were discussed in the council along with plans and time frames for them to be prepared and submit mission applications. Over the next three years, this effort would eventually result in a five-fold increase in the number of young full-time missionaries being called from the mission, providing valuable long-term strength to the kingdom. On the temporal side, physical facilities continued to be a big concern. As this concern was addressed, it was noted,

The brethren have been disappointed here several times, so [the mission president] told them to forget the past, identify in the most professional way possible what is needed, and [we'll] get it done. If the Church wants to firmly establish itself in Rome, it's going to have to do it differently than it's been doing it so far.<sup>13</sup>

A significant leadership matter affecting the spiritual and temporal affairs in the mission involved a pattern of local church leaders sometimes asking to be released and being released when seemingly offended or whenever difficulties or misunderstandings arose. While not unique to Italy, it was important to address the pattern and to help the sons and daughters of God receiving the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to learn the difference between the ways of the world and the ways of the Lord. The counsel that the Lord began to spread throughout the mission is exemplified by what was taught during the mission council.

We concluded the meeting by learning about Edward Partridge from the [Doctrine and Covenants]. What a great perspective the scriptures give of the Prophet and the Lord calling this man to a position, training him, admonishing him, calling him to repentance, training him some more, giving added responsibility, calling to repentance, teaching, accepting and finally being found in the presence of the Lord, all over an extended period of time, and all without being released. It's interesting ... also, that before being called as bishop, immediately following his baptism the Lord called him as a missionary. Kind of identifies the Lord's thinking on the matter, doesn't it.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated July 23, 1983. The mission presidency was comprised of Craig A. Cardon, president, Raffaello Mazzella, first counselor, and Diego Fio, second counselor.

<sup>13</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 18 September 1983.

<sup>14</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 18 September 1983.

As the Lord continued to reach individual hearts with this type of perspective, individual desires began to give way to the Lord's desires and local church leaders grew in their capacities to love and sustain one another.

On Friday evening, September 23, 1983, the mission president received an unexpected call from Elder Tuttle addressing scheduling matters. During the conversation, the mission president felt impressed to ask Elder Tuttle to share his attitude toward physical facilities within the mission, and especially in Rome. The mission president then shared his impressions that for the Church to be established in Rome the way the Lord intended, it would be necessary to make a few exceptions to the normal financial and attendance guidelines for acquiring meeting houses, exceptions which had precedence elsewhere, and to acquire meeting houses in strategic locations within Rome to provide suitable meeting facilities and to communicate spiritually and temporally that the kingdom was in Rome to stay. As the mission president was explaining this, Elder Tuttle interrupted him, told him that he agreed, and instructed him to write a letter explaining the need for the buildings and the reasons for the needed financial and attendance exceptions. He explained that he would then present the letter to the appropriate persons at Church headquarters and seek approval.<sup>15</sup>

In subsequent days, the mission president began speaking with local priesthood leaders, explaining the type of information that would need to be included in such a letter. The local brethren were doubtful, noting disappointments they had experienced in the past, but indicated they would help gather the requested information. Part of the skepticism was fostered by the reality of political and bureaucratic obstacles along with cumbersome and complex laws and procedures governing any activity involving buildings in Rome. Notwithstanding these experiential difficulties, the local leaders and the staff of the Presiding Bishopric Office in Frankfurt Germany and of the branch office in Milan communicated their support of the effort.

During the last week of September 1983, a letter was drafted and sent to Elder Tuttle explaining a perspective on what needed to happen with church buildings in Rome over the succeeding decade. It suggested two steps. The first was to buy three existing buildings and sell one of the two currently owned buildings, ending up with four buildings to be used as chapels in four quadrants of Rome. The second was to begin the process of searching out and purchasing property on which the Church could build chapels, and possibly a temple.<sup>16</sup>

In support of this new initiative, just weeks after submitting the letter, during the latter part of October 1983, Brother Peter Mourik, officed in Frankfurt and the director for Church physical facilities in Continental Europe, visited Rome to look at two buildings identified by the local brethren as suitable to the Lord's purposes.<sup>17</sup> With his experience and insight, he helped

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<sup>15</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 25 September 1983.

<sup>16</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 1 October 1983.

<sup>17</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 15 October 1983.

the local brethren to recognize the care that needed to be taken in identifying and acquiring existing buildings, beyond favorable location, to ensure that an existing building would, even with remodeling, be able to accommodate the number of members and related activities of a ward. His visit proved to be very helpful in the continuing search.<sup>18</sup>

In November 1983, the concerted effort to identify appropriate buildings in Rome for acquisition continued in earnest.<sup>19</sup> At the end of the month it was discovered that a beautiful building being considered that could be easily remodeled to perfectly meet the needs of a ward, had not been built according to the plans approved by the city of Rome. Rather, significant additional space had been added illegally during the original construction. It was soon learned that this is a common practice and that once discovered during remodeling inspections, the building would be shut down by the city, and illegal payments would be required to inspectors and politicians to eventually allow occupancy. This, of course, the church would never do. Interestingly, while all of this was unfolding, the Lord identified an older villa in Piazza Carnaro, within walking distance of the mission home, that had been used as a small factory and was designed perfectly for a ward building. It would require some refurbishing and a zoning change which would be difficult, but possible, all of which could be accomplished more rapidly and for a much lower cost than the illegally built building.<sup>20</sup> The Lord was rewarding faithful efforts in unexpected ways.

At the end of 1983, a change was made in the mission presidency. Brother Mazzella was released, having served faithfully. Brother Diego Fio, former 2<sup>nd</sup> counselor was called as 1<sup>st</sup> counselor, and Brother Vincenzo Bilotta, former president of the Florence District, was called as 2<sup>nd</sup> counselor.<sup>21</sup> In January 1984, the search continued for buildings suitable to house the needs of wards.<sup>22</sup> In February 1984, Brother Mourik again visited from Frankfurt to review several buildings recommended for consideration in the proposed acquisition effort. Of particular interest was a building located in the southeast quadrant of Rome that could be used by the Tuscolano Branch. The building was further out than desired but had several means of public transportation available to it. It appeared that the church could begin utilizing the building within 3 to 6 months.<sup>23</sup> It was determined to pursue the acquisition of this building.

Several months later, the mission president wrote to his family:

We are facing a rather large building fund problem here in the mission right now. We currently have buildings either under construction or being purchased in Livorno, Firenze, 2 in Rome with a third [soon to be added], Cagliari, Naples, La Spezia, with other projects scheduled for next year. These are facilities that will serve units with approximately 150 sacrament meeting attendance, even though most of the units

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<sup>18</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 24 October 1983.

<sup>19</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 1 November 1983.

<sup>20</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 28 November 1983.

<sup>21</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 3 January 1984.

<sup>22</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated January 14, 1984.

<sup>23</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated February 14, 1984.

currently have about 50 attending, with a couple near the 100 mark. Nonetheless, we must come up with our 2% [the financial contribution required by church guidelines from local members] which is becoming a rather large burden for the members right now with all of the building activity coming at once. I am pleased with the faith and willingness to sacrifice shown by the members and I am sure the Lord will bless them, but I am concerned about the burden, nonetheless. I pray for the proper direction in these matters.<sup>24</sup>

On August 6, 1984, Brother Leopoldo Larker from the PBO Office in Milan was in Rome and informed the mission president that a contract to purchase the building in Piazza Carnaro to serve the Nomentano Branch had just been signed by the church. This meant that the Tuscolano and Nomentano Branches would soon be able to meet in church owned facilities. Just two weeks later, however, the mission received word from the PBO Office in Milan that all building projects had been blocked because the mission had not yet paid its full 2% share of the projects' costs.<sup>25</sup> This interruption was resolved with improved communication and the acknowledgment of exceptions that had been granted when these physical facilities efforts were initiated, such as in the timing of the required local building fund contributions.

After one year of wonderful counsel and direction from the Lord through Elder Tuttle, in August 1984 the church adjusted its worldwide supervision of all church matters, discontinuing executive administrators and organizing areas of the world supervised by area presidencies. As a part of this change, the Europe Area was formed, with responsibility for Europe and Africa. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, then serving as a Seventy, was assigned to serve as president of the Europe Area, of which Italy was a part. (Elder Wirthlin would later be called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in October 1986.) Elder Derek A. Cuthbert, the first resident of the United Kingdom to be called as a General Authority was assigned to serve as a counselor in the Europe Area presidency and was assigned first contact responsibility for Italy. Elder Russell C. Taylor also served in the presidency.

Elder Cuthbert visited the Rome mission briefly during August.<sup>26</sup> With his visit, the wonderful counsel and direction from the Lord continued through him and the area presidency. Elder Cuthbert returned a few weeks later for a full tour of the mission.

The emphasis on addressing the church's physical facility needs within the mission as inspired by the Lord continued in earnest. With that continued attention, the reality of the financial burden being placed on the members became more and more apparent.

## **CONTINUING TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

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<sup>24</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated July 15, 1984.

<sup>25</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, August 23, 1984, in 19840101 to 19841231.

<sup>26</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated August 27, 1984.

On Thursday, September 13, 1984, in anticipation of a scheduled mission council meeting the following Saturday, the mission president in conversation with Diego Fio, 1<sup>st</sup> counselor in the mission presidency, and Massimo De Feo, a young returned missionary who had been set apart as the mission executive secretary in July and married in August,<sup>27</sup> indicated his desire for the mission presidency to meet together early Saturday morning before the council meeting for a special prayer on one of the hills of Rome. Accordingly, early Saturday morning, September 15, 1984, joined by Vincenzo Bilotta, 2<sup>nd</sup> counselor, the mission presidency drove to Monte Mario together, arriving near the top around 5:30 AM. The sky was overcast and there was a light drizzle of rain. The group found adequate shelter under a tree. At the invitation of the mission president, each person offered a prayer: first the executive secretary, then the 2<sup>nd</sup> counselor, then the 1<sup>st</sup> counselor, then the mission president. Along with expressions of gratitude, an earnest plea was offered up unto God, that just as life-giving moisture was then falling upon Rome, He would pour out His Spirit upon the entire mission, that He would provide the means to raise the required local member building fund contribution by the end of the year, and that He would bless the proceedings of the mission council that day and cause the hearts of the district presidencies to be receptive to what would be presented.<sup>28</sup>

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by the mission president to his family on September 24, 1984:

As you will recall, I have been very concerned about the heavy building fund obligation we have due to the buildings that have been purchased as exceptions to the Church policy. I had hoped we could get some credit from a building we are selling, but the answer came back, according to policy, no. During Elder Cuthbert's visit on August 21, I had mentioned these things and he had told me to write him a letter explaining all the facts and making the request for the exception I felt would be proper. I spent some time gathering facts about the economic status of the members and as I did so, the need for the exception became more and more evident. With facts in hand, I began to write the letter. I made a great presentation of the facts, explaining why this was a burden too large to ask the members to bear, but when I got to the point where I had to make the specific request for exception, I simply couldn't do it. The words would not come. I decided it must be because of the way I had presented the facts, so I began again. Arriving at the same point, I could not proceed. [Then, a] third letter, and a third inability to actually make the request for exception. At this point, I put the letters away, and began to ask the Lord what it was He was trying to get through to me. As I pondered on this, my mind and heart began to fill with visions and joy of how the saints could and should make this sacrifice and of how the Lord would bless us if we did. Making this temporal sacrifice would bring great spiritual blessings. I called my counselors and they sustained me in this. On Saturday, September 15, we invited all the district presidencies to the villa and had a general [mission council] meeting. I took about an hour and taught the principle of sacrifice and the blessings that flow from it. There was a very strong

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<sup>27</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, July 25, 1984, and September 13, 1984, in 19840101 to 19841231.

<sup>28</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, September 13 and 15, 1984, in 19840101 to 19841231.

spirit. This was in direct response to a prayer meeting we had held as a presidency at 5:30 that morning on a hill overlooking Rome. After the general meeting, we invited each district presidency in individually and gave them the figure we needed from them over the next three months and gave them the [following] method by which they could obtain the funds. They would have to teach the principle to the branch presidents and then give each a figure they would need from his branch. The branch presidents would in turn have to meet with each individual member or family of the branch, active or inactive, teach the principle and make the request. All the district presidencies accepted fully, with grateful hearts, which again was an answer to prayer. At this point, the reports back are very positive. What a great blessing this will be to the mission!<sup>29</sup>

In the same letter, the mission president addressed a relevant spiritual matter again rearing its head:

We must be doing something right, for Satan is more active now, it seems, than at any other time so far in our mission. He is really working on the missionaries and the members. I have had to make several trips to talk with different people about different things. Even the strongest leaders do not escape his attention. In fact, they receive most of it. It is a spiritual struggle with eternal consequences. I have great faith that as we deal with these problems in the right way, they will prove to be great opportunities to refine and strengthen the kingdom. It is always a great testimony to me to see weaknesses become strengths.<sup>30</sup>

During this time, the reality of the financial commitment the Lord was asking of the members continued to regularly occupy the heart and mind of the mission president and was a constant part of his daily prayers. The priesthood leaders and the members were exercising great faith even as the facts evidencing the members' inability to meet the church's required building fund contribution did not change. One evening in early October 1984<sup>31</sup> while attending an activity at the school attended by their children, the mission president and his wife met one of their children's teachers, a small but dynamic woman from England. She inquired of the mission president why he, his wife and family were in Italy. In the ensuing conversation, along with speaking of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the mission president mentioned the building fund effort that had recently been initiated. While of a different faith, with that reference the sweet woman remembered a time years earlier in her life when a small congregation of which she was a part in England, undertook a building fund effort to make needed repairs to their humble meeting house. She recalled that effort occurred around Christmas time. She explained that the minister purchased some bricks and gave a brick to each family who contributed to the effort, thus allowing them to have something to place under their Christmas tree in lieu of gifts they otherwise may have purchased and reminding them of their sacrifice in the building effort. As she spoke, the Spirit of the Lord filled the mission president's heart to overflowing as the Lord

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<sup>29</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated September 24, 1984. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>30</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated September 24, 1984.

