

Stuck in slow motion?



I've been doing a serious amount of biking around town and to and from work over the past week. I know that doesn't surprise many of you because you know that fitness, health and wellness is my profession. But, even a fitness professional doesn't always feel like exercising!

The biking has been great and gets me where I want and need to go so much faster. In fact, it even led to my presence as an extra in a movie as a cyclist this week (see my next post for that story).

But something struck me as I was biking to work this past Monday. My normal route to work at StudioThirty4 in Hampden, where I teach fitness and dance, takes me through Druid Hill Park and then uphill on Keswick Road. My bike has a fair number of gears so I can adjust for all types of terrain. Something odd happened as I made my way up Keswick Road: I was passed by a guy on a fixed gear bike.

Basically that means his bike didn't have all of the gears mine did so hills should have been more of a challenge for him. But it wasn't. He went uphill as fast as I go downhill! I didn't understand that! How was that possible? I'm still not sure but there was only one explanation that made sense: This cyclist had simply been at this longer than me. He had more practice and was stronger and one day I'll be that way too. But on Monday, I felt like I was stuck in slow motion. I've had that feeling around other cyclists before.

I see it all the time when people start new fitness programs. One of two things happen: people start off doing too much too fast, get discouraged and think about quitting, or they are intimidated by people who have been at this longer and can do more. This is particularly true when I teach fitness classes. Many come to me when it's their first class wondering if they will be able to keep up because they're new. I always tell new students to take things at their own pace and not to worry about

what others in the class are doing. We all have to go at our own pace.

The same is true with our spiritual journey. It can be intimidating for some people to come back to the Church after a long absence because they may feel behind or out of place. For others, there may be a nagging sense that you're not pious enough or holy enough or that you're just not doing enough as others who are active in the parish community.

The fact of the matter is that spiritual journeys are intensely unique and personal. We cannot say that after six months of regular mass attendance that you should know x, y, and z or that you should be able to recite the Catechism chapter and verse. As humans we compare ourselves to other people but that does nothing except make us feel less than who we are and doesn't show us how God truly sees us.

St. Paul tell us this, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good ... For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." 1 Corinthians 12: 4-7, 12 RSV

What does this really mean? We all have a place in the Church just as I found a place where my unique style of teaching and coaching was successful in fitness and dance. We take our gifts, and we all have them, and know that there is a place for them. They aren't all glamorous, but all are necessary. In any fitness class or dance class I am thrilled to have students of all levels. Why? Because it challenges me and it is a reminder that we are all at different places in our lives and with our abilities. Classes are more fun that way.

So have you felt stuck in slow motion with your faith or fitness? Do you feel others are passing you by and you'll never catch up? I say, from experience, not to worry

because you are just where you need to be when you need to be there. I want to hear about your experiences so don't forget to leave a comment or ask a question!

Lord, thank you for the blessings and difficulties in my life. I know it's hard to be thankful when things are difficult but I know you have a plan and purpose for my life. Help me to be more faithful to my spiritual journey and never forget that I have a place in the Body of Christ that you have chosen just for me. Amen.

Tip of the Day: Use the time when you exercise alone to meditate, contemplate or pray about things going on in your life. This turns your exercise time into a time of reflection that can boost both your faith and your fitness.