



January 29, 2010

Dear Friends:

SAINTS ALIVE!

Because of a slight video delay, moments before the TV screen actually showed Garrett Hartley's monster 40 yard kick split the uprights, we already knew the outcome! Jim Henderson was screaming through our radio, "It's good, it's good, it's good!"



At the end, our stomachs and emotions could not have been more discombobulated had we actually spent the time riding Space Mountain, The Tower of Terror and Bungee jumping back to back. But after 43 years, punctuated by a gut wrenching, four hour afternoon of praying and pacing, it was good! The Saints and Super Bowl could now be used in the same sentence.

Earlier, by 4:45, the three guys had found their favorite couch spots while screaming "Are you ready for some football?" Linda and her pal Nancy decided to watch the game upstairs and we'd periodically catch up at Quarter changes, Halftime and commercial breaks. Somebody had to get our refills.

We were joyful, so ready for a nice day, we had our snacks and were settled in but as time went by and the pressure began to build, we got more frazzled, louder and more nuts. As the heat escalated, Linda was worried and texted another friend, Francine, normally a kind, soft spoken lady who morphs into a verklempt Super Fan when she slips on her Drew Brees jersey; she just wanted to know if the EMS guys had come by yet with the electric paddles.

For most of the fourth quarter and throughout the overtime, Geoffrey just stood by the TV while Tyler walked the floor from halftime on. As for me, I just couldn't get comfortable anywhere. Then, in a blissful blink, it was over as soon as Jim Henderson screamed the news.

As little pink pigs flew by and ice skaters glided across the Lake of Fire, the house erupted with joy! While Henderson and Hokie were still screaming, us guys jumped, yelled, fisted the air and danced as the girls flew down the stairs to join the Group Hug. We were all laughing and crying. The drought was over!



Early Sunday Morning, I had walked out to find four Saints flags on my car. Tyler was already seat belted and waiting. I said, "Hey man, I don't want to drive to church like this!" He said, "We have to. Today is the day." Although he wasn't alive during the 1-15 years, Tyler is the biggest sports nut in the house and he loves his Saints. He won the debate, and we drove to church, flags flying, looking like "The Clampetts Go to the Football Game".

Way back in May, he had announced to his Mom, "This year, the Saints are going to the Super Bowl!" Back then she just smiled and, knowing the 43 year history and not wanting to discourage the boy, she said, "Tyler that would really be great." His faith was real and now we know, well founded.

Sunday Night, while he was running around in high celebration, texting his "peps", waving the Saints flags and honking our car horns, I thought about asking Linda, "Since he was so right about this prediction, do you think I should take him to Harrah's?" Then I quickly remembered who I was and what I did and decided not to bring it up. Guess the victory euphoria was momentarily mentally debilitating. After my temporary "Get thee behind me Satan moment", I can now solidly affirm, I'm OK.

Interspersed with a periodic, "Can you believe it?" we laughed and watched all the local channels until we were blind tired and by 9:15 the next morning, all four of us had our Championship Shirts and Caps. Later that day, Tyler taped a full Saints flag in the front window of the house. He's ready. We're ready. After all, Drew Brees' sermon had directed us to FINISH STRONG!

A lot has been said and written about the beleaguered, long suffering, Saints fans, as well the deserved good news for a region that has known so much heartache; I'm prone to agree and since Sunday Night, talk radio has been laugh out loud funny and crime has almost been nonexistent because of the excitement.

Admittedly, this area is quite different and unique; we even talk our own language. We need to be more cognizant of this and offer help when we can.

A few days ago, my friend Bill texted me, "What is this WHO DAT stuff?"

Although my friend is a bright, successful, Godly man, he has two problems; he is a Northerner and he is an attorney. He doesn't know about Drago's or Bozo's. He thinks seafood comes from The Red Lobster and he does talk different.

I called my Michigan friend and tenderly gave an interpretation to the tongues message, "WHO DAT". I said, "Bill, in pristine Northern language, it means, who out there could possibly even dare to question that there could perhaps be another athletic team that could even hope to beat our football team on the field of battle?" In other words, WHO DAT!

I hope I got through to him. Maybe a Fleur-De-Lis King Cake or a tape of Spud's Radio Show may help explain it better.

Yeah, I know it's just a game but the Saints are headed to Miami. We've waited a long time for this and it looks like it's gonna be a fun ride.

Michael

PS: I almost forgot, these writings are supposed to have some sort of religious/faith application. After the journey of all these years, my heart is encouraged by the Lord's Deuteronomy 29 words to Moses, "For 40 years (read, and 40 yard field goal, too), I have lead you in the wilderness, your clothes and your shoes have not worn out...I AM the Lord your God". If I remember correctly, that trip ended up in a special Land that was flowing with milk and honey. Oranges, anyone?