

15 April 1991

Dear Mom and Dad,

I'm so thankful to be a missionary and a representative of the Lord. We are teaching some very special people. Yesterday we baptized a 61 yr. old man named Oscar Baca Maldonado. We are going to baptize a very wonderful 18 yr. old girl named Sylvia Palma. Both have thriving new testimonies. Both have desires to bring their families into the gospel. Both are determined to be active. Both have shared their testimonies with us. Oscar said after his baptism, "I'm so happy." And so am I.

It seems that I've had so many problems, but the Lord is blessing me with a knowledge of all my many weaknesses, and I'm learning that it's so important to have a GOOD ATTITUDE. Look on the brighter side and smile when there're difficulties.

What a joy this work is when the Lord blesses us and helps us to help others to be BAPTIZED. The Lord knows what He's doing. He lifts you up; He brings you down; but He does it for our good.

Mom, please plan us a 1 (maybe he made the 1 into a "2"--can't decipher it) month genealogy trip for when I get back. I want to take part. Did you hear the last General Conference? Of course you did! Wasn't it excellent! I can't wait to do genealogy work [this is the kid who screamed from the car at every cemetery stop?!?]

I love the Lord. He's so patient with us. BUT I'M NOT PATIENT AND I WANT MORE LETTERS. (Smiley face). [we wrote him, but he just didn't get them.]

I'm going to be more faithful and write every week and you folks will, too. OK?

Grandpa's death was a surprise. I feel he was a righteous man. I know I'll see him again some day. I'm worried for Grandma more than him. I need to write her a letter.

Please take care of yourselves. I love you and miss and regret all past mistakes. If I had been more obedient, I'd be much more prepared. One learns this sooner or later.

I love you both, Elder Bartholomew

May 13, 1991

Dear Mom and Dad and Laura,

That sure was a great phone call yesterday! I really enjoyed talking with you folks. [He called for Mother's Day and we talked over an hour.]

I think the most interesting news was of Dad's new job [we had written it long before, but he hasn't been getting our letters for many weeks, he said] and the very possible upcoming move to Utah. I don't know why, but it doesn't bother me much. I'm very happy for Dad because I feel it's going to be a job he'll really enjoy. Also, if I should return to BYU, it'll be nice to have you folks so close to visit. I'm always going to miss New York, but I always knew I was going to have to say goodbye some day, and with the moves to NJ, Utah, and Guatemala, I guess I've become quite adjusted to moving away from my teenage home town.