

“Father, Your will, not my will.”

“**Lord what would you have me do?**” In a dream – or an imaginal state – Francis of Assisi was confronted by God, “Do you want to serve the Lord or the servant?” Francis had just helped a poor knight and embraced a leper. He was caught in a power question of what to do with his life, how do you “give your all?” Over and over this is a core question of discernment, when we feel the desire well up in us to make a difference, to serve others, to make all things new. We truly want to give our all and find the place of power, the place of contribution, where we can make a difference.

Who do I follow? Who will show me the way?

I recently posted an Instagram reflection on a red maple which my father transplanted from Rochester to the lawn of our home overlooking Keuka Lake - a modest little dwelling that he purchased for a family of 7! This little place – especially this tree - signifies for me our roots, the rootedness of what it means to be family, our particular family. Our origins, both with our parents and the home we grew up in, ways we prayed as a family or in our Church community, the neighborhood we grew up in – times of prayer around the table and around one of our beds at night, when we made up prayers - all of what that means and comes together is symbolized in many ways by the red maple that grew in our backyard and who gave up one of its progeny to be rooted above Keuka Lake.

Francis, in his own youth and time of exploration, went off to make a difference in the world. Reflect with us on this short passage from St. Bonaventure’s “First Life of Francis:”

“**Francis set out shortly afterwards**, but when he reached the next town he heard God calling him by his first name as he lay asleep and saying, ‘Francis, who can do more for you, a lord or his servant, a rich man or a beggar?’ When he replied that a lord or a rich man could do more, he was asked, ‘Then why are you abandoning the Lord to devote yourself to a servant? Why are you choosing a beggar instead of God who is infinitely rich?’



Ray and Maureen Dee (longtime friends of the Mountain) received an Honorary Doctorate from St. Bonaventure University at Commencement this year and their children and grandchildren (some of whom are pictured here) were able to attend and celebrate.

Mt. IRENAEUS

FRANCISCAN MOUNTAIN RETREAT

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‘Lord,’ replied Francis, ‘what will you have me do?’ And God told him, **‘Return to your own land (where you began, your very beginning).** The vision which you saw foretold a spiritual achievement which will be accomplished in you by God’s will, not man’s.’ In the morning then he returned in haste to Assisi, joyous and free of care: already a model of obedience, he awaited the Lord’s will.”

In Francis’ dream – his question, “What would you have me do?” opens up with God’s direction, “Go back to your home, to your village, to your neighborhood, to your folks.” God sent Francis home and to his roots, to discover where he was and in whom he found his roots, the very ground of his being.

Over time and in the struggles of his own journey, God’s mercy and compassion pointed Francis to the Incarnation, the “Poor Christ,” the one who became like us so that rooted, grounded in the Cosmic Christ we might realize that we are, each of us, images of God.

We are all rooted somewhere with someone and we need to find where we came from, understand the foundations of our life as we make the big choices of what we will do now and in the future. What is the “ground of our being” – where do we stand? Where and in whom am I rooted? As Christians we find ourselves rooted in Christ, the Tree of Life, in whom all creation “lives and moves and has its being,” the one we also call “Teacher” and “Brother” and “Friend.”

We are seeking and finding, at this time in the human venture as we explore our origins in all creation, that we are seeking and finding where our inspiration came from, what the roots are that we have, so that we understand how we are to grow so that we, together, might form our future. Our confidence and our trust is strong as we realize that others have, over the years, risked this **Gospel manner of life and ministry** because they felt a rootedness in their faith, in Christ, an organic sense of being in the world and profoundly founded in God’s call for them to form this place we call the Mountain.

Our recent Convocation helped us to see our origins and offer each other reflections on our beginnings, our own and each other’s. We are daring to begin to dream again and understand the desire we have to shape a listening place like the Mountain.

Listening, trusting and being ready to follow – to gaze upon Christ - to consider all God is for us, has done for us, and let this heal us, make us - in a contemplative way - imitators of Christ himself. This is our Franciscan journey; to feel the depths of our origins in Christ himself and the movement of his own life, to be obedient to God’s invitation, God’s call to him to be in the world.

“Lord what would you have me do?” “Father, Thy will, not my will.” All these images and convergences teach and educate us as we move ahead as a Mountain community to foster and to participate in the growth and development of a home that is transformational in itself, a place where we can live and find our origins so that we might discern our future.



We welcome others to join us as we renew our Council for Spirit and Life. Still gaining organization and members, the Council is considered a body to support the growth of the Mountain gatherings elsewhere. We want “recipes” and resources for “Mountain in the Home” as well as true



We gather together in prayer and song after a blessed Convocation Weekend of work and reflection.