<sup>31</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, October 3, 1984, in 19840101 to 19841231

also placed a companion thought in his mind. Along with His instruction that a sizeable temporal sacrifice be asked of the members, the Lord was revealing the means by which this sacrifice could be made.

In Italy, as in several other nations, there is a custom, and in some instances, a law, that employers pay to their employees in December what is called in Italy the “tredicesima,” which is a “thirteenth” month of wages. That is, in addition to their December salary, employees receive an additional month’s salary. Many families depend on this to meet ongoing family obligations, with some allocation to Christmas gifts. The mission president immediately contacted his counselors. They discussed appropriate ways priesthood leaders could counsel members to consider foregoing the normal purchase of Christmas gifts, asking the Lord for guidance, and donating whatever amount the Lord told them to donate to the building fund. For those contributing any amount, a brick would be given, along with a certificate, commemorating their participation in this special effort to establish the Lord’s temporal kingdom more firmly within the mission.

On Saturday, November 10, 1984, during a mission council meeting with the four district presidencies, the mission presidency reviewed these things, counseling with the district presidents about what the Lord was doing and ways in which they could counsel with the branch presidents, who in turn could counsel with the members, inviting them to consider in lieu of normal Christmas gifts, donating that portion of their tredicesima they felt directed by the Lord to contribute to the building fund, according to their means and circumstances. The district presidents were also told that bricks and certificates would be made available to the branch presidents, to be given to members making donations to the building fund, commemorating the members’ sacrifices in this special effort inspired of the Lord.

A copy of the certificate that accompanied the brick is found in Appendix A.

A greater insight into the broader spiritual work that the Lord was accomplishing with his people during this time comes into view with the following details shared by the mission president with his family in a letter written over two days on Saturday, November 24, and Sunday, November 25, 1984.

[Saturday]

Tomorrow we will be creating a fifth branch here in Rome [Roma-Centro]. Satan knows it and has been as active as I have ever seen him. This gives me great confidence that we are on the right course. There have been several nights when I have slept very little in praying and pondering over how to deal with some of the concerns. The Lord has made it known to me that through this means, some of the jealousies and contentions that continue to retard the work here will be overcome. So far, a counselor in the district presidency and a branch president have asked to be released, a couple members of the [district] high council and a few elders quorum presidents and some counselors in some branch presidencies have said they are not sure they will attend the conference because they cannot support the change. It seems that through this, the



Lord has brought to the surface so many of the petty wranglings and littleness of heart that have retarded the work of the Lord here for so long. The facts are that there have been priesthood bearers and women and families come into the church during the last year and a half that have enabled this change and growth in the branches to occur to the point where the Lord has clearly made known His desire that this division of the branches occur. During the past couple of days, I have marveled as He has created circumstances where I have had the opportunity to visit with many of these people and once again, I have seen miracle after miracle as the Lord has changed their hearts. Great peace and joy [have come to] their hearts and mine as some of them were wise enough and strong enough to ask forgiveness from the Lord for feelings they had had. Some of the old members just can't forget past problems, and the Lord is now separating the sheep from the goats. I believe if we are faithful and labor diligently that the Lord will pour His blessing out upon us and this will be a major step in the progress of the Church here in Rome.

[Sunday afternoon]

The Lord has answered our prayers! There was a strong spirit at the conference today and great feelings of love and unity. We had called a special conference of the district to make the changes and even though the branch members from Pescara on the other side of the [Italy geographical] boot could not attend, we had the largest number in attendance that we have ever had at a conference. All of the changes and callings were sustained unanimously. That was not even true of the last regular conference. At the first of the meeting, before making some changes in the counselors of the district presidency because of some other callings (the counselor that had asked to be released was re-sustained as still a counselor in the presidency—and he gave a beautiful message with a great spirit), I shared some thoughts with the members. Among other things, I told them that I was born in the shadow of the Mesa [Arizona] Temple and was the recipient of great blessings there because of my faithful ancestors that had left “Zion” to settle a desert when sent by the prophet ... that the blessing of a temple in the desert had not come from mere wishing or from saints huddling in the safety of Salt Lake City ... that as those faithful saints of old, they now had the opportunity to, with other families, through faith, establish the Lord's house and kingdom in their areas of the city, expecting and receiving the blessings and direction of the Lord, for this is His work, not ours.<sup>32</sup>

Christmas 1984 had added meaning for the saints of the Italy Rome Mission as they celebrated the birth of the Savior, the Son of God, and found joy in their offering to establish His kingdom within the mission more permanently. At the beginning of 1985, in recognition of the remarkable spiritual and temporal journey the Lord had asked of the saints and in recognition of their exercise of their great faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it was reported that contributions to the special building fund had exceeded the building fund requirement.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated November 24, 1984.

<sup>33</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated February 2, 1985.

In late February 1985, the land of Italy was blessed by the presence and prophetic voice of Elder Russell M. Nelson who had been sustained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles less than a year earlier at the April 1984 general conference of the Church. He came to Italy with his wife, Dantzel, to preside at a regional conference convened in Milan Italy for the members and leaders of the Church in Italy and to tour the three missions in Italy. The conference was held on the weekend of February 23-24. The Italian saints were particularly thrilled when during one of the meetings, Elder Nelson thanked his interpreter for his excellent work, excused him, and then spoke directly to the saints in the beautiful Italian language—a gift from the Lord. At a special meeting with the missionaries serving in the Italy Milan mission, Elder Nelson prophesied that they would live to see the time when stakes of Zion would dot the entire land of Italy.<sup>34</sup> (At the time of this prophecy, there was one stake in Italy, the Milan Italy Stake. Twenty-nine years later, in 2014, the tenth stake in Italy, the Florence Italy Stake, was organized with the ten stakes encompassing the entire land of Italy.) Also, while speaking to the Italian saints, Elder Nelson prophesied that the day would come when Italy would have its own temple. (Thirty-four years later, on March 10, 2019, President Nelson, then president of the Church, presided at the first dedicatory session of the Rome Italy Temple, personally offering the dedicatory prayer for the temple he had prophesied would come.)

Following the regional conference, Elder and Sister Nelson traveled on Sunday night with the Italy Rome mission president and his wife to Rome to begin a tour of the mission. On Monday morning, prior to traveling to Naples to begin zone conferences with the missionaries, the mission president drove past a couple of sites that, at the request of the mission president, had been identified as potential sites for the eventual construction of a stake center and/or temple. The favored site was in the distinguished EUR section of Rome, easily accessible by public transportation and in the center of a slightly lower dish-like geological area, which meant the site was approached from slightly higher ground. A most memorable and instructive teaching from Elder Nelson occurred when, after driving by the site from several directions without comment from Elder Nelson, the mission president asked him for his thoughts as they drove away. Elder Nelson responded saying in essence, “President, while it is a beautiful site, whenever possible, the saints need to ‘go up’ to the temple.” The mission president understood this inspired expression not as a doctrinal or policy-directed declaration, but rather as a powerful lesson in a prophet responding to the voice of the Lord in declaring that this was not the time, and the site was not the place for the temple that would eventually be built.<sup>35</sup>

The work moved forward. On March 10, 1985, during the Naples District Conference, the Naples Branch was divided to create the Naples-Nazionale Branch and the Naples Branch was renamed the Naples-Centro Branch. Immediately following the Sunday general session of

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<sup>34</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated March 2, 1985.

<sup>35</sup> Leone Flosi, who had served as both president and counselor in the presidency of the Rome Italy District during part of the time of the events described in this account, was called to preside over the Italy Rome Mission from 1996 to 1999, during which time he was instrumental, along with others, in procuring the slightly elevated site upon which the Rome Italy Temple now stands, along with a visitors center, patron housing, and a stake center. The saints now “go up” to the Rome Italy Temple (Mosiah 2:1).

the district conference, the Naples-Centro Branch building where the conference had been held was dedicated.<sup>36</sup> The chapel occupied one of the floors of a larger building and had been refurbished beautifully to meet the Lord's purposes. Copies of the dedicatory prayer in English and Italian are attached to this document as Appendices B and C.

Indicative of the spiritual strengthening and member development the Lord was fostering within the mission, when the Rome District presidency in April 1985 made a change in the branch leadership of the Rome-Centro Branch, the new president and several other branch leaders were from families that had received the gospel and joined the church within approximately the previous 18 months. During April, three couples from the Rome-Centro Branch traveled to the Swiss Temple where they were sealed for time and for all eternity.<sup>37</sup> Similar spiritual strengthening and member development were being experienced throughout the mission. Notwithstanding this progress, many temporal and spiritual challenges were ahead.

As for temporal matters, with the Piazza Carnaro building having been purchased during the second half of 1984, in December 1984 assurances had been given by the architect hired to oversee the project that the needed remodeling to create a chapel area in the building would be completed by the end of March 1985. However, by May 1985, the contract for the work had not been signed and no one was willing to commit to a date when that would happen.<sup>38</sup>

As for spiritual matters, in May 1985 the disposition of members in the early church to judge each other that Paul had addressed in Romans 2:1-3 again appeared in the latter-day church as backbiting and jealousies became evident. Noting this growing disposition, the mission president and his wife prayed about the circumstances and invited nine couples to the mission home for dinner, all of them great people and wonderful leaders in the church, each of them having some ill feelings towards someone else in the group. Eight of the couples attended, the other was unable to attend because of a prior work commitment. At the last moment, one of the eight couples called to say they could not attend for personal reasons. The mission president lovingly invited them to repent and come anyway, which they did. After a delightful meal, everyone was invited to move from the dining room to the front room of the villa. Once gathered and seated in a circle, the mission president invited each husband in the room, in turn, to explain how he had met his wife. Then each wife spoke of their courtship and how her husband had proposed to her. Some of the stories had the group nearly rolling in laughter. Others were more solemn and quiet. With all of this, there was a great unifying bond that began to develop among all present. With everyone having shared their stories, the mission president then looked around the room and asked each person individually if he or she knew that they were loved by the mission president and his wife. Each responded affirmatively. With great love, the mission president then spoke directly to all concerning their lack of unity and what Satan was attempting to do among them. He spoke of the need to repent and seek

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<sup>36</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 22 March 1985.

<sup>37</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated April 27, 1985.

<sup>38</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated May 11, 1985.

forgiveness from others, and of the need to forgive others and leave past discords behind.<sup>39</sup> In order to receive the blessings that the Lord had in store for them, it was necessary that they be united, that they be one. One with each other, and one with the Lord. A wonderful spirit rested upon all present as all determined to do the will of the Lord. With this, a significant spiritual step forward was taken.

On June 2, 1985, the Sunday following this dinner meeting, the mission president was present in a fast and testimony meeting when the man who had called at the last minute to say he could not attend the dinner and then did attend after being invited to repent, stood to bear his testimony. He had been one of the more vocal disseminators of discord prior to the dinner. He spoke of an opportunity he had recently had to get to know some of his brethren more closely. Then, one-by-one, he mentioned the names of others who had been at the dinner and said very kind things about each, expressing his love and support for each. When he concluded, others who had been at the dinner, men and women, stood and shared similar expressions of testimony and love. Tears of joy welled up in the mission president's eyes as he witnessed the miracle of a change of heart so essential to the increased growth of the Lord's kingdom.<sup>40</sup>

In July 1985, the mission was visited by Brother Louis Ringger, a new regional representative of the Twelve, with assignment for Italy. He and the mission president visited the four member districts over five days, holding a special leadership meeting in each district with the leaders who were able to attend on rather short notice. Elder Louis Ringger's older brother, Carl, was serving as president of the Swiss Temple. His younger brother, Hans, had recently been called as a General Authority Seventy and assigned to serve as second counselor in the Europe Area presidency. Brother Ringger's visit afforded him the opportunity to come to know the Italian members and mission circumstances much better.<sup>41</sup>

## **UNEXPECTED SPIRITUAL DIRECTION AND CONTINUING GUIDANCE**

While visiting Naples during the month of August 1985, the mission president received an unexpected but clear spiritual impression that consideration should be given to the creation of a Rome-Naples Stake. This was a completely new thought. All previous thoughts and planning had anticipated the eventual creation of two separate stakes in these two cities. The mission president began to ponder and pray over this somewhat surprising spiritual communication. Several days after receiving the impression, the mission president had separate conversations with Lorenzo Perticaroli, the Rome District president, and with Gennaro Cannata, the Naples District president, on individual and unrelated matters. Without the mission president mentioning his earlier impressions or giving any hint of them, both district presidents independently raised the subject and asked if the creation of a Rome-Naples Stake could ever be considered. Recognizing that the Spirit of the Lord was communicating on this subject with Rome and Naples priesthood leaders, the mission president carefully reviewed

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<sup>39</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated May 25, 1985.

<sup>40</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated June 3, 1985.

<sup>41</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated July 13, 1985.

multiple times the guidelines and standards for creating stakes in areas outside of North America.<sup>42</sup> In brief summary, the guidelines and standards were the following:

- At least 2,000 members
- At least five wards, each with at least 200 members
- At least 200 Melchizedek Priesthood holders
- At least 20-25 active Melchizedek Priesthood holders in each ward
- Distance to travel to the stake center not more than 150 kilometers

Assuming that the stake center would be in Rome and with the distance between Rome and Naples being approximately 200 kilometers, it was obvious that geography was a central impediment to the creation of a Rome-Naples stake according to the guidelines. It was also evident from the unit statistical reports at the time that the branches in the two districts did not have adequate Melchizedek Priesthood strength to meet the minimum standards required by the guidelines. Nonetheless, the spiritual impression to labor toward forming a Rome-Naples stake had been clear.

