

PURE RELIGION

In That Day Shall Thy Mouth Be Opened

At 17, Rosa Martinez already had two children. What she didn't have was hope that she could ever be happy. She had married a man who was mean and abusive and who beat her and the children. Over and over, he told her she was stupid and useless, and at times Rosa thought he must be right. Rosa had only been in the United States for a year, couldn't speak English, had no friends, and didn't know how to drive. She felt helpless and trapped. So she stayed home with her children, hoping her husband would not come home too drunk. But the abuse continued and became more severe until, eventually, the police intervened and Rosa's husband was arrested for attempted murder.



Not knowing what to do or where to go, Rosa packed up her children and the few things she could carry and bought bus tickets to Salt Lake City. As she traveled, she began to wonder how she would survive. What was she to do? How would she communicate? What would happen to her children? How would she find a job?

When Rosa arrived in Salt Lake City, she found an inexpensive place to stay. The hotel manager noticed the troubled look on her face and told her of a place that perhaps could help: the Latter-day Saint Humanitarian Center.

Rosa didn't have any idea what else to do, so she interviewed at the LDS Humanitarian Center, met with a bishop who was willing to sponsor her, and finally was offered a job sorting clothing. The wages she received allowed her to find a more permanent place to stay, but that was not enough for Rosa. Even though she still had major doubts about her ability to make it on her own, Rosa was determined to try. She

discovered that the LDS Humanitarian Center closed early on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week so that the workers could attend classes. Rosa signed up for an English class and studied diligently. She was surprised at how quickly she began to understand a language her husband had told her she was too stupid to learn. Next, she discovered that the LDS Humanitarian Center, in cooperation with Salt Lake Community College, offered more intensive English classes. She signed up for those as well. She learned to drive.

"I banged up the car," Rosa smiles as she speaks, "but I learned. I was not as stupid as my husband always said I was."

Rosa did so well with her studies that she soon began working as a bilingual receptionist at the LDS Humanitarian Center. She enrolled in Salt Lake Community College's "Back to Work" course and learned receptionist and secretarial skills. She began attending an English-speaking ward.

Through Rosa's hard work and determination, she eventually was offered and accepted a secretarial job with a national company that offered benefits and a chance for her and her children to live modestly but well.

"The Humanitarian Center has been a great blessing for me," she says, with a depth of character that comes to those familiar with adversity. "People have been good to me."