

The Searching Mind

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I was asked to address myself today to my experiences at the intersection of my studies and my beliefs. I have chosen to consider what I would call the development of the searching mind.

Because I was asked to speak on some aspect of the integration of faith and reason, it occurred to me that I needed to take a moment and dedicate this talk to my husband. So much of what I think and what I am is due to my relationship, my discussions, and my life with him for the past seventeen years. Our discussions and his insights have helped me shape many of my own opinions about life and about how I *do* integrate secular knowledge with my religious beliefs and faith. It also occurred to me that this integration was really a process, and that metaphorically it took on, somewhat, the characteristics of a journey. This journey takes us to both gloriously sunny and forebodingly stormy climes. When we reach the former, we take delight in the inspiration received and the insight gained, thus restoring our spiritual and mental health. Stormy episodes along our route will cause us to struggle with the hypotheses, logic, and conclusions presented by the world. The result of such struggles, however, may again be the

emergence of a strengthened and enlightened mind, depending on whether or not we bring with us the necessary protective garb.

It seems to me that one of the greatest protections we can have in the world of reason and knowledge is a carefully cultivated questioning mind—a mind that is not easily swayed by every idea thrust forward at it and one that stops to ponder and thoughtfully examine in the context of gospel principles all that is presented. This carefully cultivated questioning mind is what I would call the searching mind. It is an intellect energized by the challenge of a good problem or a significant task; when so engaged, it is led to probe deeply and ponder carefully all aspects of the problem or task. Easy answers from supposed or self-promoting authorities are not readily adopted. Rather, the searching mind questions deeply to produce genuine, grounded understanding. Such questioning is not, therefore, done randomly, willy-nilly, nor is it performed simply with the intention of questioning everything or

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undermining all understanding. The searching mind questions, probes, and ponders with direction and purpose. The principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ provide this direction and purpose. Such a foundation keeps the questioning mind focused on those questions and modes of understanding that are most likely to produce fruitful outcomes. More, then, than providing easy answers, such a focused searching mind is led to grow, develop, and expand by paying attention to significant questions and fruitful modes of answering those questions.

Students frequently come to me in my art history classes and say that they have read two opposing sides of a particular scholarly debate and that they are equally convinced by both positions. I routinely tell them that they have not read carefully enough, nor have they allowed time for their minds to rigorously sift through the evidence and draw their own conclusions. One episode of neglectful reasoning over an art historical debate will certainly not produce dire results for the student's life (except perhaps for an art history grade), but if the individual never learns how to exercise the ability to judiciously question, probe, and evaluate ideas presented, the long-term consequences on a lifetime journey may indeed be harmful, perhaps endangering its entire course. I would suggest, therefore, that developing a thoughtfully questioning and evaluative mind—right now, while so many of you have such great opportunities as students at this university—is vital to your capacity to weather storms along your own journey. Each journey of lifetime encounters is unique and personal, but I hope that my discussion today of a few of my own experiences will not be without some relevance to all of us.

Reflecting on my own life, I am certain that Heavenly Father was helping me develop at a relatively young age those characteristics that would later benefit my understanding of how the gospel provides valuable insights into

secular learning. I had the privilege of being raised in the Church, and therefore discussions regarding such questions were a frequent occurrence in my youth. And since debates were, and continue to be, a favorite part of all my family's get-togethers, there was ample opportunity to express opinions. One very significant episode in my journey, however, came when I was a senior in high school. I was taking a sociology class, and because we had to complete a final group project and presentation on personal and social roles, I proudly volunteered my dad, then a psychology professor at BYU, to come speak to the class.

When the day arrived for his presentation, I was very excited that friends and classmates were going to see what an intelligent father I had. Because it was a rather unique experience at the high school, we all listened intently to everything he had to say. He addressed the several roles of high school students—including child, sibling, friend, etc.—but he particularly focused on our role as student. He told the class that he had always encouraged his own children from a very young age to challenge and question the ideas that were dispensed at school. He asserted that such interaction would bring about a fuller understanding of the topic at hand, and real learning could thus take place. This assertion in his talk, in particular, greatly astounded the students, and I remember one of the rather bold boys in the class asking in amazement, "You mean you really tell your kids to question what the teacher says?"

My father looked over at me for confirmation and said, "Yes, I do. Don't I, Martha?" I rather timidly nodded yes, even as I realized that I certainly had not significantly lived up to my father's dictum to that point in my education. I also committed to myself at that moment that I would no longer accept as truth what every seeming authority had to say on a subject, and I would more thoroughly, albeit

respectfully, question the ideas put forward and search out answers for myself.

