

Giardini, Mary D.

From: Mt. Irenaeus <peace@mountainonline.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 22, 2025 9:01 PM
To: Giardini, Mary D.
Subject: "Making All Things New!" - October 2025 - Powerful Reflections on Recent Stays and On the Road



Making All Things New

October 2025



Alexis Serio, Mt. Irenaeus Communications Intern, Mountain Community Leader and On the Road Minister gives us a glimpse into the the Mountain on the Road event in Rochester, NY on Oct 15. She invites you to join us at an event near you.

Echoes of the Earth ~ Alexis Serio '27

In September, I had the opportunity to participate in “Echoes of the Earth,” an event focused on honoring nature and celebrating autumn. When we arrived on the land, an immediate sense of purpose washed over me. It was my first time visiting since the leaves had started to change and the weather was absolutely worth celebrating.

The Mountain welcomed two locals, Mike and Rose, who provided ten American Chestnut trees for planting. The job seemed daunting at first, but with the help of 15 students, we were able to make an investment in the land and complete the task. I felt so small as I imagined how grand these trees would become. I experienced joy and thought of the transformation it would soon face as we promised to care for this aspect of Creation.



After planting trees, we spent time in the Chapel and recited the Cantic of the Creatures. Since my time as a Summer Companion in 2024, I have felt a special connection to this reading. There is something so magnificent in considering each part of the natural world and appreciating how we acknowledge its greatness because it exists as it is. The natural world does not live to please others; it exists with purpose just by being itself.

As we concluded the night, we spotted constellations and showed gratitude for the presence of Sister Moon and the stars. We headed back to campus, knowing we would see Brother Sun soon again and would praise once more.



Join us for an afternoon of contemplative time on the Land on Sunday, November 2, after Mass and brunch. Gather at the House of Peace, and experience the peace, meditative sounds, and beauty of nature in an environment where others are present on the same journey.

November 2, along with being the feast of All Souls, is also known as the Day of the Dead, a day to honor and celebrate the lives of the deceased and to connect the living with memories of their loved ones.

Please dress for the weather and wear footwear appropriate for trails, which can be muddy and uneven. Questions can be directed to Mt. Irenaeus at 585-973-2470 or 716-375-2096.





St. Rita Parish Men's Retreat ~Dave Polatta

Deacon Jim Fein began the October 2025 St. Rita Men's Retreat with prayer in the church parking lot before four vehicles departed for Mt. Irenaeus. Arriving Sunday evening, I was immediately at peace as I opened my door. Gerry's son Ryan jumped out of his car and yelled "Did you see those clouds??? They were amazing!" As we approached Dansville, dark clouds set against the hills were illuminated by the low fall sunset - a spectacular scene. Our retreat was off to a peaceful start!

I can give an hour-by-hour account of what occurred these three days; however, the Mountain encounter is the focus. I travelled with Joe H., another long-time parishioner. I never had a conversation with Joe in all these years. We talked non-stop. I had similar conversations with others. Gerry, his son Ryan and I had a very in-depth, faith filled conversation late into Sunday evening. I started Monday hiking the Mountain alone. Along the way I inevitably saw others on the trail, talked for a few minutes or joined them on their journey. We all gathered for meals as we sat at the large table in the House of Peace.

There are some places on the Mountain I found especially peaceful: the prayer bench at the top of Mountain Road, the



Creator, Reshape My Heart: A Reflection on the Adult Women's Overnight ~Patty Finnerty

On October 11-12, eleven women gathered at Mt. Irenaeus for a time of reflection, prayer, and renewal at a women's overnight retreat centered on the theme, "*Creator, Reshape My Heart*." Surrounded by the beauty and peace of The Mountain, participants entered into a rhythm of quiet meditation, heartfelt small-group sharing, and prayerful celebration of the Eucharist. Together, we explored the call to let God reshape our hearts — softening what has grown rigid, healing what has been wounded, and opening us again to love.

One of the most meaningful reflections of the day came during our discussion on forgiveness. As one woman beautifully expressed, forgiveness can be "the ability to live with an uneven score" — a grace that frees rather than binds. We also reflected on the mystery of God's love, a love given not for what we do, but simply because we *are*.

