

## Traveling Companion: Biking through the debris

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I lost my 27 gear, hybrid bike in Hurricane Katrina. Chuck, a good friend from Houston, restored my confidence by giving me a new red, black and silver Schwinn bike. It sat, waiting for my invitation in Gulfport until recently. Finally, it came home to its rightful place.

Recently, I decided to give it a test run. Obviously, my usual 4 a.m. ride was interrupted by Katrina. Since, then, I was unable to perform my early morning riding ritual. A few Sundays ago, I rolled out my new acquisition to peddle the roads of Bay St. Louis. I donned by new helmet, my black biking shorts, a T-Shirt and a pair of sneakers. Of course, I donned my biking gloves, with their extra padding, to protect my hands from calluses.

Along the way, I had to stop now and then to make some adjustments to the bike. The gears needed adjustment as well as the saddle. The kick bar rubbed against the left pedal as I rode along.

The ride was interesting. I tried to negotiate along the beach bike path. Along the way, I encountered sand and debris strewn in my way. Broken bottles became a minefield as I tried to dodge them. I hoped my all terrain tires would be up to the task and they were.

On my return journey, I decided to ride on the main road. I was amazed that no one honked for me to get out of the way. No one rushed past me at speeds beyond the limit. People even waved from their cars. I wondered if they were waves of encouragement for my efforts at dodging the remnants of Katrina.

As I peddled along, I negotiated the many bumps and bruises on the road; the washed away sections and the sand caressing sections. As I did, I had the opportunity to see the impending dangers and avoid them. I wondered about the traffic that traveled along at their leisure, did they, too, anticipate such potholes and surprises along the way.

The whole experience helped me to discover some untested muscles. My posterior cried out for a gentler, kinder saddle; reminding me that more padding was needed to contour to my contours.

Obviously, my biking through the debris experience reminded me of Lent. Lent is an opportunity to journey through the debris of our lives. As we journey, we are filled with hopes, dreams and determination to accomplish certain things that will be beneficial to our lifestyle.

Along the way, we may encounter unforeseen obstacles and challenges. Such obstacles and challenges, obviously, are not of our making. Yet, we have to make the adjustments needed to continue on the journey. Along life's highway, even though we may be goal and purpose driven, we have to face the unexpected.

As we face the unseen, sudden and unpredictable obstacles along the way, we are challenged to make adjustments, detours and even drastic changes.