



Reflection from Ben Babaran

When Damar Hamlin had a cardiac arrest last Monday, January 2, around 8PM Central Time, 5 minutes and 58 seconds into the Monday Night Game between the Bills and the Bengals, I witnessed something that I saw in 2001 during 9/11 – people prayed, were sympathetic, kind, and generous. All of America was ONE and pulling for Damar just like 21 years ago. It was the America that Martin Luther King Jr. was looking for. It was his vision. It was in his heart and in his dreams. As we celebrate him this week, can we see this unity, compassion, kindness, generosity, and togetherness continue?

In Sunday's Gospel, John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God saying "Look!". John and our Sunday liturgy are asking us to pause, gaze, and contemplate because Jesus is coming towards us in the Gospels, in the Creed, in the Consecration, in Communion, and in the people we meet each day.

John further testified "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him." What does it mean to see the Spirit come down on someone and remain? One example is when a person has to explain himself or herself and is frightened and feels totally incapable—yet in the explaining of oneself, sometimes we see the person take heart (receive the Spirit) and begin to speak with confidence. There are lots of ways in which the Spirit can come down on a person, a community or a nation. I believe that the Hamlin incident was an example when the Spirit came down upon us. It made us all stop and appreciate life, appreciate love. It also showed human potential and how we can, at times, set aside what scares us, and put our hearts into something that moves us.

I pray that this Spirit remains and change us. May we not forget this moment and how so many people, with so many differences, from all parts of the country, with different political affiliations and religious beliefs, came together.

*Peace,
Ben*