

# Lent: a time to reflect on how we live our lives



Archbishop  
Gregory M.  
**AYMOND**

**S**o much has been happening in New Orleans these last few days with the Saints finally getting to the Super Bowl and Mardi Gras and Lent fast approaching. How are you approaching your first Mardi Gras in awhile?

I want to wish everyone a happy Mardi Gras season. In my nine years away from New Orleans, it was always amazing how the rest of the world went on with its business on Mardi Gras day as if nothing else was happening. I had to

work, and no one would have understood if I had asked to "take off" for Mardi Gras. I find that very humorous. It's nice to be back in a city that honors Mardi Gras and celebrates carnival. That helps us focus in a more deliberate way on the season of Lent.

**How do you feel about the incredible Saints' victory in the Super Bowl?**

I'm very proud of the Saints, as well as everyone in the New Orleans area, and we extend our heartfelt congratulations to them. We'll continue to say "Bless you, boys!" We've come a long way, and our team has a very bright future. We've responded to their success with great rejoicing and we congratulate them. I was privileged and blessed to be there in Miami.

**What do you like best about Mardi Gras?**

In its best form, Mardi Gras is really a family celebra-

**On the Web:**  
[www.arch-no.org](http://www.arch-no.org)

tion. Having lived away from home, I've often seen on the TV news a different picture of Mardi Gras. The news tends to focus not on the parades but on some of the more questionable scenes and activities that take place in the French Quarter. Those of us from New Orleans know that Mardi Gras is a time to have fun and to celebrate with family and friends.

**Now our focus turns to Lent. How should Catholics prepare?**

The church invites us during these 40 days to examine our lives in a very honest way. This time allows us to truthfully pinpoint or acknowledge the many ways in which we are living in union with God and to see how much God loves us. Lent also calls us

to reflect on the dark side, the ways in which we have not been responsive to God's love. Lent calls us to a very basic honesty with ourselves. We are called to stand before God and admit our weakness so that we can have a change of heart.

**What about your preparation for Lent?**

For me, Lent is a time in which I am called more deeply into prayer. It's also a time when we are asked to sacrifice and do penance, to give up something or do something extra. Whatever we choose to do, that particular action should be connected to our areas of weakness. As a kid, I was taught to give up candy, and at the end of Lent you could either pat yourself on the back for not eating candy, or sometimes fell a little short. I don't know that as a kid I really connected to the area of my life that needed change.

Fasting is important. As we discipline the body and make the body stronger, we become more open to God and discipline the spirit. The most important part of Lent is the need for conversion and change. I don't think we should try to change two, three, four or five things. I think we should particularly limit the conversion to one thing and then formulate a penance and prayer that will help us focus on that and become attentive. I do ask people to observe the fasting guidelines for Lent, which are printed in this issue of the Clarion Herald (see page 13). I remember the days when we had to fast every day. In my opinion, the church is not asking a lot of us, especially for those of us who live in Louisiana, where abstaining from meat is no big deal.

Questions for Archbishop Aymond can be sent to [clarionherald@clarionherald.org](mailto:clarionherald@clarionherald.org).

## Amen to that: Saints etched in Super Bowl history



Peter  
**FINNEY JR**  
CLARION HERALD

**M**IAMI – The lifelong black-and-gold vision hit me, finally, on the Tuesday morning before Super Bowl XLIV media day at Sun Life Stadium.

As a cradle Who Dat, born, reared and eventually resettled in New Orleans, I scarcely could believe the work of folk art emerging from the green grass. There, in the north end zone, an NFL paint crew using spray guns drew the improbable vision for me in black capital letters, 20 feet tall: "SAINTS."

After finishing the black letters, the artists then worked on filling in the negative space with gold paint. For me, the spray paint could have been 24-karat gold. The Technicolor picture – 10 by 53 1/3 yards – had a surreal, Dorothy-from-Kansas quality. The yellow brick road on the way to Oz never looked any better – especially in light of the Saints' mesmerizing and emotionally uplifting 31-17 victory over the Colts in Super Bowl XLIV on Sunday. Anyone from New Orleans can tell

you the Super Bowl was never exclusively about football. Reflecting on those days in 2005 when a great American city went wet and dark, I can bring only two words to mind: horrors and heroes.

Katrina exposed to America's eyes the searing poverty and human need that existed but had remained hidden in New Orleans for decades. Truth be told, every major American city has those disparities, but New Orleans has the location and the topography that allowed Katrina to blow open the lock to Pandora's box.

