

[Readings: Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47; Eph 1:17-23; Matt 28: 16-20]

Now is the time for our Catholic Services Appeal for this year. By now, everyone should have received their CSA packet through the mail. You have been reading in my column all the particulars of this year's campaign.

There are just a couple of things I want to highlight.

1) Last year's parish target for St. Martin de Porres, set not by me or by the Parish Finance Council but by the Archbishop and his advisors, was \$78,444. Thanks to your overwhelming generous response, we reached and exceeded that goal by \$13,000! This year's goal, \$91,038, is 16% higher than last year's, but it matches how much we received last year in pledges and gifts. We can do this! Please prayerfully consider increasing your gift from last year.

2) You also can make your gift or pledge electronically, but please do NOT use your parish offertory direct deposit link. You need to go to the special site on our website: <http://smdeporres.aodcsa.org>. Please view the C. S. A. video at aod.org which has segments that feature our parish nurse and parishioners. It moved me to increase my support. May it move you to support this worthy cause generously, and to "open doors to encounter Christ!"

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP!

The older we get, the more we lose the familiar, the safe. The old neighborhood in which we lived and grew, especially if we lived in Detroit, is gone or unrecognizable. How many jobs have we had in our lifetime? Who among our loved ones have been taken from us by death? How do we survive after the breakup of a relationship? It's all a matter of time. It's about time.

How do we know what time it is? The clock on the wall gives us one answer. Then the moment passes, and we're obliged to look again for a new answer shortly. The deeper understanding of what time it is comes from *context*—which is hardly written on the wall.

Context tells us whether it's the beginning, middle, or end of a relationship, for example. It tells us whether it's time to stay or go, to listen or speak, to agree

or object, to reap or sow. This deeper sense of time requires our full attention, some experience, and not a little wisdom.

The context Jesus uses faithfully during his ministry for telling time is *prayer*. Notice how often he goes aside to pray in some lonely place. See how he takes his closest friends up a mountain, or into a grove of trees, to pray with him. This sense of timing allows Jesus to know when it's the hour to slip away from those prepared to kill him -- as he did in Nazareth at the synagogue where he delivered his unpopular address to the hometown community. Attention to context also lets Jesus know when it's time to deliver himself to the mob coming to get him -- as he does in Gethsemane soon after his final supper with his friends. No first-century sundial was ever going to deliver that information.

Jesus shows a keen sense of the time, hour by hour. When to have a private dinner with a Pharisee, and when to foil another in a public debate. Still more: when to recruit a high-profile Pharisee to become his apostle to the Gentiles. Sometimes Jesus openly taught multitudes of strangers, and at other times instructed his small circle of friends. At times Jesus worked to exhaustion, and at others he urged his friends to "come away and rest."

There was never a one-size-fits-all approach to delivering the gospel. Sometimes it was important to jot and tittle every letter of the law. Later that same day, an opportunity might arise where the law was an obstacle to an even greater fidelity.

Jesus realized that now was the time to return to the Father. When the disciples asked Jesus, "Is this the right time to restore the Kingdom to Israel?" Jesus must have thought, "Father, if I don't leave now, I'm gonna KILL these people!" And listen to how Matthew accurately, painfully and yet briefly, summarizes the Ascension experience in today's Gospel: "The eleven disciples saw Jesus. They worshiped, but they doubted."

Note that this is the very last time they are going to see Jesus Christ in the flesh, and they couldn't even give Him the benefit of their total understanding and support. But are you and I any different? We come here to worship every Sunday, but do we not also come with our own doubts?

Yes Jesus is not me, Jesus is not us. He is much more kind, loving, forgiving and understanding. He reminds His followers that the promised Holy Spirit will come upon them soon to give them what St. Paul prays for the people of Ephesus and for all of us in our Second Reading: a spirit of wisdom and revelation, knowledge, enlightenment and hope.

In the meantime, the disciples – and we – are commissioned, missioned, sent to “go and make disciples.” That is the call to evangelization. This is the word we have been hearing in the Archdiocese and in our parish for three years. We are to make disciples, to baptize and to teach, savoring and cherishing His final words to us: Know that I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Today is World Communications Day. This year, Our Holy Father, Pope Francis has called each one of us “communicators,” and asks “communicators” to deliver a message of hope and trust in a season of fear and uncertainty.

Above all, he’s asked us to offer a radically fresh context: to teach hope and trust *in history itself*. History’s legacy is often painted as bleak and broken, a tragedy of errors. People of faith are affirmed in our belief that God has rescued history and turned it into a story of salvation. We take the events of history and see them through the lens of faith and time.

This is the true answer to the question: What time is it? Now is the hour that God comes to save us. ALLELUIA AND AMEN!