



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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GIVING: THE PERFECT ACT
THE TOWN OF WEST NEW YORK CELEBRATES EASTER

“[Jesus], who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.”

– Mahatma Gandhi

The Town of West New York is unique in that it is home to a wonderfully diverse group of people from various cultures, countries, and religions. While not all of our residents may be practicing Catholics or Christians, we can all appreciate the philosophy behind one of the holiest of religious holidays: Easter.

Whether you recognize Jesus as the son of God, a man who made history, or the main character of a famous Biblical parable, his life is an inspiring example of one of the most important and necessary human acts: the act of giving.

I’m not talking about giving as routine as a parent might give a child an Easter basket on Sunday morning because they expect it, or as a couple might feed their family as part of a yearly tradition of celebration – I’m talking about the rarer sort of giving when it is done completely selflessly, and at one’s own expense. This sort of giving crosses into the higher plane of charity, which, as Mahatma Gandhi (who was no stranger to sacrifice himself) called the “perfect act.”

And this sort of perfection, perhaps ironically, springs from the fact that human nature is inherently flawed. People are not always as kind as they should be. We work hard for what we earn, and economic times are tough. It is easy to fall into a routine, and to be so intent on making ends meet, that we forget to look around and see where, perhaps, a greater need than ours might lie.

This is the beauty of Easter. Jesus struggled for what he believed in, for what was right and true, and he suffered for it because those around him were so used to following the status quo and were so blinded by power and greed that they had to kill the spirit that reminded them of their higher human nature.

In this way, Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice; and though he was the son of God, it was the sort of sacrifice only a human being could make: his own life.

This is not to say that the only true act of charity must be this intense or this final. Even the smallest gesture of kindness toward one’s fellow man while we all struggle to make our way can mean the world to the person who receives it.

This is the true spirit of Easter. We celebrate the life, or the legend, of a man who died for humanity’s imperfections and sins, and who rose again. May we follow this example, whatever our religion, and take the time to look outside ourselves and offer to each other whatever small, perfect act we can.

God bless,

Mayor Felix E. Roque, M.D.

Lead by Example