In his letter to his family dated September 18, 1985, the mission president shared the following:

I called President Wirthlin to talk about several items and was in effect trying, I imagine, to measure his feelings, when I decided to share [openly] with him this feeling. His immediate response was that the distance was too great and that it could not be considered. I told him that I understood that, and had for two years, but felt that there were some very valid reasons to consider this stake. He was very attentive as he listened to my feelings, and at the conclusion of my comments, suggested that he knew that the Brethren would certainly like to see a stake in Rome and that perhaps we could put the idea on the back burner and think about it a while.

I had since become aware of the fact that Elder David B. Haight [of the Quorum of the Twelve] would be coming to Italy to form the Venice Italy Stake on September 14-15. Part of my feelings had been that I needed to talk to Elder Haight about this. I did not know what his plans were, but I felt that I could at least attempt to visit with him briefly by phone. On an item such as this, I felt that it would only be proper to do that with the approval of the Area Presidency, or in other words, President Wirthlin. I therefore told Elder Wirthlin that I was aware, as was everyone, that Elder Haight was planning to be in Italy and asked if President Wirthlin thought it would be alright for me to visit with Elder Haight about this and to call him about it. I was a little disappointed when he told me he didn't think that would be right considering Elder Haight's schedule, etc. [Notwithstanding my disappointment], I felt that it was the right answer, and agreed with him.

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<sup>42</sup> Naples District, 1986 Annual History, 6 April 1986.

After hanging up the telephone, however, I had another strong thought come into my mind. Although it would not be proper for me to call Elder Haight on this at this time, there would certainly be nothing wrong with Elder Haight getting in touch with me. I therefore began to pray fervently, every day, that if this was the will of the Lord, Elder Haight would be prompted by Him to get in touch with me. This went on for a couple of weeks.

I had to go to Florence on September 5 for some member business and would be very late. I asked Debbie [my eternal companion] if she wanted to accompany me, stay over night, and come back the next day. She agreed. In Florence, as Debbie and I [knelt] in prayer, I once again prayed that the Lord would inspire Elder Haight to contact me. This was the first time anyone besides the Lord was aware of my prayer. When we arrived back at the office the next day, the first message that the Elders gave to me was that Elder Haight's office had called that morning, that he was going to be in Rome, and that he planned to see me while he was here.

Elder Haight was in Rome from Tuesday, September 10 to Thursday, September 12. We were able to spend parts of three glorious days with him and his great wife, Ruby.... On [Wednesday] evening, as we were eating alone with the Haight's, I shared the impression I had had about the stake as well as the answer to prayer. He told me that he was, or is, on the committee that approves such requests [which I had not known], and that he agreed with my feeling that it was time to consider a Rome-Naples Stake! He could see that I still had something on my mind, and said, "Come on President.... Out with it. You can't scare me." I then explained that with his organization of the Venice Stake, and the eventual organization of the Rome Stake, that the strongest district in Italy, the Florence District, would be left in the middle without the hope of becoming a stake for years. If the Church could consider organizing stakes at less than 2000 members ... the pie could be divided up a little differently, and there could be three stakes up north, rather than two.

He then expanded my vision and spoke of how a fourth could be formed in Torino, eventually. He told me of his experience of being a mission president in Scotland when there were two weak stakes and several districts. Everyone wanted to combine the two weak stakes to make one. He had a different vision, and instead, they put every square inch of Scotland within the confines of a stake, and instead of two stakes, they had five. Sure, they struggled for a while, he said, but now they have grown and expanded. It was then easy to see the Puglia and Sicilia districts eventually as stakes, also.

By the time he left on Thursday, while we were eating a final lunch together, he said in effect, "President..., I want you to quote me, or you may quote me, when you talk to the members, in saying that the time is here for us to consider a Roma-Napoli Stake. You should set goals and work towards, them. When the members are ready to accept the financial responsibilities and the priesthood leadership is prepared, we will

proceed.” I told him I felt we should shoot for being ready by the end of this year [1985]. He agreed and said that he would return to tell his Brethren that we had talked about the stake in Rome.<sup>43</sup>

In describing this pivotal exchange with Elder Haight, the mission president recorded the following in his private journal:

He then told me that in speaking with the members, I could and should quote him in saying that it is time to set the necessary goals and get ready for a stake in Rome-Napoli. His statement and invitation to quote him was once again a direct answer to my prayerfully expressed desire to the Lord to have the means to move things ahead. He said it was time to jump in and get all wet, not just dab a toe in the cold water. He went on to explain that this is how local leaders grow, although they struggle. He commented that as a Church, we are learning to manage smaller stakes.<sup>44</sup>

The mission president’s September 18, 1985 letter to his family continued:

[On Tuesday, September 17, 1985], Louis Ringger, the regional representative for Italy, stopped in on his way down to Catania. He had, of course, assisted Elder Haight in the formation of the Venice stake and said that while speaking in the general session, Elder Haight had told the congregation that there would soon be many stakes formed in Italy, and that a stake would be formed in Rome in 1986.

Today, we are not ready for the stake. There is absolutely only one way we are going to be ready by the end of the year. That is through great faith and the blessing of the Lord while giving it our absolute all.... We will do all we can to bring this about.<sup>45</sup>

On September 21-22, 1985, a conference of the Naples District was convened in Naples at which the mission president announced the possibility of the prophets authorizing the organization of a Rome-Naples stake and invited the saints in Naples to join with the saints in Rome in multiplying their efforts to see this great blessing realized.<sup>46</sup> This announcement was met with great enthusiasm and renewed spiritual commitment. A few days after this conference, the mission president recorded in his private journal:

While putting things away, I found a talk by President Kimball given June 27, 1974 to mission presidents and regional representatives. On page 12 is a beautiful quote. President Kimball looks forward to the day when there will be a stake in Italy – especially in Rome – saying that day must come. His vision will be a great blessing as we proceed. I feel the Lord led me to this talk.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated September 18, 1985.

<sup>44</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, September 12, 1985.

<sup>45</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated September 18, 1985.

<sup>46</sup> Naples District, 1985 Annual History, 21-22 September.

<sup>47</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, September 24, 1985. Emphasis in the original.

The following week, a conference of the Rome District was held in Rome, with close to 100% attendance at the priesthood leadership meeting on Saturday. A special meeting was held Sunday morning prior to the general session at which Lorenzo Perticaroli, district president, announced that the foundations for a stake in Rome and Naples were being put in place. At the conclusion of the conference the mission president spoke of President Kimball having prophesied of a stake in Italy, noted that there were now two, and testified that a Rome-Naples stake would not be realized without the faithful labors of the saints.<sup>48</sup> In both the Naples and Rome conferences, the best attendance ever recorded for the Saturday and Sunday sessions was noted. Recognizing an exception would have to be made for the 150-kilometer limitation, specific goals were set within each district in accordance with the membership and activity guidelines and standards for creating stakes, all to be accomplished by the end of the year to qualify for becoming a stake. The local leaders and members began diligently working toward those goals.<sup>49</sup>

As an example of the miracles that the Lord began to perform in the hearts of many, sometime prior to the Rome District conference, Massimo De Feo, had been released as mission executive secretary and called as president of the Tuscolano Branch in Rome. Having been asked to speak at the district conference, he explained man's exile from God and thereby, the necessity of authorized leaders to direct us. He then explained the need for the atonement of Jesus Christ by explaining how a higher form of life acts upon a lower form, doing things the lower form could not do. For example, plants take from the earth, creating that which the earth could not create by itself. Animals take from plants. Man takes from the animals, and in this sense, a higher form, God, the Savior, did for man something that man could not do for himself. He then briefly explained the need for man to do all he can.<sup>50</sup>

When President De Feo began his service as branch president, the weekly average sacrament meeting attendance of the Tuscolano Branch was around 20. In faith, he began a labor of love in visiting every member of the branch in their homes and communicating to them that they were loved and that they were needed. With faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and through the righteous exercise of the priesthood keys possessed by a branch president, President De Feo invited those within his branch to repent, to become full tithe payers, and to lend their labors, faith, and prayers in establishing the Lord's kingdom in that part of His vineyard. Over the course of just a few weeks and months, the average sacrament meeting attendance more than doubled and eventually tripled, with corresponding increases in tithing faithfulness and active Melchizedek priesthood holders.<sup>51</sup> Other branches in the Rome and Naples Districts experienced similar growth and strengthening. Many hearts turned more fully to the Lord as He graciously poured out His Spirit upon His people.

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<sup>48</sup> Rome District, 1985 Annual History, 29 September.

<sup>49</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated October 5, 1985.

<sup>50</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, September 28, 1985.

<sup>51</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, November 3, 1985, and March 23, 1986.



President and Sister Wirthlin made a scheduled tour of the Italy Rome Mission from January 16 to January 19, 1986. During those short four days, with the mission president and his wife they visited all four member districts of the mission, held four missionary zone conferences, three investigator firesides (devotionals), and three member leadership training meetings. The first of the leadership training meetings was for the combined Rome and Naples Districts and was held in Naples on the night of January 16. There were 72 local priesthood leaders in attendance and President Wirthlin was pleased with the strength of the priesthood leadership he saw there. However, his comments to the brethren were low-key, so much so that following the meeting some of the local brethren were disappointed. In anticipation of all the miraculous work that had occurred and still continued in strengthening families and the church, they had expected some greater acknowledgement and recognition. Instead, President Wirthlin had done exactly what the Lord had so lovingly prompted him to do. As to the possible creation of a stake, he had been vague and non-committal—exactly as he should have been.<sup>52</sup> This fostered a broad reassessment by individual priesthood leaders as to their motivation in laboring to bring souls into the kingdom, reactivate those who had wandered, and see more men worthily ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood. Were they motivated by the desire for individual recognition? by pride in being able to see a stake formed? or by love for the Lord, for His work, and for their brothers and sisters in the gospel?

The following evening, after a fireside held in Rome, President Perticaroli of the Rome District spoke with President Wirthlin and expressed his feelings of initial discouragement following the previous night's leadership meeting, but now feeling a renewed sense of purpose and capacity in preparing for a Rome-Naples stake. President Wirthlin encouraged him even more, indicating that the stake could be formed possibly with four wards rather than five and saying that he wanted to take a stake application with him to April Conference to get the feeling of the Brethren.<sup>53</sup>

When President Wirthlin departed the mission on Sunday, January 19, 1986, he told the mission president that he would be meeting with Elder Russell M. Nelson the next Wednesday and wanted to visit with him to start the ball rolling on a Rome stake, again with the thought in mind of personally hand-carrying the official recommendation to the general conference of the Church in April 1986.<sup>54</sup> He also asked that the mission president send to him by Tuesday, January 21, a brief written explanation justifying the creation of a Rome-Naples stake. With his direction, this plan was set in motion, even though some of the year-end goals in some of the units had not yet been reached. The mission president subsequently shared President Wirthlin's direction with other local priesthood leaders, and with motivations aligned with the Lord's will, the work continued.

President Wirthlin called the mission president on Monday, January 20, and asked that in addition to a "Proposal A" describing a Rome-Naples stake, a "Proposal B" be added

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<sup>52</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated January 25, 1986.

<sup>53</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, January 17, 1986.

<sup>54</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated January 25, 1986.

describing a Rome-Naples-Florence stake. These two proposals were sent to President Wirthlin's secretary on Tuesday, January 21, as requested.

Tuesday evening, the mission president and President Fio, first counselor in the mission presidency, met with the Rome District presidency, Lorenzo Perticaroli, president, Leone Flosi, first counselor, and Gaetano Mandalari, second counselor,<sup>55</sup> in the district presidency's regular presidency meeting. The mission president explained the two proposals that had been sent to President Wirthlin earlier in the day. The district presidency noted that while travel could be shared by the saints in a Rome-Naples stake, constant travel to Rome by members in Naples and Florence in a Rome-Naples-Florence stake would soon become burdensome. With this wise assessment, the mission president called President Wirthlin the first thing Wednesday morning, January 22, to explain this perspective. President Wirthlin agreed, and Proposal B was withdrawn.<sup>56</sup>

Recognizing the position of the Roman Catholic Church that the Pope is the "Bishop of Rome" (also known by other titles), the mission president later wrote in his private journal, "After nearly 2000 years, soon there will once again be a bishop in Rome. We continue to work towards a stake."<sup>57</sup>

On January 31, following his visit with Elder Nelson, President Wirthlin called the mission president and suggested that the mission proceed with preparing an application for the Rome-Naples Stake within the next few weeks. They spoke of the many exceptions to policy that would need to be made for the application to be approved, and President Wirthlin repeatedly emphasized that submitting the application did not mean that it would be approved when eventually presented to the Brethren. He indicated that the Brethren were anxious to see a stake in Rome, but naturally wanted it to be a sound step.<sup>58</sup>

## THE FIRST ITALY ROME STAKE APPLICATION

With 1985 year-end statistical information becoming available, the preparation of the first application for a stake in Rome, the Rome-Naples Stake, began in earnest.

As has often been the case in the work of the Lord throughout history, as this significant temporal and spiritual work was unfolding in anticipation of submitting an application for the creation of a Rome-Naples Stake, opposition from the adversary increased as he attempted to disrupt the work among the members and the missionaries by many means. Partially emblematic of this opposition was a dramatic experience involving the mission president and his missionary assistants directly. At the beginning of February 1986, the mission president began a series of mini conferences with missionaries and members throughout the mission,

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<sup>55</sup> Rome District, 1985 Annual History, 29 September 1985.

