


PRAYER AT 30 FEET DOWN





I could barely believe it. I was 30 feet under water with an air tank on my back, a regulator in my mouth, a mask and flippers on, and a sudden fear of fainting.

I had been taking practice dives with my scuba diving class for the past four weeks, and everything had gone without a hitch. Of course, those dives had been in a shallow, clear pool.

As I followed my scuba instructor down into our first real dive site—a deep, water-filled crater—I quickly found that the water was much murkier than I had imagined. In a matter of seconds I couldn't see past my feet. After a minute or two of slowly sinking, I saw a structure of ropes and floating PVC pipes loom out of the dark water, marking the depth at 30 feet.

Our instructor motioned for us to hold on to the pipes and wait while he went around the group, testing our ability to read our water depth and air supply.

I clung to the pipe and stared at my white knuckles. They looked blue-gray in the cold, underwater light. The pressure was pushing uncomfortably on my ears, and all I could hear was the strange, empty whooshing of water around me. I had never felt more trapped. I couldn't speak, I couldn't hear, I could barely see. And what was worse, as I stared at my hands, I realized that they were tingling. So were my cheeks. It was that strange sensation I always got from breathing too shallowly. I thought I must be hyperventilating.

A panicked question flitted through my mind: what would happen if I fainted? Frightened, I looked to the side at my

classmates. But I had no way to tell them what was happening. I looked up, but the surface was just a dim glimmer of light. I didn't have the courage to try swimming to it. Fear kept me clinging to the pipe. Then, instinctively, I began to pray.

I pled in my heart that I would calm down, that the tingling would subside and I would be able to safely complete the dive. As I finished, it struck me that my Heavenly Father really can hear me, no matter where I am. There at 30 feet under water I could do no more than think the prayer in my mind and feel it in my heart, but that was enough. He heard me and answered.

My body relaxed, and the feelings and fear of fainting slowly dissolved. I completed the dive and swam with my class to the surface.

I often reflect on how this experience taught me that we can always pray, no matter where we are. And this doesn't mean just physical locations. We can reach out to Heavenly Father even from the most remote spiritual situations. Alma the Younger had been rebellious in his youth, and when he was visited by an angel and warned of his destruction, he became submerged in the remembrance of his own sins. His spirit had sunk far deeper than the deepest underwater crater or canyon, yet the Lord listened when Alma cried out to Him in despair, and he was delivered (see Alma 36:17–19).

Whether we are caught in physical distress or wrapped in spiritual darkness, if we are faithful and repentant, Heavenly Father will still hear us. We are never too far away for Him to reach. If we turn to our Father, our sincere prayers will be heard. **NE**

WE CAN ALWAYS PRAY

"It matters not our circumstance, be we humble or arrogant, poor or rich, free or enslaved, learned or ignorant, loved or forsaken, we can address Him. We need no appointment. Our solicitation can be brief or can occupy all the time needed. It can be an extended expression of love and gratitude or an urgent plea for help. He has created numberless cosmos and populated them with worlds, yet you and I can talk with Him personally, and He will ever answer."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," *Ensign*, May 2007, 8.