Throughout the day, the Spirit moved gently among us, stirring insights about how our inner posture shapes the

Cross and view at Naomi's Knoll, the Holy Lady meditation cabin, and of course the Chapel.

The retreat was about an encounter with our Creator through sharing our faith, prayer, family stories, meals, our personal journeys. Monday was the ultimate encounter as we gathered for Mass in the Chapel.

The sign outside the Chapel doors was a constant reminder of how to spend my time at the Mountain as well as how to live in the Now – “BE STILL and know that I AM”.



We give thanks~

world around us: *how we look at the world is how the world looks at us*. As we considered that our emotions are the energy of the soul, we were reminded that allowing God to reshape our hearts is an ongoing, living process — one that deepens our compassion for ourselves and others. The retreat closed with gratitude, laughter, and a sense of renewed connection — to God, to The Mountain, and to one another.



You are invited to join us at the Mountain on Saturday, Dec 6 at 1 pm.

We will be praying through the Stations of the Cross. Please make sure to dress warmly as this will be outside, rain (snow) or shine!



Remembering and Celebrating the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi ~Kevin Kriso, ofm

Each October 3rd Franciscans remember and celebrate the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi, when Francis's soul was transported into the arms of Jesus while his body remained behind. The Transitus is the culmination of Francis's life and ministry and in a world that tries to shy away from the reality of death, celebrating someone's death, not merely celebrating their life, seems a bit morbid or off putting. For Francis however, and even for all believers, death is a portal to the next world. It is not something to be feared but a natural part of life. Indeed, it is the goal of life.

The Mountain community celebrated the Transitus on the Bona campus with the Campus Friars, Allegany Franciscan Sisters, Franciscan Seculars and other lovers of St. Francis. As always, it was a moving service. We remembered Francis's love for fraternity, poverty, the Eucharist, and Scripture. It helped us to put into context "What is ours to do" today by



Blessing of the Animals

In celebration of the feast of St. Francis, Br. Kevin offered a blessing of the animals at University Ministries this month where people brought their dogs, cats and even a beta fighting fish that showed up in a small travel bowl!

The blessing commemorates St. Francis's deep connection with animals, often communicating with the birds, rabbits, fish, and perhaps the most well known story, with an unsettled wolf. His connection to animals reminds us that we are all one with God's creation.

embracing fraternity, voluntary poverty, the Eucharist and Scripture.

Continued blessings on your journey.

+ What a great gift
WE EACH HAVE RECEIVED
TO SERVE (GOD) and ONE ANOTHER



Humanity at the Border Presentation

~Kristi Crandall '27

Mari Snyder and Br. Kevin's presentation about their personal experiences with the border and watching the challenges that migrants overcome was not only inspirational, but also eye opening. Both Mari and Br. Kevin's stories brought the struggles of migrants to light for us, as well as their hopes, dreams, and resilience. Migrants go through so much more than we would ever think of and the

To Share from the Heart and Listen to Others ~Fr. Stephen Mimnaugh, OFM



"We are human beings and not human doings." Br. Kevin's words pop into my mind when things on campus feel especially busy. Admittedly, I have heard Kevin say this on many occasions with students when describing the blessing Mt. Irenaeus offers: a space to be surrounded by God's creation. It is my privilege to be St. Bonaventure University's Vice President for Mission Integration. My role pulls me in lot of directions, often simultaneously. Thankfully, I enjoy all of them—just not all at once. Kevin's gentle reminder crosses my mind amidst the busyness of university life.

For a few months, it has also been my joy to be invited to preside at Eucharist twice a month to give Fr. Lou an opportunity to be a member of the congregation and those gathered a

presentations and stories really captured that.

Something that stood out to me in Br. Kevin's presentation was the story about a little boy that he was close to. The only way out of poverty for him and other people in that area was to be good at baseball and make it to the big leagues. From Mari's presentation, it was the story of BonaResponds. We do food packing days with BonaResponds here on campus and those bags have little notes in them that are in Spanish and English. The notes share the message that we know that times are difficult, encourage people to not give up, and include the reminder that they are loved. Well, Mari and a friend found one of our notes from those bags in a desert at the U.S.-Mexico border.