<sup>56</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, January 22, 1986.

<sup>57</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, January 24, 1986. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>58</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, January 31, 1986, and Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated 1 February 1986.

attempting to learn how better to accomplish the Lord's work as He continued to pour out His Spirit upon the mission. The meetings began in Rome on Tuesday, February 4. On Wednesday, February 5, the mission president and his assistants, Elder Michael Benson and Elder Clark Ivory, traveled to Florence where successful meetings were held with missionaries and members. With Thursday's meetings planned for Pisa, the mission president and his assistants began their drive to Pisa late Wednesday night. At about 10:00 PM as they neared Lucca, with a light rain falling, while traveling at a high speed on the freeway (legal in Italy) they were involved in a serious collision with a large truck in which their car was completely destroyed. Miraculously, all three of them received only minor scratches and bruises caused by seatbelts. After a lengthy night of dealing with the complications occasioned by the accident and with little rest, the meetings with the missionaries and members continued Thursday and thereafter without further interruption.<sup>59</sup> Although a serious accident could have caused severe injury or even death, and thereby thwarted the work and the stake application process, the Lord had seen fit to protect His servants, and His work and the stake application process continued.

A mission council meeting with the four district presidencies was held at the mission home on Saturday, February 15, 1986.<sup>60</sup> The meeting was Spirit-directed, and all were edified. In consultation between the mission presidency and the Rome and Naples Districts presidencies, final consideration was given to unit consolidations and boundary realignments to be recommended in forming the Rome-Naples Stake. It was determined that the mission president would prepare and deliver the application to President Wirthlin at an upcoming mission presidents conference in Barcelona Spain.

As had been decided in council, on the following Monday through Wednesday, the application for the Rome-Naples Stake was prepared using 1985 year-end statistical data for the units in the Rome and Naples Districts along with maps showing existing and proposed boundaries. With the able assistance of Elder Stanford Clark, secretary to the mission president, the application and explanatory letter were refined and finalized. The application was not perfect. For example, there were some units that did not reach the minimum standard for active Melchizedek Priesthood holders, and it was clear that if the application were to be approved, several exceptions to policy would have to be made, not the least of which was a geographic exception accommodating the distance between Rome and Naples. Nonetheless, through Church leaders, the Spirit of the Lord had directed that this was the time to proceed with the first application to create a stake of Zion in Rome.

On Thursday, February 20, 1986, the mission president hand-carried the application to the mission presidents conference and delivered it personally to President Wirthlin in Barcelona Spain. In his private journal entry for that date, the mission president recorded:

I delivered the Rome Italy Stake application to President Wirthlin. He said he thought it would be six weeks before we would have any word. I thought I would feel a

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<sup>59</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated, February 9, 1986.

<sup>60</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, February 15, 1986.

great relief and relaxation in giving to him the application, but that feeling never came. Much work remains to be done.<sup>61</sup>

A copy of the complete application, including maps, is found in Appendix D.

During the first week of March 1986, President Wirthlin called the mission president to discuss several matters. During that conversation he told the mission president that he, President Wirthlin, planned to hand carry the stake application to general conference to make the presentation to the Brethren personally. A few days later, in recognition of this latest indication of remarkable support and personal involvement received from the Lord's special witnesses and His prophets over the prior two and one-half years, the mission president noted in a letter to his family:

I'm not sure I know what that means in terms of whether or not the application will be approved. One thing I do know—it's in the Lord's hands, and whatever decision is made will be the right one.<sup>62</sup>

On Thursday night, March 27, 1986, the mission president was awakened by a telephone call at 11:00 PM. The call was from President Wirthlin who was then in Salt Lake City, Utah. He said that about an hour earlier, the application for the Rome Italy Stake had been turned down by the committee responsible for making decisions on stakehood, and that he wanted to let the mission president know immediately. Remembering that a few of the units had not met the minimum standards suggested in the guidelines at the time of the submittal, the mission president picked up a pencil and notepad he kept on the nightstand, thanked President Wirthlin for his call and asked what problems the committee had identified so the saints could begin making the necessary improvements. President Wirthlin responded saying there were two reasons. First, the committee felt that the number of active Melchizedek Priesthood bearers was a little lower than it ought to be. The mission president immediately thought to himself, *Well, that problem will be solved with the Melchizedek Priesthood ordinations planned for the Rome and Naples district conferences scheduled during the first two weeks of April.* Second, the committee felt that the distances involved were just too great, and because of this, there was no possibility for further consideration of a Rome stake at this time. President Wirthlin was extremely complimentary of all that had been accomplished, indicated that he had personally supported the application fully and therefore felt personally affected by the decision. With mutual salutations, the call ended.<sup>63</sup>

The mission president was stunned. Distance had been the primary issue addressed prior to beginning the entire effort to prepare for a Rome Italy Stake. Had this central issue not been directly addressed with President Wirthlin? In answer to the mission president's prayers, had not Elder Haight contacted the mission president, visited Rome, and with full knowledge of

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<sup>61</sup> Craig A. Cardon Personal Journal, February 20, 1986.

<sup>62</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated March 10, 1986.

<sup>63</sup> Craig A. Cardon letter to family dated March 31, 1986.

the distances involved told him that it was time to consider creating a Rome-Naples stake? Had not Elder Haight told the mission president that he could quote him to the saints in saying that it was time for a Rome-Naples stake to be prepared for and considered? As communicated by Elder Louis Ringger, regional representative of that Twelve, had not Elder Haight even announced to members at the creation of the Venice Stake in 1985 that a Rome stake would be created in 1986? And had not the saints demonstrated remarkable faith and devotion, both temporally and spiritually, with the building fund miracle allowing the church to now be more firmly established temporally, and with reactivation efforts resulting in unprecedented improvement in spiritual conversion? These questions weighed heavily on the mission president's heart and mind, and he could not rest. He left the side of his bed where he had been seated and went to the guest room of the mission home, closed the door, and spent the remainder of Thursday night on his knees in prayer, with scriptures in hand, pondering and pleading for answers. The answers came.

### **VESTIGES OF ZION'S CAMP**

Beginning with his first prayer in that occasion and continuing throughout the night, the Spirit of the Lord began to enlighten the mission president's mind in a way he felt incapable of adequately describing, yet in a way he would never forget.

The Lord first brought to his mind the experiences of the "Camp of Israel," or "Zion's Camp." In 1834, with the saints in Missouri, or in Zion, sorely afflicted and persecuted, suffering loss of lands and personal belongings, the Lord promised the Prophet Joseph the "redemption of your brethren, even their restoration to the land of Zion, to be established, no more to be thrown down."<sup>64</sup> The thought came to the mission president: *What the Lord communicated through Elder Haight in saying that it was time for a Rome-Naples stake was similar to this.*

Through the Prophet Joseph, the Lord told others to make His commandments known to saints not in Missouri. *Elder Haight had essentially done the same thing when he indicated he could and should be quoted.*

From among the saints in Missouri, the Lord directed that they were to

...[obtain] companies to go up unto the land of Zion, by tens, or by twenties, or by fifties, or by an hundred, until they have obtained to the number of five hundred of the strength of my house. ...if you cannot obtain five hundred, seek diligently that peradventure you may obtain three hundred. And if ye cannot obtain three hundred, seek diligently that peradventure ye may obtain one hundred.<sup>65</sup>

*The Lord had done this same thing in rallying saints and priesthood leaders in Rome and Naples to do all necessary to prepare for the stake.*

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<sup>64</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 103:13.

<sup>65</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 103:30-33.

Zion's Camp was organized with over 200 persons<sup>66</sup> and an arduous journey of approximately 1,400 kilometers taken, arriving finally on the banks of the Fishing River in Missouri with the stated objective of redeeming Zion and restoring her to her lands now within their reach. *There was a parallel in the temporal and spiritual labor the saints and leaders had performed under the guidance and direction the Lord's special witnesses, finally submitting the stake application as they had been led to do, and had waited on the "banks" of a decision.*

After all the preparations and travel to Missouri, with difficulties and imperfections that arose within the camp, through the Prophet Joseph, the Lord unexpectedly declared, "...it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion."<sup>67</sup> And with that, the camp was disbanded, and the participants told to return to their homes. So it was among the saints in the Rome and Naples districts. From the outset, all the Lord's special witnesses had affirmed that, apart from the question of distance, the creation of a Rome-Naples stake would proceed only with numerical and spiritual strength that would be recognized and spiritually confirmed by the Lord through His special witnesses. As with Zion's Camp, when He instructed His prophet that His "elders should wait for a little season," the Lord now looked upon the overall circumstances and through His prophets told His people in the Rome and Naples Districts that that they were to wait for a stake in Rome.

The Lord knows the end from the beginning. He knew when in speaking to Joseph He used definitive terms about Zion being redeemed and restored to her lands and commanded that at least 100 men be gathered to march to Missouri to accomplish this objective, that while the stated objective of redeeming Zion would not be achieved, there was another purpose known to Him that would be accomplished. When He disbanded the camp, He explained His purpose to Joseph.

That they [those who had participated in Zion's Camp] themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands.<sup>68</sup>

In the months that followed Zion's Camp, it was from among the faithful participants in the camp that the Lord later chose the majority of the first members of the Twelve Apostles and of the Seventy. They had not only gained valuable experience in leadership but had also refined their spiritual natures and capacities. With sacrifice, they had become more faithful and more willing servants.

During that Thursday night, the Lord revealed to the mission president that He knew the end from the beginning with the first Rome Italy Stake application and unfolded to the mission

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<sup>66</sup> Gospel Library / Church History / Revelations in Context / "The Acceptable Offering of Zion's Camp"

<sup>67</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 105:9.

<sup>68</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 105:10.

president's view the parallel with the Zion's Camp experience. The Lord knew that if He had not been definitive with the Prophet Joseph, Zion's Camp never would have been organized and the needed experiences through the exercise of faith and through temporal and spiritual sacrifice would have been long delayed. So it was with the first Rome Italy Stake application. Had there been no definitive declaration that distance would not be an obstacle, and had there been no definitive direction from Elder Haight and others about proceeding with the application for a stake in Rome, the remarkable, even miraculous, spiritual depth and leadership capacities developed among the saints would have been long delayed.

As the mind of the mission president continued to contemplate all that the Lord was pouring into his heart, there lingered a question: After what had been said to the Italian saints at the beginning of this effort, was there something more the Lord wanted the mission president to communicate to them when explaining the denial of the stake application? As if drawing to a close the almost palpable spiritual dialogue in which they had been engaged, the Spirit of the Lord told the mission president to open his scriptures. As he did, the scriptures opened directly to the page where the following two verses are printed, which seemed to jump off the page at him.

Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now, neither the ministering of angels; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected.

Let not your minds turn back; and when ye are worthy, in mine own due time, ye shall see and know that which was conferred upon you by the hands of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun. Amen.<sup>69</sup>

As the mission president read the last phrase of the last verse, the name at the end of the verse seemed to read "Elder David B. Haight."

A glorious feeling filled the heart of the mission president, and he knew, just as he had earlier presaged in a letter to his family, that the decision that had been made was the right decision, consistent in every way with the will of the Lord. With that witness, the Lord had also given him the means by which to explain the decision and His purpose to the wonderful and faithful Italian saints who had given so much to the effort.

The Spirit of the Lord touched the hearts of the local leaders and saints as the parallel with Zion's Camp and the teachings from the scriptures were shared. Rather than disappointment, the prevailing response was one of renewed spiritual commitment and resolve to understand and do the will of the Lord. Significantly, a few weeks later, Lorenzo Perticaroli, president of the Rome District, told the mission president that in their district council meeting, they had reviewed the temporal and spiritual lessons they had learned during this extraordinary effort, and they had joyously and confidently concluded that with continued faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in His time, they would eventually see a stake in Rome.

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<sup>69</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 67:13-14.

Prior to beginning his tenure of service, the mission president had been inspired to write down several goals to be accomplished while he served. Although completely unaware at the time of the physical facilities circumstances in Rome, he had felt inspired to include the goal of having a stake center dedicated in Rome. This goal was never divulged to others. Just weeks before completing his service as mission president, he unexpectedly received from the Church written authorization to act as voice in the dedication of the Piazza Carnaro building that had been acquired during his tenure. In addition to serving as the chapel for the Rome-Nomentano Branch the building also housed the offices of the Rome District. Extra attention was given to the cleaning of the building in preparation for its dedication, which occurred on Sunday, June 8, 1986. Although other buildings used as chapels in Rome were owned by the Church prior to the acquisition of the Piazza Carnaro building, this was the first such building to be dedicated in Rome. Copies of the dedicatory prayer in English and Italian are attached to this document as Appendices E and F.

The “little season” of waiting for a stake in Rome ended nineteen years later when on May 22, 2005. Elder Russell M. Nelson presided at the organization of the Rome Italy Stake. Through him the Lord called Massimo De Feo to preside over the stake. For President De Feo and for other men and women called to responsible positions in the new stake, the experience with which the Lord blessed them during their earlier contributions to the work certainly added to their preparation as they now responded faithfully to their new callings. With the creation of wards in the new stake, for the first time in this dispensation there were finally true bishops of the Lord in Rome.

It is worth noting that eight former presidents of the Italy Rome Mission made special trips, several from across the ocean, to be in attendance at the organization of the Rome Italy Stake. Elder Nelson observed how extraordinary this was and invited them all to sit on the stand. Among them was the mission president who served at the time the first application was made for a stake in Rome. There was for him, another quiet, personal, message of approbation from the Lord when he realized that the Piazza Carnaro building, the building he had dedicated nineteen years earlier, would serve as the stake center, thus seeing the fulfillment of a goal he had set privately under the inspiration of heaven.