As an undergraduate, I, like you, attended BYU. It was a time of strong examples—a time during which I could observe ways that scholars had dealt with important eternal questions in relationship to their faith and their specific disciplines. I am grateful to Dr. Mark Hamilton, who gave the prayer today, because he was one of those teachers who helped me develop the ability to question the scholarship and ideas of others in order to reach a more profound understanding of the topic and related issues. I would like to thank him for that training and for his example. I am convinced that this firm foundation prepared me in significant ways to face the more daunting pursuit of specialized knowledge in graduate school.

The year before I entered graduate school, however, Heavenly Father provided me with one of the most significant experiences on my journey thus far, an experience that I was to call to mind many times during my graduate studies. One day I was reading the scriptures just for enjoyment—those always seem to be the times when the Spirit is most able to work on one’s mind—and I felt greatly inspired by what I read. It seemed to me that the passage I had been reading related very directly to some rather discouraging public criticism the Church had recently been put through in the media. This story in the Book of Mormon seemed to put everything in proper perspective for me. The episode had to do with Korihor, the Anti-Christ, and his attempts to sway people with his declarations against a belief in Christ. One gets a vivid image of Korihor’s wily ways in the account given by Alma.

Korihor had much success in leading people into wickedness by convincing them that there was no Atonement and that

every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature; therefore every man

prospered according to his genius, and that every man conquered according to his strength; and whatsoever a man did was no crime. [Alma 30:17]

Later, when the high priest Giddonah questioned why he condemned the teachings of the prophets, Korihor responded by saying:

Because I do not teach the foolish traditions of your fathers, and because I do not teach this people to bind themselves down under the foolish ordinances and performances which are laid down by ancient priests, to usurp power and authority over them, to keep them in ignorance, that they may not lift up their heads, but be brought down according to thy words.

Ye say that this people is a free people. Behold, I say they are in bondage. [Alma 30:23–24]

How modern this all must have sounded to a culture that had a long tradition of faith and belief in the Lord. How convincing it must have seemed to those who already felt such religious devotion was old-fashioned and naïve. Korihor became more emboldened with each failed attempt to quell his evil influence. Finally, by the time he was brought before Alma, Korihor had become an extremely pompous individual enamored of the cleverness of his own rhetoric. Alma records:

And he [Korihor] did rise up in great swelling words . . . and did revile against the priests and teachers, accusing them of leading away the people after the silly traditions of their fathers, for the sake of glutting on the labors of the people. [Alma 30:31]

We all know that after this Korihor came to a very miserable end, but we should ask ourselves, “Why were so many people persuaded by his ideas? Why did many individuals not question the truth or spirit of his logic?” I think it likely that many were simply influenced by the novelty and persuasiveness of his

arguments. Furthermore, Korihor's accusation that the faithful were both mindless and blindly obedient must have provoked a vehement desire among some to separate themselves from such a categorization. Ironically, after vociferously proclaiming their independence from their fathers' traditions, these individuals then blindly followed Korihor's lead without stopping to question his motives or the assumptions underlying his pronouncements.

This passage of scripture came to my mind many times when I returned to my studies. Graduate school was an exciting experience. I was fortunate to have the unusual experience of going to graduate school at the same time as my husband. Even though this brought about certain stresses—like juggling class schedules with the demands of raising our two sons, who are now teenagers—I mostly remember both of us frequently coming home to breathlessly tell each other of some stimulating class we had just attended or some fascinating research we had been working on that was generating new and original ideas.

There were other times, however, when I landed in those stormy locales where my beliefs and faith were questioned and even ridiculed. In particular, I remember an important learning experience I had in a history class at Ohio State University. The professor for the course was a world-renowned scholar on Martin Luther and the Reformation. We were in the midst of discussing Luther's reading of the Bible one day when this professor laughingly recounted, "Those Mormons just don't get it. I just walked through the student union and saw a couple of Mormon missionaries sitting at a table, and they just don't understand Christ." Well, I am certain that he did not expect that there would be a Mormon sitting in the class, and he must have thought everyone would join in on the humor. I challenged him, however, on his comments, and he replied that if the Mormons had understood Christ,

they would have realized that Christ had forgiven murderers in his statement "forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). We then had a lengthy discussion as to who was actually responsible for Christ's death. In the end, I doubt that anyone was greatly affected by the discussion except me. I more firmly grasped something I had known all along and should have been more vigorously applying in my schooling: Do not automatically validate the knowledge dispensed by so-called authorities, whatever their worldly reputation.

