

**The goodness of others,  
to truly enter into life with others,  
is really at the center of the Good News.**



**Years ago, an early group of Bonaventure students wrote a Mission Statement for what then was called the “Students for the Mountain.” They came to me with the excitement of a band of friends who felt like they had created the Mona Lisa, as if it were an image of the Mountain ministry.**

**“Fr. Dan, take a moment – look at our Mission Statement for the Students for the Mountain. Let us read it for you!” They then stood at my office door with great joy and proclaimed, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature!” (Mark 16:25)**

I am not aware if any of them had read biographies of St. Francis, but, if you have, you will notice that they expressed an adaptation of a Gospel proclamation by Jesus, the very mission that Francis perceived when he read Scriptures himself with a small band of brothers who were intentional about joining him in his way of life to go and bear the Good News to the world.

**Our one-line Mission Statement continues to reflect this sentiment as we communicate that through our Mountain life as we “join with Jesus Christ to make all things new.”** This is a way of talking about Good News in a troubled world, in a time when there seems to be great global tension, natural disasters have struck and there is intentional intervention into the freedom and independence of other nations. Human life and all of our creation cries out for “Good News.”

**Each day at Mt. Irenaeus, the Mountain wakes me to what St. Francis said near the end of his life, “Let us begin now for up till now we have done very little.” We desire to grow with the joy of the journey,**

**MT. IRENAEUS**

**FRANCISCAN MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY**

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the goodness of the possibilities, trusting our capacity to be those who can bring and bear Good News to others. Maybe better said, we desire to live well with one another, with the hope that the peace of the reign of God may take root in our hearts and offer new hope of life to every creature!

**Fr. Lou would say in a homily, "You may be the only Bible that some other person will read."**

So with the sense of a change of understanding of ourselves, as well as a deepening and rich sense of our mission, the message we have to bear to the world became so important to us at the Mountain. We talk about it in different ways as we have grown in a deeper sense of the creative conversation that has us grow and change in our lives. In Latin this is called is, "conversatio." It is a somewhat subtle, sometimes more dramatic, reversal or movement of change within our hearts, within our practice, within our relationships. You can feel the difference; "conversatio," is quite different than discussion. It fills out, in a rich sense, what an active conversation might be wherever one experiences the Good News and shares the experience of its liberation.

**The simple movement is expressed in the ways in which we offer each other renewed or new experiences of deepening life.** It is a type of "ongoing formation" leading to new life as Lent leads us to Christian Easter. This is a very non-stationary or static sense of "coming to know."

It is active involvement with our life and the active involvement within each person's heart to wish to become more "informed, reformed, and transformed."

The meaning of this trilogy might be something like this: informed would be to "see, hear and taste," possibly read about, and certainly begin to reflect on experiences that would begin to make a difference for us. In other words, experiences that lead us to some reforming of ourselves or life, maybe letting Grace in to do that reforming. It becomes an experience of community where others, by their way of being informed, they begin to bring changes, renewal and reformation to our very selves. Through this, the Good News that we are becoming, wants to be brought out to others. This is called "transformation." We are being transformed, moved from people who feel themselves in the background or around the edges of things to being in the very center of change, the renewal of life.

As I write this little reflection for our newsletter, I am struck by how many people have reached me about my book, **"Franciscan Lectio: Reading the World through the Living Word."** I am grateful for their reflections and I am realizing how blessed it is that others are finding that the call within Lectio is not so much to withdraw to find prayer only within, but to "truly go among others." The book seems to be informing a type of reforming for ourselves, a renewal in finding the hope that others too can be transformers of people; part of the transformation of the world and their family, community or the world around them... "Joining with Jesus Christ to make all things new!"

It helps me realize the blessed place that I have learned most about life has been from, "going among" others, particularly youth, and listening to the questions and wondering with them.



Fr. Dan speaking in front of a nice crowd at the invitation of the Olean Public Library.





Fr. Dan sharing a laugh with Br. Tyler Grudi, after brunch in Chicago with a group of student friars.

Every once in a while I have the joy of a bright young face showing up at the door of my office or at the Mountain, and say, "Dan, Fr. Dan, listen, read this, be part of this. This is what we are coming to know. We are finding that we too are called to go out to all the earth and teach all nations the Good News." The goodness of others, to truly enter into life with others, is really at the center of the Good News. We do not stand back or stand outside of life to talk about it, but we come alive and enter into life. This is the reforming and transforming of our own lives as we begin to bring the Good News of the Gospel to women and men of our age.