Although separated by many years and many other experiences, yet similar to what the Lord had done with Zion’s Camp, from among the many faithful souls who had labored so diligently in temporal and spiritual affairs in preparing to make the first application for a stake in Rome, two were subsequently called as General Authority Seventies. Over the years the Lord also called many other men and women to other responsible leadership positions in the kingdom. And significantly, myriad homes and families were strengthened by deeper faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, with greater resolve to do His will.

As further affirmation that the Lord was in charge of all that transpired temporally and spiritually during the times and events incident to the first Rome Italy Stake application, and as affirmation that He remains in charge of His church and kingdom here on earth, on September 15, 2013 when the Rome Italy Stake was renamed the Rome Italy East Stake and divided to



create the Rome Italy West Stake, the newly organized Rome Italy West Stake included what was formerly the Naples District as well as what was formerly the Sardegna District, Sardegna being an island west of Rome. The distances between the units in this new configuration far exceeded the distances that had precluded the approval of the first Rome Italy Stake application. Ultimately, in the Lord's own time and in the Lord's own way, what He had said through His Apostle, Elder Haight, was realized. Distance between Rome and Naples was not an impediment.

Also, as a continuing testament of the Lord's hand being made manifest during the time of the first Rome Italy Stake application, and as noted earlier in this account, with the creation of the Florence Italy Stake on May 11, 2014, stakes of Zion now "dotted" the entire land of Italy as Elder Nelson had prophesied in February 1985. This also affirmed what Elder Haight envisioned for Italy when in September 1985, as noted earlier, he spoke of his experience as a mission president in Scotland when stakes of Zion were organized to encompass every square inch of Scotland. As had occurred then in Scotland, with the creation of the Florence Italy Stake, every square inch of Italy was now encompassed by a stake of Zion.<sup>70</sup>

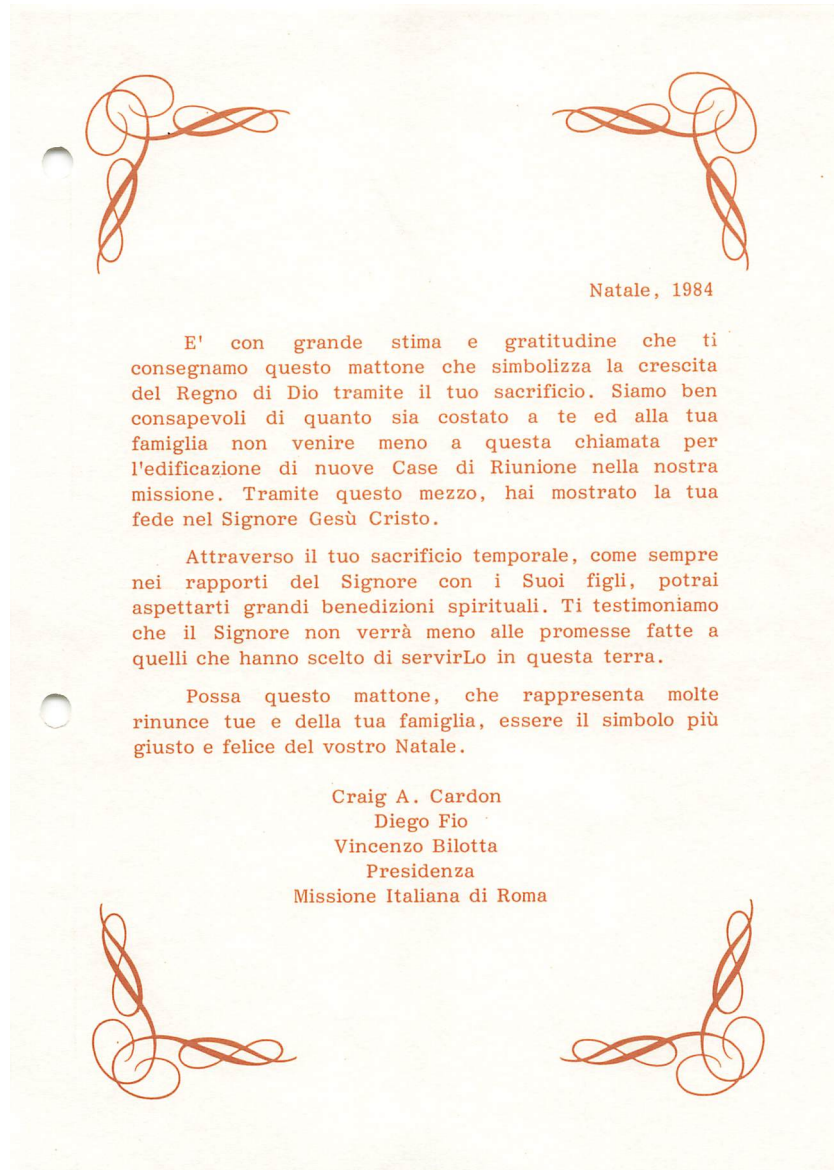
Finally, also as noted earlier, with the continued growth and strengthening of the Church throughout Italy, and in fulfillment of his prophecy uttered thirty-four years earlier, in 2019 President Russell M. Nelson, serving as President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, invited all members of the First Presidency and all members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to be present in Rome as he dedicated the Rome Italy Temple and ancillary buildings. A chapel on the temple grounds, also dedicated, now serves as a stake center. As evidence of the Lord's continuing grace and kindness, along with other faithful Italian saints and former missionaries, many of the faithful Italian saints, former missionaries, and mission president who had personally witnessed what the Lord so miraculously accomplished both temporally and spiritually at the time of the first Rome Italy Stake application were present to personally witness these sacred dedicatory events.

Many miracles await the saints in Italy as the Lord continues to fulfill His promises throughout the earth. In humble gratitude, the events contained in this brief narrative are recorded that they might serve as a memorable and enduring witness of the Lord's hand being made powerfully manifest on behalf of His beloved sons and daughters of Italy and all who have served and will serve there.

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<sup>70</sup> The separate country of Malta is currently a part of the Italy Rome Mission and constitutes a member district within the mission.

Appendix A  
Building Fund Donation Certificate



Translation:

*It is with great esteem and gratitude that we deliver to you this brick which symbolizes the growth of the Kingdom of God through your sacrifice. We are well aware of what it has cost you and your family to not fail in this call to build new Meeting Houses in our mission. By this means you have shown your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Through your temporal sacrifice, as always in the Lord's dealings with His children, you can expect great spiritual blessings. We testify to you that the Lord will not fail in the promises made to those who have chosen to serve Him in this land.*

*May this brick, which represents many of your and your family's sacrifices, be the most just and happy symbol of your Christmas.*

*Craig A. Cardon, Diego Fio, Vincenzo Bilotta, Italy Rome Mission Presidency*

## Appendix B Naples-Centro Building Dedication, English

-1-

Our Father in Heaven, with bowed heads and humble hearts, we unite together, on this the 10th day of March, 1985 to express unto Thee our thankfulness for the many blessings that Thou hast poured out upon our heads and upon this land and upon this people. We gather also that this building in which we meet may be dedicated unto Thee and unto Thy purposes. We thank Thee, dear Father that Thou hast seen fit to restore Thy Gospel and Thy Church once again to the earth in these latter-days, through Thy prophet Joseph Smith. We thank Thee that with great vision and power Thy work has continued to roll forth and to spread into all the earth. We thank Thee for all of Thy Prophets and Apostles and all the General Authorities of Thy Church that labor so diligently to establish and to build Thy Church and Kingdom here upon the earth. We thank thee that in 1850 Thou didst send a prophet to this land of Italy to begin the work of gathering Thine elect and to dedicate this land to the preaching of Thy Gospel. We thank Thee that once again in 1966 this land was dedicated by one of Thy prophets. We thank Thee for all of the missionaries that have come from all over the world and from within this country itself to share their testimonies of the Restored Gospel with Thy children within this land. We thank Thee for the hearts that have been softened and for the faith that has been strengthened and for Thy children that have accepted Thy Gospel and now move forward with ever increasing faith in sharing this message with others. We thank Thee for Thy Spirit that inspires and directs this work and pray for Thy continued direction and blessing, that this work may roll forth within this land and within this mission and especially within this city with ever increasing success, that there may be a dramatic increase in the number of Thy children that hear and understand and accept this message, that with ever increasing faith they may come forth to receive the first ordinances of salvation.

Now dear Father, by virtue of the Holy Melchizedec Priesthood which I hold, and having been authorized by the General Authorities of Thy Church, I dedicate unto thee this entire chapel and all its related areas, of this the Napoli Branch, of the Napoli District, of the Italy Rome Mission, of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Inasmuch as this chapel area is a part of a larger building, I bless the foundations and the footings and the support structures of this building that they may be strong and true in providing the foundation for this chapel. I bless the grounds in which they are set that they may be undisturbed that this chapel may in turn be undisturbed. Within this entire chapel area that we now dedicate to Thee, I bless the pavement and the walls, the doors, and the windows, the ceiling and all the structural parts that they may remain firm and true. I bless the electrical system and the heating system and the plumbing system and all of the fixtures related to each of these systems, that they will function properly in performing their purposes in furthering the progress of Thy Kingdom. I bless the carpet and the tiles, the curtains, the chairs, the blackboards and the other fixtures that are a part of this chapel that they will serve properly the function for which they have been created and installed. I bless the offices of this chapel used by the presidencies and clerks that they may be places where inspired counsel is given, where inspiration may be received in directing thy work, where proper records may be kept, and where all things may be done in order and in accordance with Thy mind and will. I bless the classrooms, all of the classrooms, that they may be places where Thy restored gospel is taught, where truth may be heard and understood where lives may be improved and where direction may be given and received. I bless the bathrooms and the kitchen and the baptismal font areas and the closets and storage areas that they may perform their functions properly. I bless the corridors and the terraces and the entry

ways that they may be used with respect in allowing Thy children to move from one area to another and in greeting one another. I bless the chapel area so that when it is used for special activities it may be always respected. I bless the chapel area that when it is used for worship services as it will be principally, that it will be respected, that truth will always be taught from its pulpit by means of Thy Spirit, that those who come here and attend will understand that while we uphold vigorously the free agency of man, this chapel and this pulpit have been dedicated solely to the preaching of Thy Gospel and the message of the restoration, the plan of salvation, and the true meaning of the mission of Thy Son to the earth, that all will understand and respect the fact that this chapel has been dedicated to Thy purposes, and for the purpose of testimony bearing and testimony strengthening. I bless all of these areas that they may together be a refuge from the world and the things of the world, that as Thy children come here to gather and to meet one with another, they will feel Thy Spirit and know that this is a holy place. I bless this entire area and all of the parts of this great chapel that they will be protected from the elements and from vandalism, that they will be protected from natural disorders. I bless this chapel and all of its associated parts that these physical facilities will be a great testimony tool and that they will serve in bringing many of thy children to a knowledge of the truth and of Thy great work established in this land and in this city in these latter days, by the hands of Thy Prophets and by the hands of Thy chosen servants and by the hands of Thy people.

We once again thank Thee dear Father for all of the temporal and spiritual blessings that we enjoy. Having acquired and prepared this chapel through some temporal sacrifice and through the sacred funds of the Church, we now of our own free will and choice and with humble and thankful hearts, dedicate this chapel

unto Thee, that it be Thine, not ours, that Thy work be done herein, not the work of man, that Thy Spirit may dwell herein, and that Thy children may be blessed and Thy purposes accomplished.

Heavenly Father, having dedicated this chapel, we now unitedly dedicate ourselves to Thee and to Thy work and pray for Thy blessing that we may be strengthened in overcoming the temptations of the world, in repenting of our sins, and in perfecting our lives. Please strengthen us especially in sharing the message of Thy Restored Gospel with our friends that many may share with us in the blessings that we enjoy, that Thy Kingdom may be established and strengthened and that Thy name may be glorified. That all this may come to pass according to our faith, we pray humbly in the name of Thy Son Jesus Christ, Amen.

*Dedicatory prayer for the Naples Central Branch, Naples District,  
Italy Rome Mission: offered by Craig Gibson Carson, president  
of the Italy Rome Mission.*

## Appendix C

### Napoli-Centro Dedicazione dell'Edificio, Italiano

-1-

Nostro Padre in cielo, con capi chini e cuori umili, ci siamo riuniti, oggi 10 marzo, 1985 per esprimereTi la nostra gratitudine per le molte benedizioni che Tu hai riversato sui nostri capi e sopra questa terra e sopra questo popolo. Noi comprendiamo, anche, che questo edificio nel quale ci incontriamo deve essere dedicato a Te ed ai Tuoi scopi. Ringraziamo Te Padre che hai sentito l'opportunità di restaurare il Tuo Vangelo e la Tua Chiesa un'altra volta sulla terra, in questi ultimi giorni, attraverso il Profeta Joseph Smith. Ti ringraziamo che con una grande visione e con forza, il Tuo lavoro ha continuato a progredire ed a diffondersi in tutta la terra. Ti ringraziamo per i Tuoi Profeti e Apostoli e tutte le Autorità Generali della Chiesa che lavorano così diligentemente per stabilire e costruire la Tua Chiesa e il Tuo Regno sopra la terra. Ti ringraziamo perchè nel 1850 Tu hai mandato un profeta in questa terra, in Italia, a cominciare il lavoro di radunare i Tuoi eletti ed a dedicare questa terra alla predicazione del Vangelo. Ti ringraziamo perchè di nuovo nel 1966 questa terra è stata dedicata da uno dei Tuoi profeti. Ti ringraziamo per tutti i missionari che sono venuti qui da ogni parte del mondo, e da questa stessa nazione, a condividere le loro testimonianze del Vangelo Restaurato con i Tuoi figli in questa terra. Ti ringraziamo per i cuori che hai intenerito, per la fede che è stata rafforzata e per i Tuoi figli che hanno accettato il Vangelo e che ora avanzano con fede crescente nel condividere il messaggio con altri. Ti ringraziamo per il Tuo Spirito che ispira e guida questo lavoro e preghiamo che con la Tua continua guida e benedizione questo lavoro possa procedere in questa terra, in questa missione ed in questa città con sempre crescente successo, che qui ci possa essere un meraviglioso incremento del numero dei Tuoi figli.

che ascoltano e capiscono ed accettano questo messaggio, che con fede sempre crescente, possano andare avanti per ricevere le prime ordinanze di salvezza.

