

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students,

Considering all the sadness in the world, the anxiety felt by families while sheltering in place, and the sickness many individuals are experiencing, I looked out at the blue sky this morning, heard birds singing and felt a strange sense of contentment. And while I am not going to be coloring Easter Eggs and seeing my wonderful family, I am healthy, have a wonderful job, and I have all of you who carry on our mission of teaching great students, the next generation of health care professionals. I feel blessed.

Today the COVID-19 Response Team met and we carried on our discussion of teaching students and planning for laboratory experiences once groups can safely return to campus. I thank the Response Team for their dedicated service on behalf of our students.

This past week our many Jewish colleagues began Passover, our Hindu colleagues celebrated Hanuman Jayanti, the Buddhists celebrated Buddha's Birthday both on April 8, 2020 and our Muslim community begins Ramadan on April 24, 2020. This weekend is Easter Sunday for our Christian faculty, staff and students.

Easter Sunday has always been a special time to me. As a child I remember the excitement of always getting a new dress and Easter bonnet, while my brothers always got new suits and shoes. Early Easter Sunday my father would wake us singing his rendition of Handel's Messiah as he insisted we get to the first sunrise service. Our reward was breakfast after church with unlimited candy from our Easter baskets. I really don't remember much grumbling but I am sure he heard some as he loaded all of us into the family station wagon.

All of us think of holidays as a time to spend with family and friends. While that may not happen this year, we need to cherish past memories, count the many blessings we have, and remember the sun rises each day. From our students doing video chats with family back home, to those attending a church service on the computer, we will all remember this as a year of great challenge and change.

This weekend I wish you all much happiness and joy. And as my father would remind me, "Find peace in your own heart first."

Be well.

Dr. G.