I returned to BYU as a professor, anticipating the opportunity of now dispensing my own accumulated knowledge. Now, however, as my first decade back at BYU is coming to a close, I realize that I still have much questioning to do concerning the education I received. Now that I am here where one feels a greater ease in discussing the eternal aspects of an issue in class, I find that there are modes of perception I had not known existed during my graduate school days. As I was hurtling through the demands of doing research, writing papers, and taking exams, there were questions I never thought of asking. Recently, I heard that Stan Taylor, a BYU professor of political science whose wisdom I admire, said it takes about seven years here before one really gets to know what BYU is all about. I heartily concur. It takes about that long before one stops worrying about accumulating knowledge—a built-in habit acquired during student days—and starts thinking more about evaluating the knowledge one has in relationship to the gospel.

I thought I would turn now to some of those specific experiences in relation to my own field of study, the history of art. I feel profoundly that our beliefs provide experiences and reasoning that frequently enlighten our appreciation and understanding of the art of the past. In regard to much recent scholarship in art history and other disciplines, I find the

insights of the author Tom Wolfe enlightening. He criticizes both scholarship and creativity at American universities during the latter half of this century for admiringly and uncritically adopting the voguish methods of twentieth-century Europe. Instead of relating their work to the optimism of and issues facing America, Wolfe asserts that these individuals, in embarrassed homage, prostrated themselves at the feet of elitist and pessimistic modern European philosophies. In his book *From Bauhaus to Our House*, Wolfe describes the comic chaos that has resulted from such methods:

*The twentieth century, the American century, was now two-thirds over. . . . Young philosophers in the universities were completely bowled over by the French vogue for so-called analytical approaches to philosophy, such as Structuralism and Deconstructivism. The idea was that the old "idealistic" concerns of nineteenth-century philosophy—God, Freedom, Immortality, man's fate—were hopelessly naïve and bourgeois. The proper concern of philosophy . . . was the arcana of the philosophical clerisy itself. . . . What was the overriding concern of American philosophers? Why, it was the same as that of the French philosophers whom they idolized. By day, Structuralists constructed the structure of meaning and pondered the meaning of structure. By night, Deconstructivists pulled the cortical edifice down. And the next day the Structuralists started in again . . . [Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1981), pp. 100–101]*

Many of you will be familiar with the philosophies with which Wolfe is concerned here. Some of you will not have encountered them. There is not time to explain in detail, but such perspectives as Marxism, Freudian psychoanalytic method, structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstructivism, feminism, and the like have come to dominate the discussion of the history of art, just as they have become influential in many intellectual realms.

Although each approach is described in terms peculiar to itself, most of these ways of seeing humankind and the world take the position that oppression of some kind is at work in the living and understanding experienced by humans. Social, political, economic, artistic, even scientific relations between humans are all characterized by some mode of dominance reinforced by violence either physical, verbal, psychological, or the like. Such approaches are ahistorical and indeed critical of past traditions and values; the only grounding that remains for such perspectives is the self and the exercise of complete autonomy by the self.

Although I would allow that some value has resulted from discussions by individuals espousing these views, many have taken these and other philosophies to the extreme, leaving us in a world of utter chaos where there is no meaning and no truth. Furthermore, many scholarly evaluations take rather bleak and sardonic views of human motivation, allowing for very little appreciation of the cultural products of the past. Our knowledge of God's eternal plan and our optimistic embracement of hope for humankind leads us to very different conclusions. It is in this fashion that the searching mind is led to understandings that in turn produce growth, development, and enlargement of the person.

The interpretation of much religious art produced by Western civilization has suffered severely under the application of modern theoretical approaches. During the latter part of the twentieth century, scholars unable to relate to the simplistic faith and hope of earlier generations have deconstructed these works and assigned them meaning and intent that is both extremely convoluted as well as alien to these cultures of the past. Moreover, as you will witness today, they do not seem at all consistent with the mood evoked by the images for most of us as modern viewers. Twentieth-century scholars, however, are anxious to dig up every piece of historical dirt on artists to demonstrate

their impure motives or their deviant imagery. Works that had traditionally been considered inspiring and poignant are now ruined for many viewers who listen to rather contrived arguments as to the “real” meaning of such works.

