

SMM - Thoughts on Backpacking vs Life – October 11, 2010

As you know we just returned yesterday from a backpacking trip in Allegheny National Forest in upper Pennsylvania. This trip required us to backpack to our campsite in the dark. This was necessary because we wouldn't be arriving at the trailhead until around 9:30pm, being that it is a 4 hour drive from Steubenville.

Several years ago I gave a similar scoutmaster minute recalling how I relate backpacking to our lives. As we hiked in Friday night, having this Court of Honor on my mind I began to think again of these and new examples of how backpacking relates to life. I would like to share these thoughts with you tonight.

On the trail in the dark, you cannot see beyond your headlamp so you must trust that the trail continues. / In life the Lord only allows us to see so far ahead into our future and we must trust that He has a plan for us.

On the trail in the dark sometimes your headlamp doesn't penetrate the darkness as far as someone else's, so you seek the help of that person so that you can see which way to go. / In life, we don't have all the answers so we need to seek the help of our parents, trusted friends and maybe a spiritual director to help us see where we are going or where we need to go.

On the trail in the dark, it is easy to trip and stumble on rocks or tree roots that lie in our path and we must try to catch ourselves from falling with our sense of balance and our hiking sticks and move along. / In life, when we encounter difficult times, we need to seek the help of our parents, close friends and pray for guidance from the Lord and press on.

On the trail, we might have to wake up early in order to get on the trail to meet a schedule. It can be very difficult to climb out of a warm sleeping bag on a brisk morning especially when it is still dark outside. It may take all of our willpower to get up and get going. / There will be times in our lives when we feel that we are surrounded by darkness, maybe even spiritual darkness, that is when we must recall God's truth, hang onto the words He has spoken to us and press on.

On the trail there are times when the path is wide and easy / In life there are times when we find life easy and we are confident of where we are going.

On the trail there are times when it is hilly and difficult and we may feel like quitting / In life there are times when it seems overwhelming.

On the trail there are times when all we are doing is pounding out miles / In life there are times when life may seem boring.

On the trail, we need to watch what we eat so that we have the energy needed for the task / In life we need to stay mentally awake and morally straight.

On the trail our load lightens as we drink our water during the day and consume our food / In life there are ways to lighten our spiritual load such as going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

On the trail if we make it to our destination, we experience a great sense of accomplishment / In life if we love God and our neighbors with all our hearts we will be rewarded with everlasting life in the kingdom of God.