Ora caro Padre, col potere del Santo Sacerdozio di Melchisedek che detengo ed essendo stato autorizzato dalle Autorità Generali della Chiesa, io dedico a Te tutta questa cappella, e tutte le sue pertinenti, di questo Ramo di Napoli, del Distretto di Napoli, della Missione Italiana di Roma della Chiesa di Gesù Cristo dei Santi degli Ultimi Giorni. Poichè l'area di questa cappella fa parte di un più grande edificio io benedico le fondamenta, gli appoggi e le strutture di sostegno di questo edificio che possano essere forti e sicure nel fornire la base per questa cappella. Io benedico i terreni nei quali sono collocati che possano essere preservati e che questa cappella, a sua volta, possa essere preservata. Assieme alla intera area della cappella che noi ora dedichiamo a Te, io benedico i pavimenti e le mura, le porte e le finestre, il soffitto e tutte le strutture di questa cappella che possano rimanere saldi e sicuri. Io benedico l'impianto elettrico, l'impianto di riscaldamento e l'impianto idraulico e tutte le installazioni relative a questi impianti che esse possano funzionare regolarmente nel fornire i loro servizi nel favorire il progresso del Tuo Regno. Io benedico i tappeti e le mattonelle, le tende, le sedie, le lavagne e le altre installazioni che fanno parte in questa cappella che possano servire regolarmente alle funzioni per le quali sono state costruite ed installate. Io benedico gli uffici di questa cappella usati per le presidenze e gli archivisti che essi possano essere luoghi dove vengono dato consigli ispirati, dove la ispirazione possa essere ricevuta per dirigere il tuo lavoro, dove documenti appropriati possano essere conservati e dove tutte le cose possano essere fatte in ordine ed in accordo con la Tua mente ed il Tuo volere. Io benedico le classi, tutte le classi, che esse possano essere luoghi dove



il Tuo vangelo restaurato è insegnato, dove la verità possa essere udita e capita, dove le vite possano essere migliorate e dove istruzioni possano essere date e ricevute. Io benedico i bagni, la cucina, la fonte battesimale, i gabinetti ed i depositi che possano rispondere alle loro proprie funzioni. Io benedico i corridoi e le terrazze e l'entrata che possano essere usate con rispetto per permettere ai Tuoi figli di spostarsi da un posto all'altro e di salutarsi. Io benedico il locale della cappella in modo che quando viene usato per attività speciali possa essere sempre rispettato. Io benedico il locale della cappella che quando viene usato per riunioni sacre, come sarà di solito, che sia rispettato, che la verità sia sempre insegnata dal pulpito con le risorse dello Spirito, che quelli che vengono ad assistere possano capire che mentre noi sosteniamo vigorosamente il libero arbitrio dell'uomo, questa cappella e questo pulpito sono stati dedicati unicamente per la predicazione del Tuo Vangelo, del messaggio della restaurazione, del piano di salvezza, ed del reale significato della missione di Tuo Figlio sulla terra, che tutti capiscano e rispettino il fatto che questa cappella è stata dedicata per i Tuoi fini, ed allo scopo di portare testimonianze e di rafforzare testimonianze. Io benedico tutte queste cose che possano tutte insieme essere un rifugio dal mondo e dalle cose del mondo, che i Tuoi figli vengano qui a riunirsi ed incontrarsi l'uno con l'altro, che possano sentire il Tuo Spirito e sapere che questo è un luogo sacro. Io benedico l'intera area e tutte le parti di questa grande cappella che esse siano protette dagli elementi e dai vandalismi, che esse siano protette dalle calamità naturali. Io benedico questa cappella e tutte le sue parti collegate che questi locali siano strumenti di grande testimonianza e che possano servire a portare molti dei Tuoi figli alla

conoscenza della verità e del Tuo grande lavoro stabilito in questa terra ed in questa città in questi ultimi giorni, dalle mani dei Tuoi Profeti e dalle mani del Tuoi servitori eletti e dalle mani del Tuo popolo.

Ancora una volta Ti ringraziamo, caro Padre per tutte le benedizioni temporali e spirituali di cui noi godiamo. Avendo acquistato ed arredato questa cappella con diversi sacrifici temporali ed attraverso i sacri fondi della Chiesa, noi ora con la nostra libera volontà e scelta e con umili e grati cuori, dedichiamo questa cappella a Te, che sia Tua e non nostra, che il Tuo lavoro possa essere fatto qui e non il lavoro dell'uomo, che il Tuo Spirito possa dimorarvi e che i Tuoi figli possano essere benedetti ed i Tuoi intenti realizzati.

Ora, Padre Celeste, avendo dedicato questa cappella, tutti noi insieme dedichiamo noi stessi a Te ed al Tuo lavoro e preghiamo che noi possiamo essere rafforzati nel vincere le tentazioni del mondo, di pentirci dei nostri peccati, e di perfezionare le nostre vite. Rafforzaci, per favore, specialmente nel condividere il messaggio del Vangelo Restaurato tra i nostri amici, che molti possano condividere con noi le benedizioni di cui ora godiamo; che il Tuo Regno possa essere stabilito e rafforzato ed il Tuo nome possa essere glorificato. Che tutto questo possa avverarsi secondo la nostra fede, noi preghiamo, umilmente, nel nome di Tuo Figlio Gesù Cristo, Amen.

*Passqua dedicatoria per il ramo Napoli - Centro, Distretto di Napoli; Missione Italiana di Roma, offerta da Luigi Allen Caron, pastore della Missione Italiana di Roma.*

Appendix D  
Rome Italy Stake Application

CHIESA DI  
GESÙ CRISTO  
DEI SANTI  
DEGLI ULTIMI  
GIORNI

MISSIONE ITALIANA DI ROMA  
Via Cimone, 103  
00141 Roma, Italia  
Telef. 06/898394  
Telegrammi: Quickmere Roma

20 February 1986

The First Presidency  
The Quorum of the Twelve  
Europe Area Presidency

HAND DELIVERED  
Barcelona, Spain

Dear Brethren,

In the late summer of 1985, I was impressed to consider the creation of a stake composed of the Rome and Naples districts. After continuing prayerful consideration, I contacted President Wirthlin, who sustained this possibility. In September, in answer to prayer, Elder Haight contacted me during his visit to Italy when he created the Venice stake. This gave me the opportunity to share with him directly the impressions I had received. He expressed to me his support, subject of course to adherence to sound principles. In October, I delivered some preliminary information and explanations to President Wirthlin and Elder Nelson. In January 1986, President Wirthlin toured our mission, meeting with and instructing the saints. During all of this time, President Wirthlin has continued to give needful and supportive instructions and directions.

The priesthood leadership and general membership have worked faithfully and purposefully towards the goal of creating the Rome Italy Stake. They are prepared to accept all of the spiritual and temporal responsibilities associated therewith.

I hereby recommend the creation of the Rome Italy Stake, composed of the Rome and Naples districts. The spiritual significance of this step cannot be adequately expressed in writing, as many special impressions continue to be received and confirmed. Please find the stake application and supporting information and documents enclosed.

We humbly thank you all for your inspired direction and counsel. We thank God for a living prophet and express unto all of you our deep love. We anxiously await your counsel and will sustain your every decision.

Faithfully yours,



Craig A. Cardon  
President  
Italy Rome Mission

CAC/sjc  
enclosures



### Stake/District Organization Application

Send to: The First Presidency  
47 East South Temple Street  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

Direct inquiries to: Chairman of the  
Boundary Change Committee

Before completing this application, read the guidelines and definitions on the reverse side.  
Submit a map showing proposed stake/district boundaries according to the instructions on the reverse side.

The stake or mission president should discuss the proposal with the Regional Representative and/or the Executive Administrator. This form and a letter of recommendation explaining the reasons for the change should be sent to the First Presidency.

Stake/District

Rome District and Naples District

Unit number  
Rome 0605212  
Naples 0606421

Region  
Italy

Present Stake/District		Present Stake/District Reorganized		MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY INFORMATION										BUILDINGS					MILEAGE	
Wards and branches as now organized (include unit numbers)	Total membership	Wards and branches after division (note any unit name change)	Phase of materials for new wards or branches	MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY INFORMATION										BUILDINGS					MILEAGE	
				Total membership	Total families	Active members	Ward members	Total adult male	Total adult female	Total	Ward members	Ward members	% Sacrament attendance	Church owned	Rented	Shared	Used as stake center	Under construction	To present stake center	To proposed stake center
1 Rome Nomentano (73482)	126	1																		
2 Rome Tuscolano (123323)	146	2																		
3 Rome Centro (300969)	80	3																		
4 Rome Trionfale (107352)	185	4																		
5 Rome E.U.R. (121932)	109	5																		
6 Ostia (99449)	192	6																		
7 Terni (98337)	76	7																		
8 Pescara (103810)	56	8																		
9 Napoli Nazionale (286087)	335	9																		
10 Napoli Centro (117420)	237	10																		
11 Fagreo (73695)	228	11																		
12 Napoli Servicemen's (65277)	148	12																		
13 Salerno (92649)	107	Total																		
14 Caserta (300098)	36	New Stake/District																		
15 Avellino (286257)	12	Proposed name of new stake/district										Unit number		Region		Will this change require a new stake center?				
16		Rome Italy Stake												Italy		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No				
17		1 Rome Nomentano Ward	352	109	24	122	127	39		37	X					X			-	
18		2 Rome Trionfale Ward	294	124	25	128	117	31		33	X								16	
19		3 Ostia Branch	192	95	5	78	91	14		16		X							32	
20		4 Terni Branch	76	42	4	33	26	11		38		X							64	
Total	2673	5 Pescara Branch	56	18	4	29	17	8		32		X							138	
		6 Napoli Nazionale Ward	512	299	19	224	206	30		21		X							138	
		7 Napoli Centro Ward	288	147	19	122	117	22		28	X								138	
		8 Servicemen's Branch	148	35	15	27	31	20		60		X							138	
		9 Salerno Branch	107	64	5	43	43	11		21		X							171	
		10 Caserta Branch	36	18	1	12	12	4		25		X							130	
		11 Avellino Branch	12	4	1	6	6	1		58		X							158	
		12 Total	2073	1015	122	841	793	121		30										

Approval Signatures

Stake/Mission president

*[Signature]* Date 20/12/86

Regional Representative

X

Date

Executive Administrator

X

Date

SEPTEMBER 1985 Reprinted in 1984

## Instructions

### Guidelines for Dividing or Creating Stakes

- Five or more units large enough to function as wards should be included in each proposed stake.
- A suitable facility should be available to serve as a meetinghouse for each proposed ward. Each Church-owned building should be shared by two or more wards where feasible.
- Sufficient number of priesthood leaders who live the standards of the Church (including full payment of tithing) should be available for leadership positions in the proposed stake.
- Present stake/district priesthood quorums and auxiliaries should be organized and functioning well.
- Travel to the proposed stake center should not be a hardship for members.
- The proposed stake should be able to provide needed funds for buildings and budget.
- The proposed stake should share the existing stake center for conferences and activities whenever possible. If a new stake center is essential, explain on an attached sheet.

### Guidelines for Creating Districts

- As far as leadership and other factors allow, a district should be patterned after a stake organization.
- Two or more branches should exist in a proposed district.
- Travel to district meetings should not be a hardship for members.

### Guidelines for Preparing Maps Showing Unit Boundaries

A detailed, accurate map of the proposed stake should be attached to this application. Stakes/Districts outside the United States and Canada should submit two maps so that one may be given to the area office. Church headquarters and area offices will use the map for routing membership records to appropriate units.

#### Selecting a map

- Obtain an up-to-date, standard street or road map from a government agency, tourist office, chamber of commerce, local planning council, bank, or book store.
- The map should have street or town indexes.
- All Church units within the stake should be shown on the map.

#### Marking the map

- Use an erasable red pencil to mark boundaries on the map so that changes can be made later if necessary. Do not use pens, markers, or colored

- Be careful not to cover the street or town names. Do not shade any part of the map.
- Make sure a town or near a boundary line is shown in the appropriate unit.
- Write the name of the unit within the unit boundaries and indicate the location of the meetinghouse.

### Description of proposed boundaries

Attach a written description of the stake boundaries including any information not clear on the map.

### Stakes with student wards

Provide detailed information on student housing within each student ward. Apartment or dormitory room numbers assigned to specific wards should be provided in the description of unit boundaries.

### Updating unit maps

Report new streets and house numbers within your unit to:

Member and Statistical Records Division, Floor 17  
50 East North Temple Street  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150  
or to the appropriate area office.

### Distribution of Materials to New Units

The president of a new stake receives the following materials:

New stake issue—administrative and reporting supplies

New unit issue—administrative, curriculum and reporting supplies designed for each unit's level of development

Using the following definitions, specify on the front of this form the materials to be sent for new units.

Phase I: A specific, authorized list of materials for member and nonmember families in new and developing areas of the Church.

