

Saturday - March 6

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13 (NRSV)

I once took a multiday hike through an area that had been ravaged by a major forest fire. As I hiked, I was continuously surrounded in all directions as far as the eye could see with the charred, black burned-out skeletons of what had once been magnificent living trees. There was no undergrowth under the trees. The ground was covered in black and white ash. With every step that I took, the ash made a plume that went half-way up to my knees. The land was totally silent. There was not sight or sound of any wildlife. No squirrels. No birds. Not even any insects. There was no water to be found. The land was totally dead. After a sad 10-mile day, I finally camped for the night.

The hike during the second day started out much like the first. However, I experienced something different in the afternoon. At the base of a dead, burned-out tree there was a little spot in the ash that was not the same color as the ash. I brushed away the ash from around the spot and uncovered a little living sprout with two little tiny green leaves. I gave that little plant all of the water that I had left. I sat there with it for a while before finally moving on. You see, to this day it is that little living sprout that I remember whenever I hear the word "Hope."

Steven

Prayer: Almighty and Everlasting God, thank you for life. Thank you that we are surrounded by so much life each and every day. Thank you that we have each other. For it is from You and You alone that truly gives us all that is Good and all that is Holy on the face of this earth. Amen.