

APOSTLE JOSEPH CALABRESE PASSES ON TO HIS ETERNAL REWARD

Apostle Joseph Calabrese passed away on December 5, 2008 having served the Lord with great determination from the day of his baptism on February 18, 1945 at 27 years of age. For the 63 years that followed, he was a tireless laborer for the Church. In answer to the question that some would pose to him, "When did you become a missionary?" he would always say, "On the day of my baptism!" And indeed, he was passionately involved in the missionary endeavors of the Church, both in the United States and in foreign countries. He made extensive efforts to visit every branch and mission in the United States and Canada, and in 1981, he and Brother Alvin Swanson organized the Church in India. Since that time Brother Calabrese had made 12 missionary trips to India. He was highly respected and loved by the members of the congregations in India. Truly he was a man of God exhibiting the characteristics of Christ in fulfilling his duties before man and God.

He was born in Monessen, Pennsylvania on January 10, 1918 to Brother Antonio and Sister Theresa Calabrese. The family moved to Lorain, Ohio in 1930 where they came in contact with The Church of Jesus Christ. His parents were baptized and became dedicated members thereafter. He married Sister Victoria Calabrese in 1937 and had been married for 69 years before her passing in 2006. They faced many tough times together, including the death of their infant son, Kenneth, but they persevered. He is survived by his children, Bonnie Smith and her husband Isaac, Dennis Calabrese and his wife Anne, Cheryl Smith and her husband Harry, Candice Genaro and her husband Peter, Joel Calabrese and his wife Edna, 19 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, and 1 great-great-grandchild.

In 1945, Brother Joseph became gravely ill with appendicitis. He was not yet baptized, and had resisted becoming a member of the Church, but he called upon the elders of the Church to anoint him. A month later, once out of the hospital, even though the doctors worried for his condition, he went into the waters of baptism on a cold day, February 18, 1945. His life from that time forward became a vessel of the Lord by which he served God and His church with unfaltering faith, zeal, and dedication expressing his love for Jesus Christ to all that would hear.

In 1955, he was ordained into the ministry of the Church as an elder, in 1958 as an evangelist, and in 1989 as an apostle. His service to the Lord never wavered. His service to the Church, whether as a trustee, Sunday School teacher, GMBA Vice President, Presiding Elder, Ohio District President, Quorum of Seventy Vice President, Quorum of Twelve President, Foreign Missions Chairman, India Coordinator, General Church Correspondent, Elder, Evangelist, or Apostle was given the same intensity of dedication.

"We're not playing marbles in the backyard anymore" was one of his sayings that will long be remembered regarding the seriousness of serving the Lord. Brother Joseph Calabrese was many things to many people throughout his life and he made an enormous impact on hundreds, if not thousands, of people worldwide. All know of the goodness and Christ-like nature of this beloved man of God. We are blessed and thankful to have had his love, devotion to Jesus Christ, and perseverance in spite of many of life's obstacles, as an example for all of us to follow.

He will be greatly missed by the Quorum of Twelve and all of the brothers, sisters and friends of The Church of Jesus Christ. Brother Joseph Calabrese has left a legacy for all of us to follow, and part of that legacy is written in publications that he authored: "*Divine Continuity*," "*Questions and Answers*," and his autobiography, "*Missionary Endeavors at Home and Abroad*".

(Additional biographical information may be found in *A History of The Church of Jesus Christ: Volume 2*, pp.600-606 or at www.thechurchofjesuschrist.com.)