Among the best two hours I spent immediately after the storm came at a seminar presented by experts on traumatic stress. They predicted, with uncanny accuracy, the roller coaster of emotions that would hit everyone over the next few days, months and years.

"You will lose track of time, your decision-making will be jumbled, you will have difficulty remembering things," one psychologist said. "You are not going crazy. This is a normal coping mechanism. You could have these up-and-down feelings for two to five years or longer."

Adversity affects everyone differently. The suicide rate in New Orleans skyrocketed in the months immediately after Katrina and has remained far

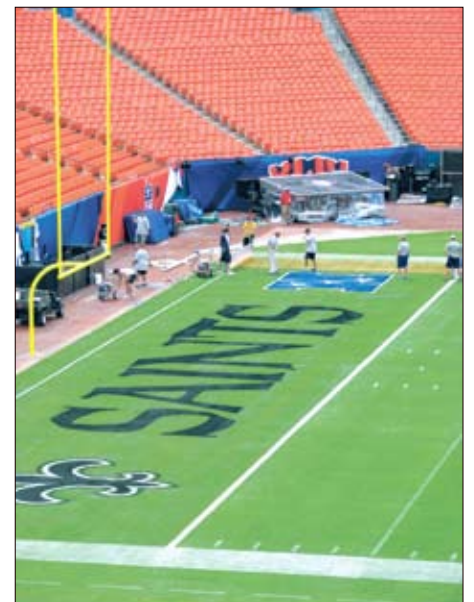


Photo by Peter Finney Jr. | CLARION HERALD

**The moment the dream hit home: A crew at Super Bowl XLIV spray painted the "SAINTS" logo in the end zone of Sun Life Stadium in Miami.**

above the national average since then. What Katrina couldn't take instantly, she took by simply biding her time.

One of our doctors, his practice under water, committed suicide. Another person lost his house and nearly lost his life when he got into a confrontation with police. He wanted out of his

See **FINNEY** page 8 ►

**CLARION HERALD**  
Official Newspaper of the Archdiocese of New Orleans

The Clarion Herald (USPS 115-520), published every Saturday (September-May) and published every other Saturday (June-August) by the Clarion Herald Publishing Company, is the official publication of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

**ARCHBISHOP GREGORY M. AYMOND**  
Publisher and President

**MSGR. CROSBY W. KERN**  
Moderator

**PETER P. FINNEY JR.**  
Executive Editor and General Manager  
OFFICE  
1000 Howard Ave. • Suite 400  
New Orleans, LA 70113  
MAIL  
P.O. Box 53247 • New Orleans, LA 70153  
504-596-3035 • FAX: 504-596-3020

General E-Mail:  
[clarionherald@clarionherald.org](mailto:clarionherald@clarionherald.org)  
[www.clarionherald.org](http://www.clarionherald.org)

NEWSROOM	ART DEPARTMENT
<b>CHRISTINE BORDELON</b> 596-3030 Associate Editor	<b>CHERYL DEJOIE-LACABE</b> 596-3025 Senior Art Director
<b>BETH DONZE</b> 596-3026 Kids' Clarion Editor	<b>LLOYD ROBICHAUX</b> 596-3024 Art Director / Web Master
<b>FLORENCE L. HERMAN</b> 596-3032 Design/Managing Editor	<b>FRANK J. METHE</b> 596-3027
<b>RON BROCATO</b> 596-3033 Sports Editor	<b>C. MICHAEL COMAR</b> 596-3041 Business Manager
<b>ADVERTISING</b>	<b>PHOTOGRAPHY</b>
<b>M J CAHILL</b> 596-3034 Advertising/Marketing Director	<b>JONELLE L. FOLTZ</b> 596-3035 Executive Assistant
<b>RON KOGOS</b> 596-3040 Account Executive	<b>VERNELL SPEYER</b> 524-4777 Circulation Manager

For Advertising call **524-1618**; FAX: **596-3039**  
or E-Mail: [adsales@clarionherald.org](mailto:adsales@clarionherald.org)

**How to Subscribe**  
To order the Clarion Herald,  
call (504) 524-4777

Postmaster send address changes to  
Clarion Herald, P.O. Box 53247  
New Orleans, LA 70153

Subscription rates: \$20 per year inside the Archdiocese of New Orleans; \$25 per year outside the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Remittances should be made payable to Clarion Herald Publishing Company. Periodicals Postage Paid at New Orleans.