



Easter Message:

Happy Easter to you all! It's truly a time of celebration.

I hope your time leading up to Easter this year has been a joyous journey. Also, I pray that your Easter Season will continue throughout all of 2024.

A quick reminder of why Easter is celebrated:

Easter Sunday is a Christian holiday that celebrates the belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ (God incarnate). In the New Testament of the Bible, the event is said to have occurred three days after Jesus was crucified by the Romans and died in roughly 30 A.D. The Easter holiday preparation period (Lent) lasts 40 days starting with Ash Wednesday and concluding with the "Passion of Christ" (Holy Week). Lent is a time of fasting, prayer and sacrifice which ends with Holy Week, that includes Holy Thursday (the celebration of Jesus' Last Supper with his 12 Apostles), Good Friday (on which Jesus' crucifixion is observed) and Easter Sunday (the day of Jesus' resurrection from the dead).

The resurrection of Jesus is essentially the foundation upon which Christian religions are built. Hence, Easter is a very significant date on the Christian calendar.

If you allow me to digress, here is a little insight into my journey. You may or may not be like me, but I usually need some sort of reason to evaluate my physical, mental, and spiritual health. A lot of people use the New Year to address one, two, or all of these issues. Sometimes it takes a crisis in our lives to direct our attention in these areas.

This year, I turned 60, so that was the catalyst for me to turn my focus to these three items. It just happened that "that age event" for me was close to the start of the season of Lent this year. Great timing.

Physical

Over the years, I have taken my physical health for granted. I blamed my increase in weight each year on living in Louisiana. The food and drink here has not been kind to my waistline, if you know what I mean. Exercise, restraint, and proactive maintenance are the directives I hear when in contemplation on this subject. Patience and persistence, too.

Mental

To me, this health issue is too many times overlooked. Busyness and preoccupation with daily tasks are ways that I have addressed my mental health in the past. In hindsight, idleness, social media binging, and television binging brings clutter and chaos to my thoughts. Quiet time is the directive I hear when contemplating on this subject.

Spiritual

This health aspect to me is the most important and the most individually different for each of us. All our spiritual journeys are no doubt different depending on our life experiences. This year in my life, a message of humility has been my focus. I'd like to share some of my recently read reflections:

St. Augustine said that all of us, made from nothing, tend toward nothing. We can see this in our frailty and sin and mortality.

St. Paul said, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interest but each of you to the interest of the other."

Thomas Aquinas said "humilitas veritas", meaning humility is truth. It is living out the deepest truth of things: God is God, and we are not.

The ego becomes a massive monkey on our backs, and it has to be fed and pampered constantly. What a liberation it is to let go of the ego! Do you see why humility is not a degradation, but an elevation?

To believe in God is to know these truths. To live them out is to live in the attitude of humility.

For me, the benefits of evaluating my health are being able to spend more quality time with the ones I love and bringing a positive influence to those I come in contact with each and every day.

I know that each of us are different. So, your way and time to focus on these health issues will no doubt be unlike mine. For me, none of these are easy, but it's a worthwhile practice that brings peace.

In summary, the Easter season is a great time to slow down and remember that life is precious, relationships are blessings (even when we don't think so), and that Easter Sunday brings us all new joyous life meant to be shared.

Blessings to you all and Happy Easter.

Mark Nixon