



## **From Heart Ach to Hope: It's No Small Thing**



It is a cool evening in New Orleans. It is Monday September 25, 2006. It is about one year and one month after Katrina ripped us apart as a city and called into question our national will to rebuild a world class city. For all of the questions concerning this will to rebuild, for all of the confusion, agenda building, political posturing, ineptitude, the question still remains for us who live here; is there a national will to rebuild New Orleans?

On this cool evening, the kind of evening that New Orleanians live for, crowds pressed to re-enter the Super Dome. It became a media event, but more importantly, it became and is a regional event for the people. Just as the Episcopal Church is a church of signs and symbols, so too was the opening game of the New Orleans Saints. It may seem trivial, it may seem that New Orleans is doing it again, ignoring the realities and not taking care of business. Yet, we wake up every day to take care of business. Every moment is filled with both possibility and frustration. But for four hours a city was galvanized with hopeful expectation. This expectation is/was more than a thought, it is/was a living experience filled imaginatively with hope, promise, and pride. This event is/was no less than Easter for New Orleans.



For many Christians, it seems, that Easter is a day in a month that comes at the end of Lent. It is when we go from dark colors to spring colors. It is when we eat good food and kids do an Easter egg hunt. It is but a day. One would hope, and I believe that our New Orleans Easter, is for a season, granted, an NFL season but a season none the less. Just as devoted Christians, we hope that all would revel in the mystery of resurrection each Sunday, many in this

city will long remember this cool crisp New Orleans evening as a night of hope. It is/was a night of healing in many ways. In some way, just as the resurrected Christ offered integrity and dignity to his followers, who had lost hope, so to a sport, its fans, and a civic feeling now offer hope to a city that is in short supply of hope.

How this city has responded to the opening of the Super Dome and a win by it's home team is not trivial. This response is hope giving. Many went back home to FEMA trailers or homes in unfamiliar neighborhoods. They went home felling like the city is coming back in the absence of real national support. As we say, "Howzabout dem boys!" Occasionally a game is more than a game.