

Dear Flock:

The other night, I was invited to a friend's large home on the bluff of the Mississippi. It's a big square house, about 100 years old, with no air conditioning. Every window in the house was open and because of its location, a constant, pleasant breeze filled the house as though it were a living, breathing thing. I don't know that I've ever experienced anything like it; or if I have, it's been an awfully long time. Later, we had fine conversation for hours on an enormous screened porch that overlooked the river valley. That friendly breeze was there, too, as we enjoyed the expansive views and watched the sun set.

That breeze was enchanting and sensual. It made me think about how my own day-to-day life is regularly closed off. I'm in air conditioned environments. Most of the windows in my house don't even open. My mind ran through the list of places I'm in. Car. Church. Hospitals. Nursing homes. Restaurants. Coffee Shops. All air conditioned. All closed up. My life may be cool, but it's not breezy.

It reminds me of Pope John XXIII in the 1960's. He said, "Let us throw open the doors and windows of the Church and let the fresh air of the Spirit blow through." It's a clever image for working with what had become a stuffy Church, using an archaic language (Latin), and a lifeless spirituality unrelated to the world around it.

Opening the doors and windows and letting the fresh air of the Spirit blow through. A good image for the Church, for a house, for an individual soul.

My other favorite prayer of Pope John XXIII is, as he sat on the edge of the bed at night, prayed, "O God, this is your Church. I'm going to bed."

Yours,

Pastor Dan