

Lady Poverty is an American Black Cherry Tree which was beloved by Father Dan and located in the back woods. There is now a place of remembrance created there for him.

**...our two founders,
Dan Riley and Dan Hurley,
are strengthening and inspiring us from Heaven.**

LADY
POVERTY

Peace
sign

Fr. Dan Riley, ofm ~ One Year Later

As I write this, it has been nearly a year since Dan Riley passed away. Each of us has had opportunities to both individually and communally reflect on what his physical loss has meant to us, but also how he is still with us.

For example, while decorating the Chapel for Christmas, I swear I could hear Dan's guiding voice suggesting where to place a flower or an evergreen branch. At other times during the year, I found myself raising my phone at a beautiful, stirring or exciting event to take a picture, and thinking, "Wait until Dan sees this. He will love it!" followed by the realization, "No, he will not be getting this picture from me; however, he is present to the whole experience!" Others at the Mountain swear they can hear him laugh or see him in his artwork, but even more, draw from the deep well and mission and vision he imparted to us during his life and in his words.

By now, many have heard about the brilliant "First Notions for a Mountain Retreat" Dan wrote in 1979. These "Notions" described the dream that has become Mt. Irenaeus. This was long before there was a Mountain advisory group or any fundraising happening and before anyone searched for a parcel of land for the Mountain. Over the decades these dreams have materialized more than anyone could guess and they continue to unfold.

Dan's First Notions included "a rustic, rural home rooted in the Franciscan tradition for hermitages..." offering another living situation and supportive Christian values of prayer and a simple life. A place to be lived in, "not a facility for programs and events or a place to be entertained," but a place of "happy, practical hospitality and a spirit of prayer."



Robert Lentz, ofm, a Franciscan friar and icon artist, gave this painting of Fr. Dan as a gift to the Friars at Mt. Irenaeus. It is next to the icon Robert created of Fr. Dan Hurley, in the House of Peace.

MT. IRENAEUS

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This place would be away from the pace and pressure of life offering a restful and re-creative environment and community, so that people might be more in touch with basic needs and become more responsive to human interaction and the world around us. It would foster deeper self-awareness and self-appreciation (love) and growth in communal/ social responsibilities. A quiet space to review expectations, values, and begin again.

The land itself would offer space to walk and be in solitude ... Teaching us how to live in harmony with the land; keeping in tune with natural surroundings; enhancing our rhythm with the rest of creation and concerns for our common home.

In the year since Dan has passed, we have had more and more diverse visitors than ever. Dan is still inviting them to join the Mountain family with the ring of his laughter and his wise and beautiful words that move people's hearts and still echo in our way of life. The Mountain is in a good place and our two founders, Dan Riley and Dan Hurley, are strengthening and inspiring us from heaven.

~ Kevin Kriso, ofm

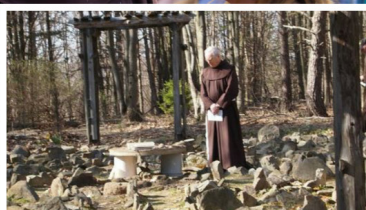
As noted so beautifully by Kevin in his piece, this July marks the anniversary of the passing of our Founder, Fr. Dan Riley. His loss continues to have ripple effects through our life and ministry, yet at the same time I am so grateful for how the resident community, the office/ministry team, our Board, and scores of volunteers, who are deeply involved in our lives, responded to Dan's passing. As has been said often, we will never replace Fr. Dan, but everyone has played an incredible role in utilizing the gifts they have been given in continuing our movement forward in a very positive way.

In the month of July there is another momentous milestone in the history of Mt. Irenaeus. Fr. Lou McCormick turns 90 years old! For over 30 years, Lou has been a strong, steady presence at the Mountain. While much of our visible ministry can be seen on campus, through social media, and on the road, Lou has given decades of his life to the behind-the-scenes aspects of the Mountain: offering hospitality to guests, grocery shopping for the community, leading the housekeeping of our facilities and supporting our Secular Franciscan Community to name just a few. Fr. Lou absolutely shines as a homilist, sharing a simple, positive message, helping the Gospel message become relatable to all who are in the room.

I first met Lou when I was a summer intern back in 1990. He was invited to be part of the summer community before he became a permanent member of the friary shortly thereafter. Admittedly, I do not have many memories of Lou from back then, other than he would get up early and run the dirt hills! When I became an employee of the Mountain nine years ago, my relationship with Lou really flourished. Over the years, whenever there was a chance for a quiet interaction, he would ask how I was doing. He is always conscious of my wife Julie and my life back in Buffalo. He encourages me to make sure I have a healthy balance between the Mountain and my family. I have always been so grateful for these interactions, and I know he has them with many others he encounters with us! He carries that true gift of Franciscan Hospitality.

