





Mt. Irenaeus Board Meeting
November 11, 2023
McGinley Carney Center for Franciscan Ministry
Minutes

Present:	Paul Aroune Rob Buckla Kathy Colucci Tom Conway, ofm Matrecia James Jimmy Kernan (Zoom) Dianne Kuzia Hills Jeff Gingerich Jackie Lanzillo Greg Licamele Terri Marrie Mike New (Zoom) Otto Rothermel (Zoom) Mike Sullivan (Zoom) Sarino Tropeano Kate Trosch Mary Giardini Joe Kotula, ofm Kevin Kriso, ofm Michelle Marcellin Lou McCormick, ofm Dan Riley, ofm	Excused:
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Meeting began with prayer and reading/discussion of “Descriptions of Mt. Irenaeus Leadership and Service.”


Dan and Kevin Kriso give update on their Assisi trip in October to meet with friars from all over the world. They also spoke of the meetings in Kansas City, which was the creation of the new Province that was formed, “Our Lady of Guadalupe Province.” There are exciting things happening and the Mountain could be a place where members of the Province will gather. Comments:

-  The friar trip to Assisi showed us that the Mountain is unique in the US but not in the world. Many places are doing this type of community around the world and people are having the same struggles. Big thing is that we have friars who try to live the fraternal life, but when there are many visitors, it effects their fraternal life.
-  It was wonderful to be with other friars who are like us and they formed a connection. What the Mountain has to offer the order was very relevant there. Franciscan contemplation does not mean monastic living.
-  The Minister General approves of what the Mountain is doing. The trip to Assisi was affirming.
-  Hoping to continue the conversations perhaps with seasonal Zoom calls.

Discussion on the Assisi pilgrimage taken by many members of the Mountain family. Consensus that it was a worthwhile and enriching experience. Many commented on how it confirmed the life of the Mountain and how we approach the manner of our life and ministry.


Discussion on our foundational documents and how they reflect our life and ministry. Comments:

 Do we need to update any documents?


 The world changed with the pandemic. How did that change the Mountain?


- We remained “open” and were a light for people in isolation.
- What was learned during the pandemic? We are challenged by geographic situation and technology helped us to bridge that gap.
- As we look forward to new people, how do we look to technology to integrate new ideas or new people?
- We need to embrace technology. How do we move forward with being a community and being open to different ideas and hybrid positions?


 This topic calls for more regular communication, not just Board meetings.


 Kathy Colucci stated that many of these questions are being discussed in the conversations being held with Bob Daugherty. She thinks we should wait on some of these questions until Bob Daugherty gives the report.

Further discussion on the life, ministry and personnel of the Mountain:

 We often talk about people like Karen (Pulaski) coming to the Mountain because we need the help.

 Karen spoke of the fact that we have a community within a community. We have Holy Peace Friary and we have Mt. Irenaeus. We need to do a better job of separation. We talk about them together. Moving forward we need to be very careful to keep them separate.


 Friars have a safety net; they have the Province to take care of their needs. When lay people come to minister at the Mountain they are giving up many things: retirement, people to care for you in your old age, etc. We want a community to live in a type of equality, but we are asking them to risk their future when they are old. We cannot forget that laity do not have a safety net and we are asking them to take a risk. Example: Karen has to pay for part of her health insurance since she is not at the Mountain full time right now.


 Our strategic plan should identify these questions.


 Is there a committee that could look into these questions and bring it back to the larger group?


Further information from the Kansas City Provincial meeting:


 The Mountain is very well known throughout the country now, and is respected.


 We are trying to capitalize on that to attract more friars to visit and stay. They found that friars were interested in possibility.

 It was stated that Kevin is well known in the Province and could be asked to leave the Mountain to pursue other ministries. He believes the Mountain needs a succession plan for when that happens.


 It was asked if the friars have a choice in where they minister. Yes, they can make their preference known, but ultimately the Province will decide where they are most needed – the friar’s preference is taken into consideration.

 Kevin shared with us that Bill McIntyre, ofm, is interested in living at the Mountain for 2-3 months in discernment. He wants to do a wellness retreat and then maybe see if he wants to stay at the Mountain. He is coming at the beginning of December. He will be here for at least 3 months.


 Mike Fenn pointed out that there is a very clear process to bring in a Mountain companion. There is no process for friars. There should be some kind of joint discernment for the Mountain too if they are going to be a part of the community.

 Jimmy Kernan had a few thoughts:

- The friars in formation are “free agents.” Each friar experiences many different ministries while in formation. What they try to consider is where God is leading them, where are they being called?
- One conversation the Mountain needs to have with these young friars is to let them know that the Mountain is a great ministry and we would love to have them – here are the reasons....it would be good for you because this is what you will learn and it will help you grow as a friar. Let them know it would be beneficial for their formation.
- Jimmy talks to young friars about the summer experience at the Mountain. After the summer, perhaps they do their one-year rotation at the Mountain. They might enjoy it because they are looking for fraternity life. He is promoting SBU and Warming House and other opportunities. Maybe others joining him on that conversation would be helpful.