Phase II: A specific, authorized list of materials for branches using the basic Church program. These branches are not able to implement the full Church program.

Phase III: A specific, authorized list of materials for units able to implement the full Church program.

### Roster of District Leaders

If a stake will be created from a mission district, list names of the present district leaders.

District Rome Naples  
President Lorenzo Perticaroli Gennaro Cannata

First  
Counselor Lee Flosi Duane Roberts

Second  
Counselor Gaetano Mandalari Vincenzo Del Core

District  
Clerk Giuseppe Aquilino Guido Ferrero

District  
Council Enrico Carosi Salvatore Schiano

Enrico Consoli Glenn John

Luis Vera Evan Clay

Carlo Caroli Sebastiano Lisatti

ROME ITALY STAKE  
APPLICATION  
SUPPORTING INFORMATION

It is proposed that the Rome Italy Stake be created from the existing Rome district and Naples district. The following information is presented in support of the accompanying application.

Total membership and growth. The fourth quarter 1985 Activity Report indicates that there are 970 members in the Rome district and 1,103 in the Naples district for a total of 2,073. It is estimated that approximately 100 of the membership records in the Naples area will eventually need to be forwarded to the Milan Regional Office because the members have moved without leaving forwarding addresses and cannot be found. This is the result, principally, of earthquake activity in the Naples area over the past several years. (This forwarding would improve slightly some of the percentages in Naples.) Nonetheless, the total membership between the two districts would be just under 2,000.

During the past three years, the number of convert baptisms has averaged approximately 50 per district per year. This means that at the current rate of growth, it would be 20 years before either district would individually approach a membership of 2,000. Even if convert baptisms were to double, it would take ten years to reach this membership total. While growth has been slow, it has been constant. In recent years there has been a great spiritual strengthening among the members as they have experienced the blessings that come from sacrifice, service, and consecration.

Wards and branches. There are currently eight branches in the Rome district and seven branches in the Naples district. The stake proposal suggests the creation of four wards, two in Rome and two in Naples, and seven branches, one of them being a strong Servicemen's branch in the Naples area.

In Rome, the Nomentano, Centro, and Tuscolano branches would be combined to form the Rome Nomentano ward. The Trionfale and E.U.R. branches would be combined to form the Rome Trionfale ward. While it would be possible to consider the creation of three wards rather than two in Rome, a third building is not located in a central enough position to allow for convenient transportation.

Three branches would then remain in what is now the Rome district area, Ostia, Terni, and Pescara. (See map of Rome for ward divisions and building location details. See stake map for ward and branch locations.)

In Naples, the Nazionale branch and part of the Flegreo branch would be combined to form the Naples Nazionale ward. The Centro branch and the remaining part of the Flegreo branch would be combined to form the

Naples Centro ward. The Flegreo branch would thereby be dissolved. As evidenced on the city map of Naples, the division between the two wards is somewhat unique in that the Naples Nazionale ward is actually on three sides of the Naples Centro ward. This is the most equitable solution because of two related factors. First, the subway system, which provides rapid and inexpensive transportation in Naples connects the two principal areas of the Naples Nazionale ward, while it does not serve the Naples Centro ward area. This means the two areas of the Naples Nazionale ward are connected by a single, rapid means of transportation, while any other division would require the use of several, slow, above ground means to reach the chapel. Second, the Naples Centro ward is located on several large hills which serve as a natural geographic division.

Four branches would remain in what is now the Naples district area, Avellino, Caserta, Salerno, and Servicemen's. While the Naples Servicemen's branch is clearly one of the strongest units in the two districts, its overall membership total would not seem to support its being formed as a ward. Nonetheless, its priesthood strength would be felt within the stake. (See city map of Naples for ward divisions and building location details. See stake map for ward and branch locations.)

Priesthood. The proposed ward and branch divisions place strong priesthood leadership in each of the units. There are strong, faithful, capable brethren that can serve in a stake presidency, as a patriarch, in bishoprics, quorum presidencies, etc.

In addition to the numbers identified under "Active Melchizedek Priesthood" on the stake application, there are 62 full-time elders serving within these units. This is especially noteworthy in light of the joint home teaching program currently being employed throughout the mission and throughout Europe. In addition, two couples will be entering the mission in April 1986 and will be assigned to the Rome and Naples areas.

Auxiliaries. The auxiliaries are functioning well within the various units with both the Rome and Naples districts providing training and support from the district level. The unification of some branches to form wards will provide a greater opportunity for what had been smaller branches to now enjoy the complete program of the Church. The units that will remain branches will continue to develop the auxiliaries as they continue to grow. While their principal function is full-time proselyting, there are also 12 full-time sister missionaries that are assigned to the Rome and Naples areas that are able to help in the auxiliaries from time to time.

Distances. The distance between Rome and Naples is 138 miles. The small branch of Salerno is another 33 miles to the south of Naples. The small branch of Pescara is on the east coast of Italy and is 138 miles from

Rome. While these distances may exceed the normally accepted guidelines in forming a stake, there are four major considerations that support making an exception in this case.

First. There is an excellent freeway system that connects all of these cities and greatly accelerates and facilitates travel between each one. There are also trains that run between these cities, departing each hour, as well as public and private bus companies. This means that there are varied, excellent means of transportation between the cities.

Second. The people in Italy generally and the members of the church specifically, are accustomed to traveling these distances. They are also accustomed to utilizing the various means of transportation mentioned above. It is common for groups of members, for numerous activities, to hire private buses for transportation. Due to the large, long-standing tourist industry, numerous private bus companies provide excellent services at very competitive prices. Perhaps more importantly, it is a commonly accepted, convenient, and frequently utilized form of transportation between cities for special events, etc.

Third. There is a great advantage in that there are two large population centers within the proposed stake where the great majority of the membership is concentrated. This means that the training meetings and various council meetings could be alternated between Rome and Naples, thus spreading the expense and burden of travel, such as it is, more evenly among the membership. In this sense, although the distance between Rome and Naples is greater than that which is normally recommended, the actual burden for travel on the membership could well be less than that found in a stake where all units must continually travel to the same center for every type of meeting.

Until 1977, these two districts were united as one district and therefore were accustomed to working together and sharing the responsibilities as described above.

Fourth. Without consideration given to combining these two districts, it will be many years before either district individually will be able to enjoy the blessings and responsibility of being a stake. The priesthood leadership and members are most desirous of taking this step now. The Lord has prepared them through many varied circumstances and experiences. They are willing to make the necessary sacrifices to see this dream realized. While many opportunities for growth will undoubtedly arise, as is the



case with the formation of any stake in a developing area, their faith and testimonies will continue to grow and strengthen. When the Rome Italy Stake will eventually be divided to create the Naples Italy Stake, the strength and growth of the Church will be greatly enhanced at that time because of the creation of this stake at this time.

In summary, the Saints are willing to accept the responsibility for traveling the distances involved for conferences, training meetings, presidency meetings, council meetings, interviews, etc.

Overall financial responsibility. Both the Rome and Naples districts have met tithing faithfulness requirements and continue to meet local share responsibilities for operating expenses as well as building projects. This was recently exemplified in a very special way.

In 1984, these two districts, along with the rest of the mission, faced the financial responsibility of a rather aggressive building acquisition program. During that time, the physical facilities situation left much to be desired. It was felt that although the memberships in the branches involved were not large enough to justify the acquisition of buildings according to policy, buildings large enough to accomodate wards should be acquired immediately. Buildings were located, exceptions to policy were granted, and acquisitions made. This, in conjunction with acquisitions in other parts of the mission, placed a heavy financial responsibility upon the members. An exception to the local share requirement could have been requested and justified on the same basis that the acquisition itself had been justified. On paper, the small number of members simply could not meet such a heavy financial obligation. However, in a marvelous demonstration of sacrifice and consecration, during the last three months of 1984, the members contributed every thing they had, including their Christmas money, to meet and even exceed the local share requirement. Since that time, activity has increased, priesthood and faith have been strengthened, and membership has grown. The fact that the creation of the Rome Italy Stake may now be considered is undoubtedly one of the many blessings, both spiritual and temporal, that continue to come to the saints because of their willingness to consecrate what they have to the building up of the kingdom. Their capacity and willingness to make such sacrifices has clearly been made manifest.

Church buildings. The Rome Trionfale and Rome Nomentano wards would meet in two separate church owned buildings. A third church owned building near the belt way that circles Rome in the south eastern part of the city would be temporarily vacated. The Pescara, Terni, and Ostia branches would continue to meet in rented buildings.

The Naples Centro ward would meet in a church owned building, while the Naples Nazionale ward would meet in a currently rented building until another building in the area could be found and acquired. Since the Flegreo branch would be dissolved, the church owned building where it now meets would be temporarily vacated or perhaps utilized by the Servicemen's branch. The Caserta, Avellino, and Salerno branches would continue to meet in rented buildings as would the Servicemen's branch, unless transferred to the former Flegreo building. (See accompanying maps of the stake and of Rome and Naples.)

The place and the people. The prominence of Rome in the religious as well as the secular history of the world is well known. The influence of Roman rule was certainly felt throughout the time period covered by the New Testament in Jerusalem, Israel, and throughout the world. This influence affected the circumstances surrounding the birth and death of the Savior and was utilized by Him in some of His teachings.

On the day of Pentecost, following the Savior's resurrection, we read that "strangers of Rome" were among those that witnessed the marvelous outpouring of the Spirit among the apostles and were undoubtedly among the first to be baptized for the remission of their sins and to receive the Holy Ghost under the administration of the apostles (Acts 2).

After abiding in Corinth with Aquila and Priscilla, who had recently come from Rome (Acts 18), Paul later declared that he "must also see Rome" (Acts 19). In a beautiful passage that inspires missionaries and members in the Italy Rome Mission today, we learn that while Paul was under arrest and in jeopardy of losing his life, during the night, "the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23). After Paul's life was miraculously spared more than once during their journey, Luke records, "And we came the next day to Puteoli, where we found brethren and were desired to tarry with them seven days." Puteoli is today a suburb of Naples where many faithful brethren, members of the Church, reside. Luke continues, "And so we went toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns." All of these places are found within the boundries of the proposed Rome Italy Stake. While Paul was in Rome, we read that he, "expounded and testified the kingdom of God . . . from morning 'til evening" (Acts 28).

Paul's longest epistle was written to the Romans, wherein he taught beautifully the fundamental principles of the gospel. It was from Rome that Paul wrote his epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians, the Ephesians, to Philemon and the Hebrews. A short while later, it was once again from Rome that Paul wrote his final letter to his "dearly beloved son," Timothy.

Undoubtedly aware of his approaching death, from his prison in Rome, Paul wrote to Timothy these marvelously inspiring words, "For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." And later, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 1, 4).

Peter wrote his first epistle from Babylon, which was probably Rome, wherein he taught, "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1). The prophet Joseph Smith commented that "Peter penned the most sublime language of any of the apostles." He penned them probably from Rome.

Religious and secular history meet as we read of thousands of Christians being martyred at Rome. Accurately, history also records that the seeds of apostasy found fertile soil in Rome, as well as elsewhere. They took root, firmly embedding themselves in the hearts and minds of the people, eventually plunging the world into the Dark Ages. The adversary established his priesthoods and bishops that perverted and abused the ways of the Lord, ironically in the name of the Lord, while they fought for power and recognition, principally in Rome.

It seems appropriate that the false and self-proclaimed bishops of Rome, even unknowingly, eventually nurtured the spirit of the Renaissance that led to a religious Reformation. This spirit led inspired men to a new land where an inspired constitution and freedom were established and where the Lord once again restored His gospel.

From the land of the Restoration, the Lord has sent prophets and missionaries back to the land of the Renaissance. As the work of the Lord has progressed in Italy, the adversary's efforts have been intense, especially in Rome. However, as promised to the faithful in these latter-days, the Lord's spirit has continued to prevail and triumph. It cannot help but be that some of the same believing blood that was spilt in Rome by early-day Christian martyrs today runs in the veins of the Latter-day Saints in Rome and Naples.

It is thrilling to contemplate that when the Lord through His prophets will so direct, and after nearly 2,000 years, there will once again be a bishop of the Lord Jesus Christ in Rome. Not just one bishop, but many. And a stake presidency, a patriarch, elders, seventies, and high priests, Relief Society presidencies, Primary presidencies, Young Men and Young Women presidencies, deacons, teachers, and priests, fathers, mothers, and children, all working together in the Rome Italy Stake "for a defense and

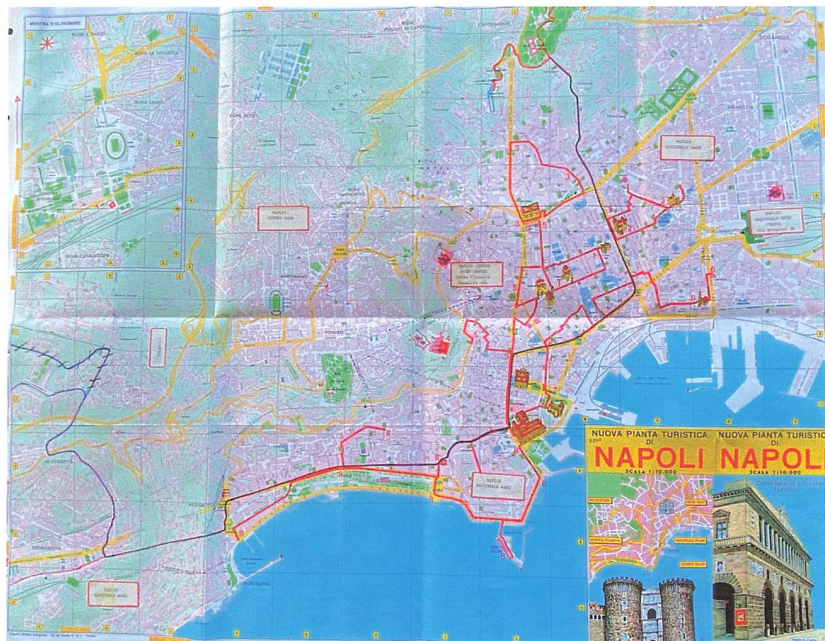
Page 7

a refuge from the storm and from the wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth" (D&C 115). The people, the place, these districts, are ready for the creation of a stake. They are not perfect, but they are ready.



