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Finding The Face Of An Angel

Some men are blessed with the gift to see things that ordinary people cannot see. Great artists and musicians often wrestle with this burden. Torlief Knaphus belongs among those who have known the struggle of dealing with a gift, greater than the mere shaping of clay between human hands.

The sculptor left a legacy of work that shows a wide range of vision and skill, particularly some of the sculptures that make their place among the art telling the story of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He saw the latter-day work with an eye that keenly demonstrated faith, sacrifice, and vision.

His oxen in the baptistry of the Alberta Temple became the prototype for other temples at one point and the diversity of his work is well demonstrated by the 100-plus figures one can find atop the Mesa Temple.

But one of the most compelling experiences of his life involved a time when he could not find someone to match what he needed to see.

Knaphus' is an exemplary story of faith and sacrifice and of one who gave his all to belong to the Kingdom of God.

Born in Norway, he joined the church early in life because he found answers where others would not venture to see or feel beyond their experience and prejudice. He joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints against the advice of his family and friends. He had found truth, however, and paid a heavy price for it.