With Fr. Bill McIntyre's assignment to Padua Academy in Cleveland, Lou becomes our solo presider of liturgy at the Mountain. We are actively inviting Friars from across the country to consider joining the community at the Mountain, and we have received genuine interest from those we ask. We are very grateful to Fr. Stephen Mimnaugh, OFM, who lives and ministers at SBU. Stephen has offered to support Lou and the community

by occasionally celebrating Sunday Mass. Other friars have offered to celebrate Mass throughout the year. As the Mountain evolves into a new time, we are filled with hope at all the possibilities the future holds for us.



In celebration of Lou's birthday, a wonderful video has been created to capture his essence and presence. Watch at www.mountainonline.org/FrLou

May God continue to bless Fr. Lou, and the Mountain Life and Ministry!

~ Mike Fenn

Summer Companions 2025



Summer 2025 Mountain Companions
Adam Watson and Audney Burnside.

Daily at Mt. Irenaeus, anyone can be found working: picking vegetables, cleaning cabins or fixing loose doorknobs. During the summer that work can look a little different, as can the faces and hands completing it. Enter: our 2025 Mountain Summer Companions.

Audney Burnside and **Adam Watson** signed on to live into the life at the Mountain for nine weeks. **Faith Barker**, another Bonaventure student, joined us in community life for 3 weeks at the beginning of the

Summer. Faith's experience growing up on a farm helped her to jump in and learn quickly when it came to outdoor work.

Mowing, digging ditches, painting, cooking meals, and leading prayer are some of the tasks done weekly. Not everything is second nature - both students said their first encounter with the weed whacker was intimidating. Audney, who enjoys the physical labor of the summer, said she feels accomplished at the end of the day. Once she learned how to use heavy equipment, she showed others how they worked.

Often rigorous, summer work is not only sweat and grit. Spending time with Br. Kevin in the garden is a rewarding experience for Adam that involves meaningful conversations and learning how to grow food.

According to Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*, work is "where many aspects of life enter into play: creativity, planning for the future, developing our talents, living out our values, relating to others, giving glory to God." This summer, Audney and Adam bring these words to life. They are a blessing to the Mountain!



Students gather to study at the Mountain on Reading Day in May.



Faith, Audney and Adam proclaim the readings during Sunday Liturgy.

From Our 3 Peaks Of Mt. Irenaeus - Service to SBU Students

What follows is a deeper discussion about our first Peak, written by our Student Ministry Coordinator, Natalie Pronio.

Ministry with young people, at any age, requires standing firmly in multiple places at once to understand the heartbeat, the vibe, and the rhythm of their lives: simultaneously looking back at what was, forward at what is coming or could be, and around at what is currently happening, all while holding on (very gently) for dear life to the plan. My primary ministry for Mt. Irenaeus with the students of St. Bonaventure University has found me in all of these places and doing all of these things - sometimes all at once - and what a gift it has been so far.

Our core ministry with students is rooted in the multitude of opportunities they have to, as Fr. Dan Riley would say: "come, climb the Mountain," throughout the year. Although their personal reasons for coming to the Mountain differ greatly, something that runs through many student reflections or interactions is gratitude. Gratitude for the time, space, quiet, community, conversation, and the hospitality that permeates their experiences as they "come away for a while" from campus and find rest, friendship, laughter, stillness, or peace.

"The Mountain truly shaped my Bonaventure experience as a student. Whenever I was lost or struggling, I knew I could find peace for myself in the community there" (Cassidy Kavathas '24).

Some students come to the Mountain for the first time with a team or club; others return time and time again on their own. Those who bring friends, roommates or family members on return trips will say, "I just had to bring them here to see this place." Students who visit only once will often remark that the Mountain trip was the highlight of the semester, or the most impactful thing their club has done. Many seniors note that one of their regrets is not going to the Mountain sooner.

"Not going to the Mountain until I am a senior is something I regret. I wish I took the time to go sooner because while being at the Mountain, I was the most relaxed I felt in so long" (Rebecca Schneider '25).

Our ministry with the University also takes other forms. We offer students space to learn skills in communications and marketing through internship positions. We welcome students on Sunday mornings for Mass and brunch. We foster relationship building, leadership, responsibility, and faith-sharing skills when we invite students to become Mountain Community Leaders. We encourage students to engage in dialogue, research, advocacy, and social and ecological justice by attending the Franciscan Action Network Conference. Our summers brim with newness when students join us as summer companions, living into community life.

We also partner with the University through our close relationship with the University Ministries staff on campus. We are proud of our students who are heavily involved with both Mt. Irenaeus and the spiritual and social-action ministries found within UMin. These "dual citizens" give us all great hope in young people who are focused on justice, advocacy, service to others and strengthening their local communities for the future. Those of us who have offices in the McGinley-Carney Center for Franciscan Ministry building in the heart of campus are fortunate to build wonderful relationships not only with the students we see daily, but also with many staff and faculty.

