

Let's face it!

"Are you nuts riding your bike at 3 a.m.?" It's a question that I am asked frequently. Maybe, I am a bit nuts in doing it but even nutty people have their own reasons for doing certain things and such reasons seem logical and practical to them. So, let's set the record straight.

Why do I ride my bike at 3 a.m.? Yes, it seems crazy except to me. I find such a time a wonderful time to enjoy some quiet peppered with an opportunity to get some much needed exercise. One of the wonderful things about a 3 a.m. ride is distraction free where I can reflect, pray and write many of my Gulf Pine articles in my head before I commit them to paper later on. I even realize Jesus went off to a quiet place early in the morning to pray.

I enjoy controlling my morning up until our 7 a.m. Mass. First, there is the hour long, ten mile bike ride, followed by my morning ablutions and breakfast. That is followed by my prayer time for Office of Readings and Morning Prayer and then a few minutes to catch the morning news headlines. Then, it is off to check and respond to the flurry of emails waiting for me – another opportunity to minister to people. Later in the day, 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. become more sacred moments when I retire to the break room for a cup of tea and some down time. I use all the above opportunities to retreat and recharge my batteries.

Sometimes, I try to escape incognito. Often my cover is blown when someone recognizes me through Gulf Pine Catholic and say things like, "I enjoy your columns. It's the first thing I turn to in the paper." Often, I make small talk with the stranger. In a way, I am glad they recognized my picture in Gulf Pine and not from the Post Office.

Some years ago, before the Pope suggested it, I started a blog. In the last issue of Gulf Pine Catholic, I invited people to include their comments in my most recent column - <http://katrina-lessons.blogspot.com/> - about their own Katrina lessons.

During the past few years, I have fought against having my own Face Book page. Even though, I received constant requests to become friends with many friends and "strangers" on their Face Books, I continued to resist it.

Finally, the dyke began to crack and a trickle of water began to break through. Jo, our secretary, suggested that we have an OLG Parish Face Book page as well as an OLG Crab Fest Face Book page. As she pressed home the merits of such, she also suggested that I have my own Face Book page. I took her suggestions under advisement. Of course, I was open to both a parish and Crab Fest page, but having my own personal Face Book page was different.

Through the gentle persuasion of Jo, I succumbed. I created my own Face Book page. The next morning, I had over fifty requests to be my friend. How thoughtful, I reflected, to have so many willing and eager people to be my friends. The amazing thing was that many of the names were complete strangers.

Now, I am wondering about all those strangers. Do I need to do a background check on them before I entertain the idea of having them as friends? What is going to happen if people I have never met but who read my columns in Gulf Pine Catholic, want to join my Face Book?

I realize that there are over 400 million people on Face Book and that around 50% of them log on daily. I also realize that Face Book is taking over the way we view and communicate through the Internet because of its "Open graph" approach. Now, we will be all energized because we are synergized.

Let's face it! It's interesting to be stopped on the street or in a store by a total stranger who saw your mug shot and your latest column in Gulf Pine Catholic. It's interesting when you get emails from total strangers who read one of your columns and who now want some advice or direction on some issue or problem they are dealing with. Now, I've got to decide on my stranger "friends" who see my mug shot on Face Book and face them.