

## **First Week of Lent 2009 – Cycle B**

Michael W. Smith, a popular Christian musician, wrote a song called *This Is Your Time*. In the song, dedicated to Cassie, a young girl who was tragically killed in the Columbine shootings, he sings about life changing situations. In the song he sings, “This is your time”. At any moment in your life, at any age, at any situation, the moment is your time.

Now is our time, yours and mine. It doesn't matter how old you are or how young you are. It doesn't matter if you are male or female, if you are married or single, in school or retired. It doesn't matter if you are a priest, religious sister or member of the community. It doesn't matter if you have just entered the Catholic Church, been a member for 10 or 80 years or like our Candidates and Catechumens ( Zech, Melinda, Ray, Bethany, Robert, Tim, Kelly, Beth and Curt) about to enter the Church this Easter. Now is our time.

In our gospel reading from Mark we see Christ coming out of the desert, beginning His ministry and His journey towards Jerusalem. His first words after coming out of the desert are, “This is the time of fulfillment...”. This is the time! It was His time, it was John the Baptist's time, it was the Israel's time... **It is our time.** In Mark's gospel we see everything immediately and this passage, this theme, this statement is no different. Christ doesn't want us to sit and think about what will happen, He doesn't want us to take His statement home and see if it fits our lives. No He wants us to immediately follow Him. To repent and believe in the gospel. That the gospel, that the good news that the fulfillment is Christ Himself.

I've been doing a lot of cycling lately. Mostly indoors and mostly in what's called a “Spin Class”. A group of people are all on stationary bikes and are lead by an instructor who takes us through different exercises. One of the instructors is constantly trying to motivate us by telling us that we have already spent money on the gym membership, we have taken time out of our day and are in class and spent money on gas to get to class. What are we going to do with this hour on the bike? Are we just going to sit and coast or are we going to work? What are we going to do now? And believe me, some times I just want to choke him because I'm about to pass out. But I don't and I continue to work.

We began our 2009 Lenten journey a few days ago with an ashen cross placed on our foreheads and told by the minister to turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel. We sit here in this church and begin the first formal week of Lent. We have made the time in our lives to come here, we have taken a break from our very busy schedules to put an effort into making a difference and change for the better in our lives. How are we going to do that? Are we going to just coast through another Lent, maybe our first one or 70<sup>th</sup> one? Each and every one of us are being told that this is our time. Now! Not tomorrow, not next week and not next Lent. Now!

And know that through this journey of Lent we may come across some difficult experiences. Maybe it just might be a feeling that comes over us that says we don't need to pray today. Maybe it might be a greater test that says, why am I even doing this? What good is it doing? Throughout our Lent, throughout our lives, we have the example of Christ. In the desert we see Christ being tempted and tested and at the same time being ministered to by the angels. That is our consolation that even in our deepest darkest moments we can know that God is with us and ministering to us in our moments of trial.

***Try to transition slightly into this***

We have so many activities in our parish that can make this Lent fulfilling. Many different prayer services, Faith enrichment opportunities, Lenten readings and reflection resources and the many different ways we pray. Commit to one of these activities to make your lent successful or choose a different one that takes you closer to God. Because we could do all these activities and if they don't bring you to the end that we all long for, that deeper relationship with God, they are just that, activities.

We begin our 2009 Lenten journey now. We begin it with hope and faith. We begin it to make our lives better now, to make the lives of those around us better. Will you choose to make Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> your time?