Even the art of the late medieval era has suffered under these new approaches as motivations of greed, dissension, and bigotry are assigned to everything from the humblest of prints to the grandest of cathedrals. One must allow for the likelihood of human frailty in every era, but it should not distract us from what the work must have conveyed for the viewers of that time or, indeed, what it still conveys to us today.

[Slide 1] For most of us, the viewing of a magnificent stained-glass window, such as this rose window from Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, has a truly inspiring effect. Even though the planners and constructors of these works of art were not of our faith, most of us can still understand the desire of this medieval culture to create a heavenly atmosphere within their cathedrals. As with our own temples, these cathedrals were an attempt to create an environment removed from worldly cares and temptations. The mysterious colored light entering into the dark cathedral through these beautifully decorated windows had the effect of transporting believers to a celestial realm where they could more intently commune with God. In addition, these windows were for most of the illiterate poor the only scripture they had or could understand. Therefore, the didactic message of these windows needed to be presented in a straightforward, yet artistically moving form.

[Slide 2] An inspiring example of this is the *Tree of Jesse* window from Chartres cathedral in France. The anonymous artist ingeniously presents the lineage of Christ in the form of a branching tree. From the side of Jesse extends the trunk, and he is succeeded by his various descendants until we reach the top of the plant

that is crowned by images of Mary and Christ. For those of us who still appreciate the import of this artistic scripture, the window continues to speak with great clarity and beauty.

[Slide 3] When I speak of Rogier van der Weyden’s *Deposition* in class, it is exciting to be able to call on the students’ own religious experiences to understand its effect in the fifteenth century. As students recall their own attempts to contemplate the suffering and sacrifice of Christ during our own sacramental service, they understand the value of such images that were meant to inspire the meditation of those attending religious services in times past. Christ is presented to us not as a convincing corpse but as a poignant portrayal of a cruelly broken and tortured body. We are also touched and inspired by the grief, sorrow, and shock of those gathered around him. The swooning figure of Mary parallels that of Christ’s as an indication that her mental anguish and suffering brought her into close connection with Christ’s physical pain.

[Slide 4] The thoughtful sorrow on the face of Joseph of Arimathea and [Slide 5] the poignant tears of this female mourner in turn inspire our own contemplation of the tragedy and lead us to a similar reverential gratitude.

For many of us, some of the most dramatic and awe-inspiring religious images ever created were produced by Baroque artists such as Caravaggio, Zurbarán, La Tour, and especially Rembrandt. Thus, attempts of modern scholarship to psychoanalyze and impugn these artists’ motives becomes particularly disturbing. As we return to the images and what they convey, I reiterate that our own spiritual experiences lead us to a clearer sense of what these images must have inspired during a time of great religious upheaval and turmoil in Europe.

Caravaggio, an Italian painter of the Counter-Reformation era, perhaps best exemplifies the desire of many at this time to return to a simpler and more devout form of worship.

[Slide 6] His naturalistic yet dramatic paintings appealed to and frequently depicted commoners, as does this painting *Doubting Thomas*. We can all relate to Thomas' all-too-human frailty of doubt and the drama of this moment when he is finally convinced of Christ's resurrection through the act of plunging his finger into the open wound of Christ's side. Indeed, Caravaggio invites us to take part in the revelatory moment by bringing us up close to the group, whose bodies actually appear to project into our own space. So convincing is the dramatic focus and naturalistic rendering of this episode that we almost cringe at the sight.

[Slide 7] Equally dramatic is Caravaggio's *Conversion of Paul*, in which Paul is depicted not as a divine or idealized legend but as a convincing man who actually lived and experienced a miraculous witness. For viewers now and in the past who believe that miracles and revelation do occur, we are sincerely moved by Caravaggio's representation of divine intervention. In a most convincing fashion, Paul, having fallen from his horse, lies prostrate on the ground, extending his arms out to the heavenly light descending from above. For the devout viewers of the seventeenth century, the image must have increased their desire to return to the faithfulness and piety of early Christian times.

[Slide 8] The severity of Spanish religious devotion at this time has been frequently discussed in historical literature and is witnessed in Zurbarán's depiction of the prayers and devotion of Francis of Assisi. The dramatic contrasts of light and dark leave most of Francis' figure in darkness. Only his lips caught in the midst of eternal prayer are illuminated. He holds a skull as a reminder of the temporality of worldly concerns and his need for constant spiritual communion. Again, our own attempts at thoughtful and deep moments of prayer help us recognize and relate to the sincerity of this image.