 Fr. Lou spoke briefly on his experience in Kansas City:

- Lou has been a member of the Province for 64 years and it was moving and renewing.
- It was moving when the HNP Provincial resigned and gave the seal to the new Province. He felt that it was not an ending but a beginning. Most friars who were there felt the same way.
- It is going to take a while to get everything together. Amen to what is happening!

 Br. Joe gave some comments:

- It was powerful and emotional for many people.
- Holy Peace Friary and Mt. Irenaeus – we try to live like Francis, but even Francis was told to set up rules. We are not asking the Board to do things for us.
- If there are no friars, who do we have to guide the future residents.
- We should not be fearful that people would leave because they can always say no. Do not let fear rule, go back to prayer and trust. Push past the “we have to survive” mentality.
- An Executive Director needs to be in contact with and in consultation with the friars.
- The board needs to be in direct consultation with the Province.
- There is a friar community and a Mountain community. There needs to be a separation.

The Executive Committee meeting at the last Board meeting gave everyone present items to think about and discuss with the larger group again according to Paul Aroune. They felt it was important to have conversations with all members of the Mountain team and friars. Thoughts/concerns:

 Do we need an interim Executive Director?

- ✚ During the MELT call it was discussed what Mike does in a structural way. What does he focus on daily/weekly/monthly? He was asked to take a couple weeks and list his responsibilities in case someone had to step in.
- ✚ Then it must decide if the structure works. Paul thinks it does.
- ✚ What does an exec director look like? What is the expectation of living the life? What is reality of life? Bob Daugherty is reviewing things and Kathy will give us more details.

Kathy Colucci gave a brief rundown of the meetings with Bob Daugherty:

- ✚ The foundational documents talk about prayer and relationships. How do the three roles (Founder (Dan Riley), Ministry (Kevin Kriso) and Business (Mike Fenn) work together? These talks began in December of 2022, before Mike gave notice.
- ✚ Mike Kasperski has also been in on these meetings. He was working part of the ED role before Mike Fenn. Mike K. is a great sounding board.
- ✚ They are looking for the clear purpose of each role.
- ✚ Some conversations have been painful, but honest which is what is needed.
- ✚ They are redrafting the job descriptions. Looking for clarity in roles. Who has ownership of any steps to go forward?
- ✚ Looking at the view of how the Mountain works in 3-5-10 years?
- ✚ Who needs to be consulted before the decision is made and who needs to be informed afterwards?

Comments/questions:

- ✚ There needs to be regular communication between all parties of the Mountain team/friars/etc.
- ✚ What does regular communication mean to us? Face to face? Email? Phone calls? Zoom?
- ✚ Mike, Kevin and Dan have been meeting weekly for 2 hours. There are many issues to go over.
- ✚ Confusion on what is "mine" to do for each of them.
- ✚ How/when, can/do they follow up?
- ✚ Do they have access to each other?
- ✚ There are multiple operational questions to be solved.
- ✚ Suggested that the RACI model would be helpful. (Responsibility assignment matrix)
- ✚ What are the rules/laws for a 501(c) (3)
- ✚ Karen pointed out that it is not realized that the Mountain core community works from first thing in the morning to late at night. These issues are not just time management, they affect the whole community. We need to work together and row in the same direction. We all are going in different directions because we love all the opportunities that come up for us. We fall apart because we try to do everything.
- ✚ We are a volunteer driven organization. We need a staff member who organizes those volunteers. It is a daily job to sustain these relationships, the volunteers as well as the "staff."
- ✚ Who is responsible for defining the structure?

General discussion on the last ED search, bringing on new Board members, NYS rules for non-profits.

Comments/questions:

- ✚ Are we a mission with an institution or an institution with a mission? It starts with the mission and the institution carries out the mission. We need to stay grounded with the mission.
- ✚ We need clarity around the roles of mission. What is the basis of the Mountain at this time?
- ✚ In the last 10 years, NYS changed many rules around non-profits.
- ✚ Kathy asked if there is some kind of training through NYS that lets board members know their responsibilities.
- ✚ There is a sense of distance between the Board and the Mountain community. How do we talk more? Nobody is holding things back. Nobody is being left out, there is just a lot happening.
- ✚ How much communication needs to be spelled out and explicit so there are no misunderstandings?