These stories make me feel grateful for what I have in life, but also make me feel upset that so many people face such horrific challenges or even death every year just to try and reach a better life somewhere else.

different voice. Having ministered in parishes and the university, I cherish the intimacy of Holy Peace Chapel. I prefer to preach without notes having memorized the points I want to make. Because the worshipping community shares, I don't worry about making every point. Instead, I get to share from my heart and listen to others and the Holy Spirit. It is a gift.

My introduction to the Mountain occurred in 2002 when I entered what we then called the "affiliate year," a year of discernment when men interested in becoming friars—albeit tentatively—experience friar life for the first time. Obviously, I stuck around. My first visit to the Mountain occurred in late autumn. I stayed blissfully alone in St. Joseph in the Pines (there were pines then). As luck or providence would have it, there was a snowstorm, the Mountain lost electricity, and everything was beautiful. This memory of peace greets me every time I visit the Mountain. Therefore, visits leave me just a little better than when I arrived.



**Love in Action: Franciscan
Justice Leadership
Conference
~Aidan Fahy '25**



Students prepare for a Taizé prayer experience during the conference.

This year's Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference was another fantastic opportunity for me to meet with other Franciscan-hearted people of all ages, from fellow students to Franciscan Sisters who have only gotten more compassionate with age. I was so glad to see some of the same folks I met last year and hear about how they have gone back to their communities and done such great work.

The highlight of the conference was our congressional visits, where groups were able to meet with staffers from our Senators and Representatives and gain insights into the way that our government works. Everyone I spoke to about their meetings told me that they were so grateful to have the opportunity to go, and I encourage anyone who is interested in learning about activism and putting it into practice to attend next year!



Sunday Mass at St. Matthew's Cathedral in DC.



Mt. Irenaeus/St. Bonaventure University group outside the Capitol.



**No Empty Tasks:
A Reflection on
the Mountain Fall Workday
~Riley Hacic, '26**



**Arriving Next to a Stranger
and Leaving with a Friend
~Brayden Esposito '29**

Even though I am just a freshman, I can see why people talk so highly of Mt.

This past weekend, I went up to the Mountain to help the friars with some tasks that will prepare them for the winter. I was assigned the task of splitting wood as well as helping to chop parsley after I had completed that task. Before we went outside to work on our assignments, we listened to a short reading that discussed why we should pray before this task and why praying before tasks like this is important. One of the points that stuck out to me is that if we are not doing work (this can be school work, volunteer work or even our careers) to honor and glorify God, there is no point. It's an empty task.

I also found the time up at the Mountain, while I had my ear protection on, to think to myself without distractions. I was able to pray, think about things other than school and prepare myself better for the upcoming week that I knew would be stressful. Not only was I able to have conversations with myself but others up at the Mountain as well.

At the end, we shared what stood out to us and the most important parts of our day, and it was interesting and insightful listening to others.

Irenaeus. It's a place where you can go and leave the stresses of life behind, whether they are academic, social, mental, physical, or a little bit of everything. The Mountain is a place where we reflect on, ask about, and are reminded of God's love. The chapel is my favorite place on the Mountain; it's small yet mighty and serves as a great place for some of the activities we do. When going to the Mountain you can arrive next to a stranger and leave beside them as a friend, and in my experience I have both met and gotten closer with many people that I probably otherwise never would have.

Something else to note is that you aren't just lounging around the whole time; in the free moments you could find yourself helping with making food, doing yard work, or guzzling down a delicious glass of vanilla milk. It's really in these moments where you connect with one another, regardless of age, gender, or any other possible physical difference. On Mt. Irenaeus we are one in the same, brothers and sisters in Christ. If you ever want an adventure, the chance to make new friends, or just need a quick break, Mt. Irenaeus is for you.



Bid High for the Mountain! Annual Auction November 7-16

Get ready for our most exciting event of the year: the **Annual Mountain Auction**! From one-of-a-kind treasures to new unforgettable experiences, this year's auction celebrates our **Franciscan heritage, Bonaventure legacy, and specially curated items**.