The Mountain continues to provide a space for students to step back from - not to escape from - the busy grind of campus life, while simultaneously offering the chance to grow, reflect and become the best version of themselves. Our hope for the future is to continue to reach young people on and off campus and to intentionally invite students into a deeper sense of community, friendship, service, spirituality and hope anchored in the light that shines in the darkness. We hope to do this by expanding our ability to host students at the Mountain, engaging with students on campus, and purposefully partnering with local communities.

"Since my freshman year at Bonas, the Mountain has stood as a sanctum of healing, friendship, love and most importantly hope. My annual trips with the Asian Students in Action Club (ASIA) have become a hallmark of my four years at Bona's...the Mountain is a community belonging to all Bonnies, where they are encouraged to be hopeful, inspired to dream big, and accepted for who they are" (Samay Saxena '25).

What a gift.
~ Natalie Pronio



Pope Francis, Pope Leo XIV, and our Come As You Are Church

Like so many of us — maybe even more so, since I'm an historian of Catholicism — I was caught completely off guard when Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost walked out from behind those red velvet Vatican curtains and was reintroduced to the world as Pope Leo XIV.

I'd prayed the cardinals would elect a successor who might carry on Pope Francis's legacy, I'd hoped they'd elect another non-European, and we got both. But never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that they'd elect a White Sox fan from the South Side of Chicago!



Mari Snyder along with Adam, Audney and Faith bake another delicious meal!



The work outdoors never ends during the Summer!



Resident Life members help with dinner prep during an Evening Away.

✦ What's most exciting to me, as a member of the Mountain family, is the fact that Pope Leo looks ready to continue Pope Francis's legacy — to carry forward the "Francis effect" — in a few different ways.

✦ From the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Leo called us to be a "missionary church" that goes out and meets people where they are, in the fullness of their humanity. Or, as our Mountain way of life might have it, to welcome people, in the spirit of Franciscan hospitality, to come as they are. Pope Leo also furthered his predecessor's call for a "synodal church" that listens to the people and emphasizes genuine encounter with those society pushed to the margins.

✦ It is not surprising, then, that Leo appears set to continue Pope Francis's consistent support for immigrants and refugees. And like Pope Francis, who was a son of immigrants, Pope Leo's support for migrants is personal too. His grandparents, Joseph Martinez and Louise Baquie, were migrants themselves — Creole Catholics of color from the Seventh Ward in New Orleans. They migrated North along with many millions of African Americans in the Great Migrations.

✦ At Mt. Irenaeus, we've long understood that transformation happens through encounter, through creating spaces where all can experience a sense of belonging. In Pope Leo XIV, we see church leadership that embodies this same conviction — ready to continue the legacy of Francis (the Pope and the Saint), namely, the work of building bridges rather than walls, of listening rather than simply pronouncing, of walking alongside rather than standing above.

✦ ~ Matthew Cressler





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MT. IRENAEUS ADVANCEMENT UPDATE

Celebrating a Legacy: A Year Like No Other

It is hard to believe that one year ago, the Mountain community was busily brainstorming how to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the founding of Mt. Irenaeus. And right in the middle of all the planning was our beloved founder and visionary, Fr. Dan Riley. His energy and passion for the Mountain's mission, and his excitement for kicking off the next 40 years, were as vibrant as ever.

No one could have foreseen that on July 24, Our Lord would call Fr. Dan home. It is an understatement to say his loss was profoundly felt by all, but his spirit continued to inspire and guide our efforts. As a result, the Mountain celebrated its 40th year with our most successful Annual Mountain Fund campaign ever, exceeding our goals for the 2024-25 fiscal year, and ensuring that Fr. Dan's legacy will indeed continue to thrive and grow.

Thanks to each and every one of you, the dear friends and supporters of the Mountain, for making this possible. You generously responded to the first-ever 40 Hours of Giving appeal in September – an idea that Fr. Dan helped to shape – with an outpouring of love and support that sent a clear message of confidence for our future.

We are excited to announce the launch of another edition of the **40 Hours of Giving on Sept. 8-9**, and hope you can join us again in this exciting effort. As you can see from the articles in this newsletter, the level of engagement and outreach happening at the Mountain, whether on-site, on the SBU campus, online, or in the many communities around the country reached by Mountain-on-the-Road and Mountain-in-the-Home, is as robust as ever – a true testament to Fr. Dan's dream.

As our **41st year** kicks off, please know that you are in our prayers, and have our deepest gratitude. We hope you will visit frequently on our website, MountainOnline.org, where you will find updates on all the latest happenings – and hopefully you can plan your next physical trip to visit us soon!

Pax et Bonum,

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We are a 501c3 that relies on private donations. It's now easy to make an annual, honor or memorial gift through our Mountain website (www.mountainonline.org). Just click the donate button.

PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING



Daniel A. Hurley ofm
Legacy Society

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