*Peace!*  
*Fr. Dan*

Being On the Road with the Mountain is different than just your run of the mill travel plans. We move together as pilgrims, aligned through our mission. We look at the multitudes of others around us in a different way. It reminds me of Thomas Merton's words we reflect on regularly, when he's standing on the corner of Fourth and Walnut in Louisville, taking in a city of strangers and struck by the fact that we are all "walking around shining like the sun."

We went on such a trip about a month ago, when the St. Bonaventure's men's basketball team was playing Loyola in Chicago. We have been encouraging one another to "go out to all" lately, and this seemed like a great opportunity to do just that. So we put a plan together to visit the Windy City, to make new friends and visit old ones.

This was a particularly special trip for me as it was the first time I can remember that my wife Julie went On the Road with the Mountain. Faith is an important aspect of our shared lives, and whenever we have a chance to join together in ministry I deeply cherish it.

After flying in on Friday night, our time with others started on a chilly Saturday morning. We had brunch with seven friars who are studying at Catholic Theological Union. This is a step along the way before they become fully professed. We already share relationships with most of them so this was an opportunity to build on those relationships and to support their future aspirations. As some of them have an interest about living in community with us, it may also bring new expressions of our life and ministry to the Mountain.

The afternoon then carried us on to the basketball game, where unfortunately the Bonnies lost, but we still enjoyed wonderful encounters with many alumni who made the trip. It was a typical Bona gathering, retelling old stories with old friends while making new connections with others.

The weekend culminated with the hospitality of our good friends **Rob Buckla** and **Rob Christopher**, inviting us into their home for a Mountain Mass on Sunday. Fr. Dan moved from Liturgy into a shared reflection from his new book. This was such a wonderful reminder that we go out into the world and share Eucharist in unexpected places because these are the places we find God. At times I need such reminders.

Later that afternoon, after enjoying some Chicago pizza, we made our way to Midway Airport and then back to Buffalo. While I think we were all tired from the weekend, we shared an energy from our time On the Road, among many others who "shine like the sun."

~ Mike Fenn



Julie and Mike alongside fellow 1991 classmates – Chris Boyle, Marty Shields, and Kip Alexander.

Here at the Mountain, we as a core community have been sharing deeply with one another the many ways that we “go along” to share the Good News. There are so many ways we do this – in our daily interactions with one another, by sharing a meal with a student on campus or with others during Sunday brunch, by how we try to be present to the person who helps us at the store...it is truly reflected more in how we walk through the world than the actual path we take. I am continually reminded by my brothers that God grants me this opportunity anew every day. Then again, there are perhaps other “larger” opportunities that God might call us to. I wanted to share one such experience with you.

We recently invited a group to the Mountain for a Women’s Overnight of reflection and retreat. This truly started as a sort of “grass roots” movement – a casual conversation here or there among women who came into contact with the Mountain community and who were looking for, longing

for, something “more.” These casual discussions quickly became much deeper, a shared experience of “conversatio” - and I truly felt God calling us to plan a time of “rest and re-creation” that would be specifically set aside for women. We began to reach out to those around us and before we knew it, we had a waiting list of those wanting to be involved!

Approximately 15 women joined us early on a Saturday afternoon. God granted us the most glorious weather of unending sunshine and mild temperatures. We were able to begin with introductions and the voicing of individual needs each one came with; we then moved to quiet time spent in creation without any specific direction or destination and with the intention of just being...being present to ourselves, God and all of the creation that surrounds us. We rejoined for fellowship and a shared meal with each other and some of our Mountain brothers that offered lots of laughter, continued “conversatio,” hugs, and even some tears. The energy in the room was palpable! After dinner, we moved to the Chapel, surrounded by candlelight and music for even deeper sharing around our theme “Just One Thing...A New Beginning.” We helped one another identify obstacles to spending meaningful time with God – and then shared many ways that we might begin “just one thing” that we could do daily that could bring us closer to God, and through that, to those around us. The weekend closed with Mass on Sunday followed by a community brunch.

This was truly an experience of allowing one’s self to be informed, reformed and transformed. It was both a personal journey as well as a communal one. There was something very special about creating a space specifically for women to join together; it was a wonderful reminder of just how powerful the Holy Spirit can be when we open ourselves up to one another in vulnerability – and how empowered we as women might feel to step into whatever God calls us to do, to know that we are children of God, we are loved, and we are enough!

