

Pastor's Column – August 3, 2025

Summertime in Western New York is a beautiful time of year that offers many opportunities to experience a deeper connection with God through the beauty of nature. The sacredness of the natural world can be seen as a reflection of God's power, wisdom, and love.

All creation comes from God's loving hand, and therefore reflects His divine attributes. This means that nature is not merely a resource to be used, but a gift to be cherished,

We may be able to connect with this beauty in by engaging in nature-based activities, like: going for mindful walks or hikes, focusing on the sights, sounds, and smells of your surroundings; finding a quiet spot in nature for meditation or prayer; journaling outdoors to process thoughts and reflections inspired by nature; creating natural art or engaging in nature photography to express your appreciation for God's creation.

Deepening the connection with God: Mindful walks and hikes can be a way to deepen our connection with God by appreciating His presence in the beauty and wonder of the natural world. Slowing down forces us to notice the sights, sounds, and smells around us, and be more present to the experience. Nature can be seen as a kind of "book" or "symphony" that reveals God's glory and wisdom.

Summertime is also a good time to seek spiritual experiences at Our Lady of Fatima Shrine and Our Lady of Victory National Shrine & Basilica. Our Lady of Fatima Shrine with its beautiful grounds, gardens, and statues that can enhance prayer and reflection, particularly in the summer. It is a good time of year to visit Our Lady of Victory National Shrine & Basilica in Lackawanna, a stunning example of architecture and a testament to faith, offering a sense of history and spirituality.

By immersing yourself in the natural beauty of Western New York, you can find opportunities for spiritual reflection, healing, and a deeper connection to God.

Peace,

Deacon John