

**THIS IS ONEIDA
A WONDERFUL EASTER SUNDAY**

I have often wondered why we do so much more in terms of the celebration of Christmas than we do for Easter. The birth of Jesus meant and still means so much. The cross and empty tomb also mean so very much.

I had a great day on Easter Sunday. I was somewhat lazy and did not make it out of bed for a sunrise service. Angie was sick that day, and I didn't have a choir trip or speaking engagement, so I decided the day would be about the Lord and my three children. That morning my two youngest children were singing at a local church that I had pastored from 1998-2001. It was a great service, and time to reconnect with old friends. After church and the egg hunt, we returned to our cafeteria for lunch. After arriving back home, the kids and I played cornhole and basketball. We also made some homemade ice cream.

After an afternoon of fun, we went to a local church for their passion play. A childhood friend of mine had invited me to the event last year, but I didn't make it. He called that Sunday afternoon to remind me of the play. My friend played Jesus in the play. Although from a great Christian family, my friend battled drug addiction after high school. As I sat and watched my friend offer his talent as worship to God, I couldn't help but be overjoyed and blessed. I was so proud of him.

My friend's journey made me think of the journey many of our students and their families are on. Although there were many sad days, I know my friend's parents did not give up on him. They continued to pray for him and committed his life to the Lord. In an administration meeting the morning after the play, I encouraged our school leaders to never give up on our students. There are times we want to give up on the people we love, but we cannot and should not give up on what the Lord can do.

We face challenges every day with our students, and sometimes we do ask students to leave our campus. We do, however, almost always give a student another chance to return to our campus at a later date. Sometimes students return and make the turnaround we all hope for, but not always. Even when we have to exercise tough love, we still continue to love our students. Young people face so many challenges today. Twenty years ago, a seventh-grader's toughest challenges were homework and acne. Today they are confronted with decisions on drug use and sex.

Pray for our young people and pray for us as we try to share that Easter Sunday love with them on a daily basis.



**Larry A. Gritton, Jr.
OBI President**

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