

## **Traveling Companion: May the Wind be at your back**

### **Fr. Michael Tracey**

During the past sixteen years, I have written hundreds of articles for *Gulf Pine Catholic*. Through these articles, I have met countless persons. They have emailed me, snail mailed me, telephoned me, stopped me on the street. The majority indicated how much they enjoyed such articles. Some saved them. Others mailed them to family who live elsewhere. Some told me that the first thing they search for in *Gulf Pine Catholic* is my article. Others asked, "Are you the Fr. Tracey who writes in *Gulf Pine Catholic*?" and some asked when I was going to publish a collection of such articles.

In recent years, with the advent of email, I have received comments, questions and pleas from people around the diocese. In recent weeks, being profiled at Wal-Mart drew a multiple and varied reaction. I heard from many Wal-Mart employees critical of my comments. Others have shared how they were also profiled. Some indicated that I should not have mentioned names. Others have informed me that, because of my experience, Wal-Mart staff meetings were held to sensitize people. Later, I read an article in *Fast Company* magazine titled, "The Wal-Mart You don't Know - why low prices have a high cost." I haven't been back to the store since.

Later, I wrote an article "Oh to be perfect." Margie wrote, "Father Tracey. For years I have been an ardent reader of your column *Traveling Companion* and have enjoyed every article you have written. Your articles have so much common sense and meaning to them. I am in dire need of a renewed spirituality in my life and even though you are not quoting scripture, which does nothing for me, I feel renewed and uplifted after reading your column.

I am a practicing Catholic and will not abandon my religion, but at this point in my life I am not fulfilled with my spiritual life.

Thank you for letting me vent and because of your article entitled "Oh, to be perfect!" will help me understand our parish priest. I know he is trying to do what he thinks is best for his parishioners but I am having a hard time dealing with him. I will not go into anymore details but God knows my feelings.

Again, thank you for your articles and I will remember when I attend Mass this weekend that he is not perfect and neither am I. May God continue to bless you."

In the following issue, I wrote an article asking, "Are you suffering from TMS?" John emailed me and said that he would hire a Mayflower moving van to collect all the stuff that people wanted to get ride of.

Finally, I accept readers challenge to select some of my columns and publish them in a book. The book, titled, "May the Wind be at your Back - Reflections from the Shade" has just been published.

*May the Wind be at your Back* is a collection of reflections that allow the reader to enter into the inner sanctum of real people's lives as they search, question, hope, struggle, and celebrate their own humanity.

If you need food for thought; a short reflection; a nightcap that is not addictive; a shot in the arm that doesn't hurt; a cure for insomnia; a marriage of your head and heart, a lucid moment; a scrambler of your thought process; a heart stress buster; a soul sojourn, then this book will tickle your funny bone and even allow you to shed a tear or two. It will help you climb a mountain of doubt and embrace a plethora of new insights. It will cure your myopic view of life with laser precision and replace it with a panoramic view of life.

Presently, the book is available locally at *Heaven Gift Store* in Bay St. Louis (228 4670151 In the comings and goings of your life, *May the Wind be at your Back*.