[Slide 9] Another moment of quiet awe is depicted in the French artist Georges de La Tour's depiction of Mary and the newborn Christ child. Here all light seems to emanate from the child as a metaphor for the divine birth itself. Mary's gentle and loving gaze directs our attention to the babe in her arms, and we are brought close into this circle of figures to join in their adoration. Whereas modern scholars frequently view this image as sentimental and stylized, our own awe over the miracle of this event helps us to appreciate the effect the painting must have had on La Tour's contemporaries.

The religious imagery of the seventeenth-century Dutch artist Rembrandt has continued to inspire countless viewers down to our present century. The penetrating psychological portrayals of his characters are as moving today as they must have been in his own time. [Slide 10] Whether it is his depiction of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah quietly lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem or [Slide 11] Peter's embarrassed denial and Christ's sorrow at the time of the arrest, Rembrandt creates convincing characters who convey emotions universal to all humankind.

[Slide 12] Perhaps one of Rembrandt's most poignant paintings is his portrayal of the *Return of the Prodigal Son*. Elevated and separated from the rest of the figures, the illuminated pair of father and son tenderly embrace. The envious brother and other family members look on but are not a part of the father and son's intimate reunion. One deeply feels the emotions of humble repentance and loving forgiveness in the placement of the prodigal's weary head in the surrounding and protective arms of his father.

It may, perhaps, seem incongruous for us to now jump ahead to the modern era, but I would like to take a look at one final example, where again I believe our own spiritual experiences help us better comprehend the motivations of the artist.

[Slide 13] This work is entitled *White on White* and is by the twentieth-century Russian artist Kasimir Malevich. BYU students often find a connection with this painting that I think frequently eludes students who cannot relate to an artist's spiritual intent. In my modern art class, we begin our discussion of this work with the question "How would you represent the concepts of *eternal* and *celestial* in a manner that transcends anything one would associate with earthly concerns?" I usually get a number of varied and interesting responses as students try to convert their religious sensibilities into visual form. I would challenge all of you to similarly contemplate this question as we view Malevich's solution to the problem. He chose a modern abstract form for his conceptualization because he wanted it to be a religious image for modern times. Although his own background was one of religious orthodoxy, he did not want to use visual symbols from the past. Instead, he wanted to create a truly transcendent, spiritual image that would not relate in any way to nature as it is known on this earth. Thus, he painted a pure white square in pure white space to represent this cosmological nexus. The square is only differentiated by its slightly altered tone of white and the direction of the brushstroke. The square is set at a slight angle to convey the idea of eternal movement through this unending space. The painting, therefore, functions like religious art of the past. It inspires meditation on a realm beyond this world that one can only intuit and cannot know by scientific means.

I thought I would conclude my art history discussion by turning to some of my own research and by treating subjects of a more secular nature.

[Slide 14] For some time now, I have been intrigued by the many images of women in the household that were produced by artists in the Dutch Republic of the seventeenth century. During this month when we celebrate the domestic and mothering roles of women,

it seemed appropriate to take a closer look at these works—how they were viewed then and what they say to us today. Almost all modern scholarship regarding these images sadly disparages them as having primarily had the intent of supporting a patriarchal regime that oppressed women and limited them to roles as servants of their husbands within the domestic realm. We in the Church today are familiar with these criticisms. Such readings, however, while reflecting modern views of women's domestic roles, have little to do with what they meant in the seventeenth century.

My religious convictions have always instilled in me very positive associations with women's domestic roles, so images of women in the household do not seem to me to primarily reflect these negative views. The love I have for my mother and all her sacrifices in my behalf lead me to hold her role as mother in the highest regard. Because of my own understanding of this role, I feel that to see women as mere slaves in a domineering patriarchal order is to fundamentally misunderstand the lives of women, both now and in the past. Moreover, the images themselves show a great interest in the world of women and present women as strong and competent managers of the household domain. Having these feelings about domestic images leads me to reject prominent scholarly opinion and seek out what the likely intent of these works was in the seventeenth century.

It is first of all important to realize how popular the subject of women in the home was to this culture. Never before in the history of Western art had so much attention been given to the visual depiction of ordinary women associated with their contemporary domestic surroundings. Furthermore, one of the most popular pieces of literature in this society was Jakob Cats' book entitled *Houwelyck* (or *Marriage*), and it was totally dedicated to the lives of women. In the newly formed Protestant Dutch Republic, women

enjoyed under the law many privileges and freedoms that astounded foreigners. Girls were educated from a young age, and women frequently helped to run their husbands' businesses. In the domestic realm, great import was given to mothers as caretakers and rulers of the household. Contemporary moralists encouraged women to supervise the children and servants, and also to control domestic expenses. Husbands were instructed to leave the household to the management of their wives; in fact, discussions of the household describe it as the dominion of women. These are all powerful indicators that women were not oppressed in this society but were accorded respect and value, and their work and the domains in which they primarily moved were likewise valued.