Over 100 people gathered at Holy Peace Chapel to celebrate the Eucharist during our Convocation.



Jason Damon, our Mountain Companion for the past 5 months, is professed as a Secular Franciscan.



Students from several colleges join us for our Intercollegiate Weekend.

understanding and models of servant leadership in light of the life of Francis and Clare, extending the life of the Mountain beyond the Mountain.

Many of us are hungry for Franciscan spirituality and good books and articles that will help us grow and be formed in prayer and in our own personal lives. These materials that would be transformational for us are those that we hope to collect, making an electronic and virtual library available for others.

We have a great desire to “keep the light on for you here.” We have two weekends in the planning for the summer (see summer schedule in this issue) to further foster the growth and transformation of each of us who will be here. You may want to come at another time and schedule your own time here. Our doors are always open as is the Chapel, and there is usually overnight space available.

Through our Convocation weekend I remained engaged, though I was told I should rest my voice – rest and rest my voice, was my doctor’s directions. This opened for me - to the extent that I listened to my doctor - ways of listening to other voices, even though I did use mine during the sharing time!

Voices rose up, longings and a deep sense of hope, a beginning sense of what we can do, how we are called to do it, helped us know that we are touching into our origins here.

I can see a few faces across the Chapel now, persons coming alert and alive to the moment in which they joined us and our listening to their own response to God. Francis’ question, “Lord what is it you would have me do?” – Return to our origins to find our way to the time where we first noticed ourselves coming alive, that which gave us life.

This is the new birth that Jesus calls us to, each of us, open to the Spirit of God infusing in us imagination and creativity so that we might actively hope and begin to offer others this experience as well. We come from these ancient and forever new origins within ourselves, among us as Church and women and men of other traditions in the world, finding our deep roots we are now called to grow in new and loving service for one another. Found within each of our hearts, our faith as women and men, graces us so that we can participate in the making of “a new Heaven and a new Earth.”

We might reflect on this section from T. S. Eliot’s great poem, “Little Gidding.”

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time ...*

*Peace!
Signatures*

SUMMER AT THE MOUNTAIN



August 5-7, 2016

Transformational Weekend at Mt. Irenaeus
“Rooted In Christ - Rising Up In The World”

(RSVP to Michelle, 716-375-2096, mmarc@sbu.edu)

Summer Evenings of Re-Creation at Mt. Irenaeus

Celebrating the Mountain’s responding to the call of Jesus to “Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole of creation.” (Mark 16:15)

Wednesday Evenings:

June 29, July 6, 13, 27, August 3

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| 5:15 p.m. | Evening Prayer
Followed by Quiet Time
on the Land |
| 6:30 p.m. | Dish to Pass Supper |
| 7:30 p.m. | Eucharist with Discussion
of Theme |
| Theme: | Franciscan Spirituality;
a Practical Approach
to the “Real World” |

Feel free to come to all or part of any evening and to come early to spend time on the land. For any questions about the evenings, call the friars at 585-973-2470.



MT. IRENAEUS WEEKEND OF TRANSFORMATION

Rooted in Christ - Rising up in the World!

Join With Jesus Christ — Make All Things New!



Listening to our Convocation and guided by what we heard, we invite you to join us as we continue to rediscover our origins; the roots of Franciscan Life in the person of Christ who makes all things new.

Through this weekend we will:

- *Reflect on our own lives, the root of our own religious experience and the desires and challenges to serve others.*
- *Draw energy and wisdom from one another, and our origins.*
- *Experience practices and recipes that can be brought to others, so that we might be agents of transformation.*

Join us for this weekend of transformation:

August 5th - 7th

Please contact Michelle at mmarc@sbu.edu or 716-375-2096 to RSVP or answer any questions.

AN UPDATE FROM FR. DAN

I have been able to let many of you know of the health concerns I have had in the past four or five months, what has been discovered, my treatment now and that the first suspicions of cancer have been put aside.

Though I have some more healing before me I already feel stronger, much of the time, and have had my voice – as well as my laugh – return through this healing process.

Your generous remarks, thoughtful prayers and well wishes, have truly touched my heart and been a part of my healing. As I pray for others - knowing you are still praying for me - I am aware, in a deep way, that we are never alone. Thank you very much.

Let us continue to remember Sr. Margaret Carney and others close to us who need and appreciate our prayers and friendship as well.

Dan

WELCOME MIKE FENN – OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Many of us already knew Mike Fenn, though his candidacy for our position of Executive Director was truly a surprise to all. We had been working toward filling this particular position and its relationship to other roles and persons for quite some time. Mike was a Trustee and Chair of our Board of Trustees through some of this time and these formative years.