This year's lineup is truly extraordinary!

Auction Highlights:

- **Franciscan Pilgrimage for Two to Assisi, Italy** – Sponsored by the Franciscan Pilgrimage Program and led by expert guides, walk in the footsteps of St. Francis and St. Clare, explore sacred sites, and savor authentic Italian cuisine.
- **Original Artwork by Fr. Dan Riley** – Fr. Dan's beautiful paintings, Living Stones and photographs continue to inspire and uplift.
- **Mountain Treasures** – Signed and blessed by our Mountain Friars, including a handcrafted stable by Br. Joe Kotula, delicious Mountain-grown canned goods prepared by Br. Kevin Kriso, and framed icon images of Fr. Dan Hurley and Fr. Dan Riley.
- **Spectacular Experience Packages** – Enjoy a luxury stay at the **Chatham Bars**



Inn on Cape Cod, a scenic **Rockport, MA Airbnb**, golf at the legendary **Beverly Country Club** near Chicago, a peaceful **Chautauqua Airbnb** getaway, a **VIP Saratoga** experience, and **dinner with SBU President** Dr. Jeff Gingerich and his wife, Betsy.

- **Buffalo Bills Fans—This One's for You!** A signed, authenticated **Dion Dawkins jersey**
- **Exclusive “WOJ Experience”**- lunch for you and a friend with St. Bonaventure Basketball's General Manager Adrian Wojnarowski to get the inside scoop on the 2025-26 team and other great highlights.
- Plus, favorites like **Rohrbach Brewing, Cutco Knives, Mountain and SBU apparel, Assisi gifts**, and opportunities to **fund special Mountain needs** that make a lasting impact.

Your generous support makes all the difference — helping us share the **Mountain way of life and ministry** with thousands of students, visitors, and friends each year.

Join us November 7-16 — bid high, bid often, watch your email, visit our [WEBSITE](#), follow us on [FACEBOOK](#) for updates and auction links, and please **spread the word** to family and friends! **Thank you for your continued support!**



Upcoming Events:

Schedule and ways to participate can also be found online [HERE](#).

Every Sunday - Mass is at 11 am with a dish-to-pass brunch following Mass.

October:

Oct 23 - Student Event at the Mountain

Oct 24 - Student Event at the Mountain

November:

November 1-29 - stop by Holy Peace Chapel to add your loved one's name to our Altar cloth to be remembered in prayer.

Nov 1 - Student Event at the Mountain

Nov 2 - After Brunch - Time on the Land (see invite above)

Nov 7-16 - Mountain Online Auction!

Nov 7-8 - Mountain Board Meeting

Nov 14-16 - Student Intercollegiate Weekend at the Mountain

Nov 23 - Mountain Thanksgiving Dinner for Students

Nov 26-28 - Mountain Offices Closed, please call the House of Peace at 585-973-2470

December:

Dec 2 - SBU Tree Lighting on Campus

Dec 2 - Giving Tuesday - Help Us With a Major Project - exciting details to come!

Dec 5 - Student Event at the Mountain

Dec 6 - **1 pm** - Outside Stations of the Cross at the Mountain

Dec 13 - Student Event at the Mountain

Dec 14 - Christmas at Bona's and Blessing of the Brains - on Campus

Dec 23-Jan 2 - Mountain Offices



You are welcome to come to Holy Peace Chapel in the month of November to write the names of loved ones who have passed on our altar cloth. They will be remembered at Mass and prayer services.



This is Chinese Silver Grass. I have seen this around my neighborhood but never this stark white. There was a small patch of this on the road from the Chapel to the Holy Lady Cabin. Looked like Angel wings to me! ~ Dave P.

Closed, please call the House of Peace
at 585-973-2470



These are pickled hardboiled eggs. Pickled in
homemade beet juice, a Br. Kevin creation.
They were delicious. This is one thing you
should try at home. ~ Dave P.

[Unsubscribe](#)

[Mt. Irenaeus](#)

www.mountainonline.org