

## OPINION

# Are bicyclists the new king of the road?

SHOOTING STRAIGHT - Bobit S. Avila - The Freeman

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For our special presentation on Straight from the Sky, we bring you a talk on how to make a proper observation of the Lenten Season. The beauty of the Catholic Church is that it covers every aspect of the life and times of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he was born, we rejoiced and celebrated Christmas. But during his passion and death on the cross, we too join our suffering Lord all the way to Calvary and we all rejoice on Easter Sunday when our Lord conquers death and rise again to take his kingdom in heaven.

To help me bring you up to speed for your Lenten reflection, we have with us my dear friend Fr. Joseph Skelton, Jr. of the Santa Monica Parish in Albuquerque, Bohol. I don't know if it is divine providence that the Santa Monica Parish was spared from the devastating earthquake last Oct.15th when its neighboring

parishes crumbled to the ground.

We thank Fr. Joseph Skelton for making time to be with us on this show in order to help you make a proper observation of Lent. Please watch this interesting show on SkyCable's channel 61 at 8:00PM with replays on Wednesday and Saturday and replays can be seen on MyTV channel 30 M-W-F at 7:00AM and 9:00PM.

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Last Saturday was [Earth Hour] where environmentalists all over the world had another one full hour of people turning off their lights to show to the world that we are part of this global thought that we must reduce our carbon emissions. I have no quarrel with that. But look at the jeepneys and light trucks and their drivers travelling around Metro Cebu City. These are the people who don't give a damn about the world, as if we owed them their living.

But what gets my gall is that the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) cannot even stop these violators from plying our roads. When our regulatory agencies fail in their job then more and more violators will emerge. I challenged the LTFRB three years ago to apprehend jeepneys that didn't put up their lights during the night and stop the illegal parking in front of their eyes at the barangay hall in Lahug. But they are still there; proving to the world how incompetent the LTFRB is!

Speaking of violators. I was going out of Escario Street corner

Juana Osmena Street last Saturday night and was pleasantly surprised to see a great number of bicycle riders enjoying Earth Hour. But when the traffic light went green on our side, those bicyclists, thinking that they were above the law, totally disregarded the green light and other traffic rules.

When we got into the corner of Escario Street and Gorordo Avenue, those bicyclists stopped again the light turned red. I wanted to go down my car to tell those bicyclists why they stopped? If they had the gall to violate the traffic light in Juana Osma Street why not violate the traffic light in Gorordo Avenue? But then I thought, we'd probably have a rumble and I was alone.

Mind you, I was one of the first to ride a mountain bike in Cebu but our bike group was a law-abiding bunch. The bikers of today are a different bunch. They believe that because they have the support of environmental lawyer Tony Oposa, they think they have become the new king of the road replacing those hard-core, hard-headed jeepney drivers. Many of these bicycle riders want a bike lane and I'm supportive of this. However, how can the ordinary motorist support their call when they show to us that they do not care about the traffic rules? Let's make one thing very clear. Everyone that uses the road only has a privilege given by the state. This is why when one operates a motor vehicle, one needs to procure a driver's license. The fees used to pay for the license is used to pave or fix our roads. That is the deal with the government and the people.

So where does this put bicyclists? Maybe it is time for the city of Cebu to consider passing a law where bicycle owners must get a bicycle license.

Call it an unpopular move. But for as long as bicycle riders show their defiance by violating our traffic rules, then the citizenry must work for a way to regulate them. I met my nephew Niconics Ybañez that evening who was also on his bicycle but he wasn't in that crowd and he too complained about those bicyclists that violated traffic laws. So you guys out there ought to start thinking what we should do about these traffic violators that CITOM cannot arrest because they have no driver's license to confiscate?