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Brasil Week 6

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Querido Familia,

This has been quite the week, and I almost didn't get to send an email today because I don't have any cash on me and LAN houses are only cash but we were able to go to a members house and there we were able to do emails.

One question, did you already mail the package you were getting ready?

That's sad to hear about changes in the ward with people moving out, but it is inevitable I guess. That is going to be strange when I get back and there will be a lot of new faces.

I got another haircut, but it was a mistake on my part because now it is way shorter than I like, but in a few weeks it'll be back to the way it was. Already been a month here in Brasil, and lately I have been having more instances with culture-shock things, (just ediquette and other details. Some phrases are rude in Portuguese that aren't rude in English and vice-verca)

This past week we had a baptism! My first one since coming to Brasil. His name is Carlos, and he's almost the age of a deacon. When we had fast and testimony meeting here, he bore his testimony about how he knows that the Book of Mormon is true and that the church is true. This was before he was baptized. He's a really cool kid. We also started teaching his cousin and she is progressing towards baptism too! (I also bore my testimony on Fast and Testimony meeting in Portuguese. I have a horrible accent, but that'll come with time. Carlos thinks its hilarious sometimes when I talk to him.)

Every day this past week has been pouring and thunder storming. I've been having troubles with not knowing what is going on each day. Not being able to communicate with your companion 100% is difficult in many ways but it has been a good growing experience for my Portuguese. Its been a little stressful but hopefully it will improve.

Today I saw a Monkey! A real life monkey, and a wild one at that. It was just sitting on a wall of one of our neighbor's, and then jumped into a mango tree that is in their front yard. It was funny because Elder Pearson, another American Elder in our house said ``Woah! What is that!?`` we looked and at first I thought it was some strange cat, but it was a monkey! Just a funny thing that happened today.

I forgot my planner today, and that is where I wrote my notes down for my email. No problems from my last email were there? The computer was very ghetto. Hopefully not.

Mom - I'm glad you enjoyed your trip in Utah mom. Genealogy is really cool, Temple work is cool. I have been keeping a detailed journal for a while now and have gotten into the habit of writing often. It is fun, and it'll be a treasure in future years when I'll be able to recall different experiences. I wish I had been more diligent with my journal-writing before the mission.

Dad - That's awesome that you're having regular dances Dad. I miss being able to listen to music. I really enjoyed the music classes in High School, Jazz Improv, and Choir. One of the Elders in the apartment has an Mp3 player with lots of church music on it and we sing along to some of the songs every once in a while. We also need to go biking when I get back.

Heather - How did you like Anime Boston? Now that I got the week right. Did you have a good turn out at your booth? What did you go as? And was there a cool video game concert again? I wish I went to that, would have been cool.

Brad - Eh! I remember you talked about seeing monkeys in Brasil, and when I saw the monkey today I thought about that. I wish I had my camera with me at the time. Also I have seen many parrots, today at lunch, we saw a parrot that could talk but it didn't say anything. Eventually I'll get a picture of one. Reminds me of our constant quest to get a picture of Winston yawning.

Julia - Para Bens on getting all A's! That is something that I don't think I ever accomplished. Maybe one semester. I have been thinking about story ideas too, and I have this cool one, I'll send you a little summary or something in another email right after this one. I have also been working on my drawings here and there. Drawing is fun! I like the lighthouse picture. Elder Olvera, in Hobbs New Mexico was good at drawing and told me to draw in pen and it'll increase skills faster than with pencil because you can't erase! Its a little intimidating, but I'm trying.

Study has become a very important time for me. Also, during the time that we go to the gym and other times too now, I have been reading Jesus the Christ. At first it was a little hard but I really enjoy it now. Study is such an important thing to do. In order to

better be able to teach the things that missionaries teach, I have been strengthening my testimony by getting to know the lessons better and develop more faith in them. Also I have been trying better to use all the materials that I have because they won't help me if I don't use them.

This past month has been very difficult overall. Trying to learn Portuguese, and getting used to Brasil. I'm on a completely different continent! Woah! But beyond all the trials it has been making me and helping me rely more on my savior Jesus Christ and God. This is the Lord's work, and he is going to help me do the things he needs me to do.

One quote from an older member from the Hobbs ward said these quotes that I read in one of my books that I have. - ``Learn to love what you do, otherwise you'll be miserable.'' and ``Always look at the good points, never let the devil let you look at all the bad.'' Also, another quote that Irmão Call from the MTC said, ``When you give Christ your all, he gives you his all.''

There has been a few things that have really tried my patience, and have been hard to ignore, or look at the good and all the blessings that I have. I'm no where near perfect, but I am trying. Just some quotes that really stood out to me.

I am glad I had that book for people to write little notes in it. I have been having people sign things in it too since going on the mission, and I am really glad I have it. One of the notes someone wrote said ``This will be your greatest adventure yet!'' It has been quite the adventure, but I am truly grateful for the opportunity to serve the Lord. I just need to get Portuguese down and then I'll feel more like I am working as hard as I was in Texas. I can't say exactly what I want to say sometimes and that is frustrating.

This church truly is led by a prophet called of God. Joseph Smith saw God and Jesus Christ in the sacred grove. Jesus Christ is our savior and our redeemer. These things I know to be true, and have further witnesses every day of the importance of this Gospel and this message that I have the responsibility to share.

I love you very much, thank you for your prayers and support. You're awesome! I miss you,

Love,

Elder Phillip Larsen

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