Peace –

~ Karen Pulaski  
Mountain Companion



A “Mountain in Your Home” gathering in Chicago hosted by Rob Buckla and Rob Christopher.





On February 10-11, **Br. Joe Kotula** and I went on a short trip to the Southern US/ Northern Mexican border that was sponsored by our Franciscan Province to learn more about the large scale migration and situation there. We see images in the news and hear various opinions of what is happening but we wanted to see for ourselves. We met migrants from Mexico, Central America, Venezuela, Haiti, China and Albania and were told there are also Africans, Ukrainians and Russians

trying to cross the border. I had understood the fact that people do not undertake such a dangerous, difficult and humiliating trip because things are going well at home. The reality of what we saw and the suffering and hope of the people only confirmed what I already knew. As I watched the people in transit, any one of them would not look out of place walking in any of our cities. What I can't understand is why these people were being detained when all they want is the chance to work in jobs Americans don't want to take. I also remembered that my own grandparents were immigrants who were not necessarily welcomed by "real" Americans who were born here. I think I as their grandson turned out pretty well. So why not give these people the same chance?

Some friars who staffed a parish on the border a few years ago told us that they found themselves offering hospitality to migrants who made their way across but who were tired, dirty, lost, confused, frightened, and hungry. For three years a respite center operated at the parish and literally thousands came through their doors. The friars said that after the people who came in had received a shower, clean clothes, a hot meal and good information on what to do next, that they were then able to relax and smile and feel safe and human again. Only a few parishioners grumbled about all of this commotion but the friars said, "You know, I once heard: When I was hungry, you gave me food. When I was thirsty you gave me a drink, when I was naked, you gave me some clothes." I believe that by doing these kind of simple acts that we are helping to make the kingdom of God tangible.

~ Br. Kevin Kriso, ofm



Images of Provincial friars visiting a church run migrant camp in Mexico.

## SUMMER EVENINGS OF RE-CREATION AT MT. IRENAEUS

Our summer Evenings of Re-Creation will begin with Evening Prayer in the Chapel followed by time on the land and supper.

After supper, join us in the Chapel for Mass and "conversatio." The evening concludes around 9:00 pm.

Our Evenings of Re-Creation will take place on the following Wednesday evenings:

**June 28 — July 5, 12, 19, 26**



## HOLY WEEK

**Palm Sunday - 11:00 am**  
**Mass & Dish To Pass Brunch**

**Holy Thursday - 8:00 pm**  
**Mass of the Lord's Supper**

**Good Friday - 3:00 pm**  
**Liturgy of the Lord's Passion**

**Holy Saturday - 8:00 pm**  
**Easter Vigil**

**Easter Sunday - 11:00 am**  
**Mass & Dish To Pass Brunch**

## Spring Cleanup - Saturday, April 15, 2023

Come help ready the Mountain for summer! Please consider spending time at the Mountain on April 15th working with the Mountain Community doing some spring cleaning and planting.

9:30 am	Meet at the Mountain	12:30 pm	Lunch provided
10:00 am	Prayer and work groups assembled	4:00 pm	Work concludes

Sign up using the form on our website's event page: [www.mountainonline.org](http://www.mountainonline.org)





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*Help us as you can, join us  
when we come to where you are.*

## MT. IRENAEUS ADVANCEMENT UPDATE

**Your Gifts at Work!** We recently added a roof to the porch of St. Joe's. Also, because of ice buildup on the landing we added a roof over the back entrance to the House of Peace, and replaced the roof of the barn which had begun to leak.

These improvements can only happen thanks to the proceeds from our auction and your gifts to the Mountain Fund. We will continue using your gifts to make updates giving our guests a comfortable experience while they visit. Our Buildings and Grounds Committee is joining us this spring to evaluate all our structures to see what is required over the coming years. Your support will help ensure we can make these improvements!

**Thank you for your ongoing support.**

With gratitude, we thank you. Pax et Bonum,

Jackie Lanzillo  
Volunteer Mountain Development  
Chairperson & Board Member

Michael Fenn  
Executive Director

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](http://www.mountainonline.org)). Just click the donate button.

**PLEASE CONSIDER  
JOINING**



**Daniel A. Hurley ofm**  
*Legacy Society*

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