

## **Turning 50: Blessed Beyond Measure**

*by Mike Pence*

June 2009

This weekend will mark my 50th time around the sun, so I thought I might pen a few words to the family and friends and neighbors and colleagues who have marked this milestone in my life with a kind expression or a good-natured tease.

Born in a small town hospital to a big city girl, I arrived upside down and backwards on June 7, 1959 and this June 7, 2009 will mark my 50th birthday. Some things never change. My mother often says that I didn't speak a word until I was three years old, but I've been making up for lost time ever since.

Small town life, growing up on 31st Street in Columbus, Indiana, cornfield in the backyard, dirt clod fights, playing army in the woods by Haw Creek, four square and baseball games in the vacant lot are all the stuff of my youth.

Dreams were born on that street. Maybe someday I'd be someone like the someones who were the heroes of my youth-John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. and Neil Armstrong.

I saw my childhood, my Irish immigrant grandfather, my small business Dad and loving Mom in heroic terms. Being one of four boys, who fought with and for each other and doted on our two baby sisters, my family lived the American dream and I had a front row seat.

So much has passed since those days by the woods. So much has changed. So much is the same. I am now a man. I now know the someones of my time; I work with them, know them and some people think I am one of them. Yet inside, still the boy, still the dreamer, still hopelessly idealistic about America despite the bumps and bruises and abuses that accompany a public life. And it is not without cause.

Mine has been a life of immense blessing and opportunity. I have known the most wonderful

woman in the world as wife and partner. I have gotten to be the Dad of the three greatest kids in the world. I was given a second chance at my boyhood dream, raised my right hand and became the Congressman from my hometown. And I have worked in common cause with men and women of faith and integrity.

I have walked with soldiers in places of war and sat with my heroes at home-Reagan, Kemp and Quayle. I have consorted with presidents, prime ministers and kings in the far flung capitols of the world. But as I think about these past five decades, no moment will ever come close to the inexpressible joy I felt on a night in April of 1978 when I gave my life to Jesus Christ. Since that night, every success, every failure, every joy and every sorrow have been knit together in a tapestry of purpose because of His sweet presence in my life.

And by that experience of provision and grace, even in these troubled times, I have hope. I know our best days are ahead-mine and yours. I know our nation will prosper and will know her greatness again because God has blessed my small life, God has blessed America, and so He surely will again.

I know where I have been. I know where I am going, but I do not know what lies between here and there. Where my journey will lead in what remains I cannot say, but this I can say-I am blessed beyond measure. And I know that He who brought my family and me safely through these first 50 years will see me through to that day when years will no longer matter and now will give way to forever.

To Him and to you who have so enriched my life for all of these 50 years, heartfelt thanks and love to you all.

Michael R. Pence