

St. Francis de Sales Parish

All glory comes from daring to begin.

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Meanderings...

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BY REV. ROY ROBERTS

PERHAPS over the last few years we have been spoiled by summer weather that had extended into October, but the invitation to accompany the grade 8s from St. Patrick's school seemed appealing when it arrived early in September.

The prospect of spending an hour and a half both ways with a busload of excited young people seemed a little daunting, so for 'professional' reasons, I opted to drive for myself. Now the field trip was to a YMCA Camp on the sunny shores of Lake Couchiching by Orillia.

Orillia was the place where mom and dad first lived after they were married. Maybe that's why I have an affinity for the northern part of the Archdiocese. Once I overcame the temptation to turn into Casino Rama and drove further along the road, I braved the pothole infested drive into the camp itself.

The buses had already arrived and the young people were being sorted into their groups for the day's activities. They would have to overcome fears to zip along the zip line, climb the ropes and ring the bells, solve the problems of specific group-oriented tasks, and my favorite, master the art of archery.

Let's just say, no one is ready to stand in front of any of the students with an apple on their head, but if they were, then directly in front of the bull's eye would be the safest spot.

The morning was bitterly frigid, with all the puddles frozen over with ice. The wind howled and despite gloves, and sweaters, and heavy socks, it still chilled to the bones.

After a hearty lunch of home-made pizza and salad, the afternoon had warmed up considerably, and it was quite a beautiful autumn day. Even in the small groups of 20 or so kids, there were many challenges, coaxing young people to brave the heights, or how to hold the bow without shooting the arrow into a foot, or cleaning up after themselves at the lunch table.

There were moments when I thought corporal punishment wasn't such a bad thing, and others where I rejoiced in celibacy.

I did get a great lesson in the generation gaps. I don't mean about language or slang, and not even between the youth and the youthful. I mean the generation gap between the mind and the body. The mind keeps thinking that it can keep up with the young people, bending, and stretching and climbing, and well, the body lets you know that a lot of water has passed under that bridge. Sigh!

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