



It's hard to believe we have reached March when it does not feel as if we have experienced a Northeast Ohio winter yet. I am certainly not complaining. It has been a joy to be outside in nature. My family enjoys hiking in the valley on the weekends. It is on those long walks that we often have the richest conversations, the loudest laughs and the deepest connections with each other and with God.



This year, March not only brings the first signs of spring but also the Lenten season. This important time calls us, as Christians, to reflect deeply on the Paschal Mystery as we prepare ourselves spiritually for the Good News of Easter.

We do this preparation both individually and in connection with others. Sometimes, during a challenging period of time, it is hard to imagine that we are not alone. We can feel darkness and despair in ways that isolate us or disconnect us from others. It can feel as if we are in a vast forest, on our own and without a guide.

It is during these times of difficulty that we remember Christ's journey for us and his continued journey with us. Our journey is never without the love of God or the love of our family and friends as they hold us in the palm of their hands.

As we engage in our Lenten practices, let us remember that we do so with our family, friends, and God supporting us and loving us. Our deep connections to each other and God will deepen the joyful moments and soften the trying times.

And if you have the time, I highly recommend a hike with loved ones in our beautiful valley. Sometimes, just being without the distractions of everyday life is all we need to connect deeply with those who mean the most to us.

Yours in faith,

*Jen*