Mike tells us some of his own on the following page. I can tell you he has been, for a long time, part of, a member of, the Mountain story. You will hear of his student years to his years of marriage, career and fathering his wonderful daughters that he and Julie have brought into the world.

When I first met Mike, and over these many years, I think one of his most significant gifts that he brings to the Mountain is his natural gift (now matured and with the knowledge that he gained from his own life in the marketplace) to “mother, father and brother” the extended spiritual family that Mt. Irenaeus has become. As Mike looks into the future he truly has a familial sense of our life and the capacity to live out those relationships in wonderful ways of leadership.

We welcome with great love and appreciation Mike Fenn. We are grateful for his choice to join us and his already active leadership for Mt. Irenaeus.

Dan

Our First Executive Director Offers Reflections

There are a handful of memories in life that are always close to the surface, easy to recall with great crispness. One that currently stands out for me took place in the Winter of 1991. It was in the laundry room of the original house at the Mountain. I approached Fr. Dan (Riley) as we were cleaning up after a meal during a retreat. In the smaller house it was difficult to find a quiet personal moment with him, and I took advantage of this quick opportunity to ask him if I could spend another summer living in community at the Mountain with him and the other friars. I will forever remember the look of happiness on his face. I now recognize that look as joy and validation that what he was helping create on this hilltop was truly gaining traction.

We had a very similar moment 25 years later, last October, as I called Dan from a corporate conference room, asking him what he thought of me putting my name in for Executive Director. He was up in his cabin on the Mountain, but through the phone I was imagining a very similar response he had in the laundry room of the Other House!

And now, 8 months later, after completing the search and interview process, and my transition from my last professional position, I am four weeks into my role as Executive Director. I often think back to the epiphany that struck me in October with such gratitude, as each new day is a validation that the decision I have made is the right one. This place has always called me in a very deep way, and it has become more and more clear that the future development and sustaining of the Mountain is my life's work.

And what an amazing 4 weeks we have had! My 2nd week included a Convocation – a gathering of over 60 people - young and old - from across the country - all of us with a deep caring about the mission and future of the way of life and ministry of Mt. Irenaeus. We spent the weekend reviewing and adjusting our strategic plans, sharing in prayer, conversation and laughter with one another. It was the best Strategic Planning session I have ever been a part of! The results of the weekend will have us further maturing our way of life and ministry for others. This will happen in many ways, including more fully organizing our way of formation for each other, continuing to call others to live amongst us, and strengthening our relationship with all those we minister to.

My position has me working alongside Fr. Dan in his role as President/Animator and Br. Kevin as Director of Ministries. It is a joy and inspiration working with two men who have committed their lives to this ministry. Together we make up a collaborative management team that is focused on sustaining the mission of the Mountain. So far it's been fun learning from one another, as we each bring our own talents and experiences to our roles.

Over time I hope to connect with many of you, gaining a better understanding of what the Mountain means to you, and how we can work together to ensure it grows for generations to come. Feel free to reach me anytime mfenn@sbu.edu or 716/375-2613.

~ **Mike Fenn, Executive Director**



Friends who came to help us on our spring service day gather for prayer and ready themselves for the day of projects.



Students from SBU and Houghton help Michelle Bednar prepare the earth for seed that will grow the fresh vegetables served at the Mountain.



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"Rooted In Christ - Rising Up In The World," A weekend of personal transformation and hearing our call to enter the world and "Make All Things New In Jesus Christ!" ~ August 5th - 7th.

YOUR GIFTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE – THANK YOU!

Thanks to all who generously donated to our annual 2015-16 Mountain Fund. Through your support we have surpassed our goal and raised more than \$220,000. Your annual gifts provide needed dollars to meet the Mountain's operating budget of \$515,000.

Of course our success wouldn't be possible without all of our volunteers and benefactors. This year we were blessed to receive a \$25,000 match challenge from **Mari Snyder, Hilary and Kevin Van Norstrand**, and **Rob Buckla**. We are thrilled to report that this match was met and exceeded by new and increased gifts of \$500 or more. The continued leadership from **Marv Stocker**, Mountain Fund Chairperson, and all of our phonathon volunteers was once again pivotal to our success.

We are already underway with our efforts for this year's Mountain Fund. Our goal is \$200,000 and we look forward to reaching out to you for your continued generosity of time, talent, and treasure. Your gifts are a blessing to us all!

Please contact us if you would like further information on ways to help us.

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"The Mountain became part of my heart and part of who I am ... I feel so welcomed just as I am. I feel recognized and known, welcomed and wanted. It is a place of God's presence ... the Mountain is home – for me and for all who visit... Thank you for all that you do to make the Mountain what it is because it has been one of the deepest blessings of my time at St. Bonaventure."

~ Hannah McGrath, SBU '15