Turning now to the images, I would like to introduce you to some of the earliest treatments of domestic work in a series of five prints that were created by the female artist Geertruydt Roghman. At first glance, the originality and power of these portrayals may not be obvious. Her own experiences as a woman, however, clearly informed her strikingly unique portrayals of various female tasks, such as [Slide 15] *Women Sewing*, [Slide 16] *The Pancake Baker*, [Slide 17] *Woman Spinning*, and [Slide 18] *Woman Scouring Metalware*. These figures do not evoke the type of weakness and meek obedience theorized in patriarchalizing analyses of domestic subjects. Rather, these isolated and monumental figures viewed from surprisingly unposed perspectives have strength and integrity. The prints give visibility to, and thereby importance to, the domestic work being performed. One can certainly imagine that the effect for the female viewer was one of familiarity with the task, thereby giving attention and assigning significance to the female viewer's work as well. These prints then influenced the works of many of Roghman's male contemporaries until domestic imagery became one of the most popular

subjects in Dutch art during the 1650s and continuing to the 1670s. This plethora of domestic imagery must have contributed significantly to a view of women's roles as important to the success of the society at large. Certainly a credible analysis of these images cannot ignore the visibility and importance such artworks gave to women's domestic roles. I think the significance such works assigned to the depicted women and the strength that they still inspire is best summed up in May Sarton's twentieth-century poem "Dutch Interior." Although it was primarily inspired by the paintings of Pieter de Hooch, I would like to show you a montage of these works by various artists—including Vermeer, Metsu, Leyster, Terborch, and Netscher, as well as de Hooch—as I read the poem. [Slides 19–27]

*I recognize the quiet and the charm,
This safe enclosed room where a woman sews
And life is tempered, orderly, and calm.*

*Through the Dutch door, half-open, sunlight
streams
And throws a pale square down on the red tiles.
The cosy black dog suns himself and dreams.*

*Even the bed is sheltered, it encloses,
A cupboard to keep people safe from harm,
Where copper glows with the warm flush of roses.*

*The atmosphere is all domestic, human,
Chaos subdued by the sheer power of need.
This is a room where I have lived as woman,*

*Lived too what the Dutch painter does not tell—
The wild skies overhead, dissolving, breaking,
And how that broken light is never still,*

*And how the roar of waves is always near,
What bitter tumult, treacherous and cold,
Attacks the solemn charm year after year!*

It must be felt as peace won and maintained

*Against those terrible antagonists—
How many from this quiet room have drowned?*

*How many left to go, drunk on the wind,
And take their ships into heartbreaking seas;
How many whom no woman's peace could bind?*

*Bent to her sewing, she looks drenched in calm.
Raw grief is disciplined to the fine thread.
But in her heart this woman is the storm;*

*Alive, deep in herself, holds wind and rain,
Remaking chaos into an intimate order
Where sometimes light flows through a window-
pane.*

[May Sarton, "Dutch Interior: Pieter de Hooch (1629–1682)"]

In conclusion, I end by returning to my original question: "How do my religious beliefs inspire my scholarship?" They are so intertwined that I can scarcely separate them. So much of what I am as a scholar is built upon my faith in an eternal plan. It is this faith and my many opportunities of applying it to art history at this university that give me the strength to critically evaluate the opinions of

others in my field. When those opinions do not seem valid or constructive, it is frequently the gospel and the understanding it provides that motivates me to search more deeply and inspires me with the logic to thwart such arguments. I am grateful for the many experiences Heavenly Father has given me to develop a questioning, searching mind. Clad in the protection of a searching mind informed by the gospel of Jesus Christ, our journey will be productive, even though challenging. In the words of the hymn we sang earlier:

*Sweet is the peace the gospel brings
To seeking minds and true.*

*With light refulgent on its wings
It clears the human view.*

["Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings,"
Hymns, 1985, no. 14]

I hope that all of us will save ourselves from blindly following the Korihors of this world by thoughtfully evaluating the ideas presented to us, both here at the university and throughout our lifetime journeys. And I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.