19860220, Rome Italy Stake Application, Rome Unit Boundaries





19860220, Rome Italy Stake Application, Naples Unit Boundaries



19860220, Rome Italy Stake Application, Stake Boundaries

## Appendix E

### Nomentano Building Dedication, English

DEDICATORY PRAYER FOR THE NOMENTANO BRANCH CHAPEL, ROME DISTRICT, ITALY ROME MISSION.

Our dear Father in Heaven, we humbly gather ourselves together and with united hearts raise our voice to Thee in praise and thanksgiving for all that Thou hast done to further Thy work in this part of Thy vineyard and especially here in Rome. We love thee. We recognize that this is a particularly momentous and historical occasion. For the first time in what is known to us from recorded history and certainly within this the dispensation of the fullness of times, a chapel is to be dedicated unto Thee in Rome by Thy children whom Thou hast gathered by the power of Thy spirit from among the people of Rome. As we contemplate the significance of the role that this city and this people have played in both religious and secular history, we are humbly grateful for the opportunity of participating in this event for we recognize it to be in continuing fulfillment of the declarations of Thy prophets that Thy kingdom shall fill the whole earth. We feel that this event is a prelude to the marvelous work that Thou wilt continue to perform wherein many additional chapels will be dedicated to Thee by Thy people in this city and to where stakes of Zion will be established as places of refuge for Thy children who will continue to be gathered into Thy fold. We pray for Thy blessing, support, and guidance through Thy spirit and through Thy chosen leaders in remaining faithful and in assisting in this great work unselfishly and with great dedication. We pray that this event this day may also prelude the day when one of Thy prophets will come to this land to dedicate unto Thee one of Thy holy houses.

We acknowledge our weaknesses and imperfections before Thee and pray for Thy forgiveness for the things wherein we do wrong. We pray that Thy blessing and grace will continue to attend us as we strengthen and grow in service and love towards our fellowmen.

And now dear Father, by virtue of the Melchizedek Priesthood which I hold and in the name of Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and having been authorized by the General Authorities of Thy church, I dedicate unto Thee this entire chapel and these entire grounds that they be Thine and not ours. I bless the foundation that it will be strong and true in supporting this chapel, and the other structural members and materials that they will fulfill the purposes for which they have been created and assembled. I bless the electrical and plumbing systems that they will also fulfill their proper functions. I bless the chapel area of this beautiful building that it may always be accorded proper reverence and respect, that the pulpit will always be used for proclaiming Thy gospel truths and that other activities held herein will always further Thy divine purposes for Thy children and Thy kingdom. I bless the classrooms and offices that Thy spirit will abide as truth is taught and counsel, strength, and support given. I bless this building and these grounds that they will be protected from the natural elements and that they will always stand as a place of refuge from the world for all of Thy children and honest seekers of the truth in this city.

Dear Heavenly Father, we now unitedly and humbly pray that Thou wilt pour out Thy spirit upon this land and this people and more specifically



that Thou wilt pour out Thy spirit in rich abundance upon the people of Rome. Soften their hearts and enlighten their minds that they may be receptive to Thy spirit and to the message of Thy restored gospel as that message is lived and shared by Thy children in this part of Thy vineyard. We pray that Thy children will hear Thy voice and that members of Thy church will continue to grow and strengthen individually and as families in their testimonies of Thy restored gospel. We pray that a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon may abound in this land and that by miraculous means Thou wilt continue to further Thy work through the marvelous testimony that is gained from that book.

We pray that Thou wilt continue to reveal unto Thy prophet, the counselors in the First Presidency, and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles Thy will. We pray that Thou wilt continue to bless them and all of the General Authorities of the Church and their families to sustain them and uphold them. We love them and pray that Thou wilt help them to know of our love for them.

As we have dedicated this chapel to Thee this day we now unitedly dedicate ourselves to Thee remembering sacred covenants that we have made with Thee. We pray that peace and love may abound among Thy saints here at Rome. We pray that there will be a willingness on the part of all Thy children to recognize and repent of their wrong doings and offenses. We pray that there will also be a willingness to forgive others. O how we recognize the need to repent and forgive!

We remember the temporal sacrifices that have been made that this and other buildings may be acquired. We pray that those efforts may be answered with spiritual blessings upon the heads of those making such sacrifices and upon their families.

Recent nuclear contamination of this area has reminded us of how imperfect man is and how dependent we must be upon Thee. Recent terrorist acts and threats have reminded us how hate and misunderstanding can grow. We recognize that the only true and lasting solution to these problems is Thy restored gospel and adherence to Thy restored truths. We recognize the important role and heavy responsibilities of our governmental leaders and of those throughout the world and pray that Thou wilt inspire and direct them in truth and righteousness. We pray that peace and tranquility may come to the earth. While this is our prayer, we recognize that the wickedness of man may limit that peace and we therefore pray that notwithstanding the circumstances that may arise, that Thy righteous purposes may be fulfilled and that we may recognize Thy hand in all things pertaining unto righteousness.

We pray that future generations, even our children, may be blessed with strong faith in Thy Son and His atonement and that they may also be blessed with obedient spirits and with hearts and minds sensitive to Thy voice that they may grow up in righteousness, listening to Thee and with the courage and strength to do what Thou asketh of them.

May all of these principles be taught within these walls and may we all consecrate our lives to them, we humbly pray, in the name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer offered at the dedicatory meeting on June 8, 1986 by Craig Allen Cardon, President of the Italy Rome Mission. Building location: Piazza Carnaro, 20, Rome. (Prayer offered in Italian.)

## Appendix F

### Nomentano Dedica dell'Edificio, Italiano

PREGHIERA DEDICATORIA PER LA CAPPELLA DEL RAMO NOMENTANO, DISTRETTO DI ROMA, MISSIONE ITALIANA DI ROMA.

Nostro Padre in Cielo, umilmente raccolti insieme e con i cuori uniti alziamo a Te la nostra voce per lodarTi e ringraziarTi per tutto quello che Hai fatto per portare avanti il Tuo lavoro in questa parte della Tua vigna e specialmente qui a Roma. Noi Ti amiamo. Ci rendiamo conto che questo è un momento particolare ed un'occasione storica. Per la prima volta, per quanto noi conosciamo da documenti storici, e certamente in questa dispensazione della pienezza dei tempi, una cappella viene dedicata a Te, a Roma, dai Tuoi figli che Hai riuniti con la potenza del Tuo spirito tra il popolo di Roma. Siccome noi consideriamo il significato del ruolo che questa città e questo popolo hanno rappresentato sia nella storia religiosa che in quella secolare, Ti siamo umilmente grati per la opportunità di partecipare a questo evento e riconosciamo che ciò è il costante adempimento delle dichiarazioni dei Tuoi profeti che il Tuo regno riempirà la terra. Noi sentiamo che questo evento è il preludio del lavoro meraviglioso che Tu proseguirai, per far sì che altre cappelle siano dedicate a Te dal Tuo popolo in questa città e che pali di Sion siano stabiliti come luogo di rifugio per quei Tuoi figli che continueranno ad essere riuniti nel Tuo ovile. Noi preghiamo per la Tua benedizione, sostegno e guida attraverso il Tuo spirito e tramite i Tuoi dirigenti da Te scelti, per rimanere fedeli e per partecipare a questo grande lavoro altruisticamente e con grande dedizione. Preghiamo che questo avvenimento odierno possa preludere il giorno in cui uno dei Tuoi profeti verrà in questa terra a dedicare a Te una delle Tue sante case.

Noi riconosciamo la nostra debolezza ed imperfezione di fronte a Te e Ti preghiamo per il Tuo perdono per le cose nelle quali sbagliamo. Preghiamo perché la Tua benedizione e grazia continuino ad assisterci per poter rinforzarci e crescere nel servizio e nell'amore verso i nostri simili.

Ed ora caro Padre, col potere del Sacerdozio di Melchisedek che detengo e nel nome del Tuo amato Figlio, Gesù Cristo, ed essendo stato autorizzato dalle Autorità Generali della Tua chiesa, io dedico a Te tutta questa cappella e tutto questo terreno perché possano essere Tuoi e non nostri. Io benedico le fondamenta perché possano essere forti e sicure nel sopportare questa cappella, e le altre parti strutturali e materiali perché possano adempiere agli scopi per cui sono state create ed unite. Io benedico gli impianti elettrici ed idraulici che possano adempiere alle loro proprie funzioni. Io benedico l'area della cappella di questo bell'edificio che le possano essere sempre accordati particolare riverenza e rispetto, che il pulpito sia sempre usato per proclamare le verità del Tuo vangelo e che le altre attività tenute qui perseguano sempre il Tuo intento divino per quanto riguarda i Tuoi figli ed il Tuo regno. Io benedico le classi e gli uffici in modo che il Tuo spirito vi dimori mentre la verità sarà insegnata per dare consiglio, forza e sostegno. Io benedico questo edificio e questo terreno perché siano protetti dagli elementi della natura e perché siano sempre un posto di rifugio dal mondo per i Tuoi figli e gli onesti ricercatori della verità in questa città.

Caro Padre Celeste, noi, ora tutti uniti ed in umiltà, preghiamo perché Tu riversi il Tuo spirito su questa terra e su questo popolo e più specificatamente che Tu elargisca il Tuo spirito con grande abbondanza sul

popolo di Roma. Intenerisci i loro cuori ed illumina le loro menti che possano essere recettivi al Tuo spirito ed al messaggio del vangelo restaurato mentre questo messaggio e' vissuto e condiviso dai Tuoi figli in questa parte della Tua vigna. Noi preghiamo che i Tuoi figli ascoltino la Tua voce e che i membri della Tua chiesa continuino a crescere e rafforzarsi individualmente e come famiglie nella loro testimonianza del vangelo restaurato. Noi preghiamo che la testimonianza della verita' del Libro di Mormon possa abbondare in questo paese e che, con mezzi miracolosi, Tu continui a portare avanti il Tuo lavoro tramite la meravigliosa testimonianza che e' raggiunta per mezzo del libro.

Noi preghiamo che Tu continui a rivelare, tramite il Tuo profeta, i consiglieri della Prima Presidenza ed il Quorum dei Dodici Apostoli, la Tua volonta'. Noi preghiamo che Tu continui a benedirli assieme a tutte le Autorita' Generali della Chiesa e le loro famiglie per sostenerli e rafforzarli. Noi li amiamo e preghiamo che Tu li aiuti a conoscere il nostro amore per loro.

Come noi abbiamo dedicato questa cappella a Te in questo giorno, tutti insieme vogliamo dedicare noi stessi, ricordando le sacre alleanze che abbiamo fatto con Te. Noi preghiamo che la pace e l'amore possano abbondare tra i santi qui a Roma. Noi preghiamo che vi possa essere la buona volonta' da parte di tutti i Tuoi figli a riconoscere e pentirsi degli errori fatti e delle offese arretrate. Noi preghiamo che ci sia anche la buona volonta' di perdonare gli altri. O come conosciamo il bisogno di pentirci e di perdonare!

Noi ricordiamo i sacrifici temporali che sono stati fatti per acquistare questo ed altri edifici. Preghiamo che questi sforzi possano avere risposta nelle benedizioni spirituali sulle teste di coloro che hanno fatto simili sacrifici e sulle loro famiglie.

Le recenti contaminazioni nucleari di questa zona hanno ricordato quanto l'uomo sia imperfetto e quanto noi siamo dipendenti da Te. I recenti atti di terrorismo e di minaccia ci hanno ricordato come possano crescere l'odio ed il disaccordo. Noi riconosciamo che la sola vera e definitiva soluzione di questi problemi e' il Tuo vangelo restaurato e la adesione alla verita' restaurata. Noi riconosciamo il ruolo importante e le pesanti responsabilita' dei nostri dirigenti di governo e di quelli di tutto il mondo e preghiamo che Tu voglia ispirarli e dirigerli nella verita' e nella rettitudine. Preghiamo che la pace e la tranquillita' possano venire sulla terra. Mentre questa e' la nostra preghiera noi riconosciamo che la malvagita' dell'uomo puo' limitare questa pace e percio' noi preghiamo che, nonostante le circostanze che possono sorgere, il Tuo giusto intento possa essere adempiuto e che noi possiamo riconoscere la Tua mano in tutte le cose riguardanti la rettitudine.

Noi preghiamo che le generazioni future, i nostri figli, possano essere benedetti con una forte fede in Tuo Figlio e la Sua espiatione e che essi possano inoltre essere benedetti con uno spirito obbediente e con cuori e menti sensibili alla Tua voce, che essi possano crescere in rettitudine, ascoltando Te e con il coraggio e la forza di fare quello che chiedi loro.

Possano tutti questi principi essere insegnati tra queste mura e possiamo tutti noi consacrare ad essi le nostre vite; Te lo preghiamo, umilmente, nel nome di Tuo Figlio Gesu' Cristo. Amen.

Preghiera offerta alla riunione dedicatoria il 8 giugno 1986 da Craig Allen Cardon, Presidente della Missione Italiana di Roma. Posizione dell'edificio: Piazza Carnaro, 20, Roma.