Discussion on Mountain relationship with University Ministries at Bonaventure:

- ✚ What will new ED's relationship be with the current administration of U. Min.?
- ✚ Karen is working hard to collaborate with U. Min. on projects. They worked together to take a group to the Franciscan Action Network conference. It went very well.
- ✚ Jeff Gingerich is leading the "Three Branches" meetings with the Mountain, SBU and Campus Friary. That will help define our relationship with U. Min. staff.
- ✚ Fr. Dan stated that the "On the Road" ministry is a partnership with SBU and the events are going well. This is a ministry done for the University.

Discussion of the relationship between the Board/friars/Executive Director:

- ✚ Fr. Dan feels he had more access to the Board in prior years. He used to talk to the Board Chair on an almost daily basis. That does not happen any longer.
- ✚ The ED is looked at as a bridge between the Board and Mountain community, not all the time, but for some communication.
- ✚ Fr. Dan feels we are not communicating outside of meetings. How does the Board take a role beside the ED?
- ✚ It was pointed out that in some ways, before we had an ED, the Board Chair acted as one. Some of the duties the Chair took on are now the responsibility of the ED.
- ✚ Primary duties of the Board are to hire, fire and review the ED. The Board can ask for input from committees, friars, staff, etc. and then review the situation.
- ✚ The friars feel there is a distance between the Board and themselves and this puts constraints on decision making.
- ✚ Kevin pointed out that we are all friends at the Mountain also. We have long histories with each other. This aspect can put more strain on a situation and that can cause distance – that is just human nature.
- ✚ There needs to be a dialogue between all members of the Mountain community.
- ✚ What are our internal reviews? Example: Michelle reports to Mike, he evaluates her. Should the Board survey be done every two years?

- ✚ We all live the life and ministry in different ways: The friars are 24/7; Karen is splitting time during the year; Michelle and Mary serve through the contacts they have at the office; Mike lives at the Mountain a couple days a week; Martha stays at the Mountain a couple days a week; the Board lives it through their work for us. There are many ways to experience the Mountain. If there is only one way to experience the Mountain then we are not living our mission. We live a life to give away. Even the person who comes for an hour, they learn something about being Franciscan. It is all part of the big picture.
- ✚ Jeff suggested that restorative evaluations are a better way. What is the role of the Board in this discussion? One of the primary roles of a Board member is evaluation of the ED. Jeff, as President of SBU, is responsible for making sure all the Deans, etc. are evaluated. He needs trust and power to these tasks. The confusion between a friar and a staff member needs to be clarified.
- ✚ We need a date set for these evaluations to be done.
- ✚ It was pointed out that Mary, Michelle and Mike already do evaluations each year. The Personnel Committee gets together and decides raises, etc. They do an informal evaluation of Mike and decide raises for him too. This process has been informal; do we need to make it formal? Yes, it does. Katie Trosch will take responsibility for that to happen.
- ✚ Fr. Dan pointed out that the friars are not employed, they are committed to what they do. How do you evaluate that situation?
 - We do not evaluate friars, but the job the friar does for the Mountain and then have a discussion.
 - What defines the difference between Holy Peace Friary and Mt. Irenaeus work?
 - What does it look like for other friars who may want to come here?
- ✚ Evaluations come after the defining of the role. Are all the roles defined?
- ✚ Kathy Colucci suggested talking to Bob Daugherty about actually focusing on the job roles and responsibilities at the next meeting they have together.

It was discussed to move the “Cottage” discussion to a later time, either next Board meeting or a Zoom call for the Board. At the last meeting, the Cottage project was put on hold. It was also said that the Cottage Committee asked for money for the project and the Board said yes, but did not specify an amount.

Mike Fenn gave an update on the Strategic Plan. Highlights:

- ✚ Mike plans to stay with the Mountain until May, unless he finds a job.
- ✚ Mike feels he was good at managing his duties for the job, but was not good at managing with the community at the Mountain.
- ✚ The core community needs to finalize a process for bringing new people into the community. Karen stated that everyone has a different opinion and they need to conceptualize it better. Dan feels first new people need to be introduced to our charism. It needs start with a plan from the core community. They know the resources. Does it fall under Dan’s job description? Dan believes it does. The Board would like to have a time frame determined to get this done.
- ✚ Jeff Gingerich talked about the meetings between the “Three Branches” that have taken place so far. There have been 2 meetings thus far, both lasting 4 hours. Jeff is considering adding more branches to the group; Holy Peace Friary and the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany. Jeff will

reconfigure who will be at the next meetings. He is moving towards written documents between SBU and the Mountain.

- ✚ Mike Fenn talked about updating our mission statement. Some feel it is not understood and needs new wording. Dianne suggested something like, "Mt. Irenaeus is an intentional Franciscan Community that offers peaceful hospitality."
- ✚ Mike spoke about our physical master plan. It is scopey and large. When ready to update we should hire a consultant.
- ✚ There were meetings on the comprehensive advancement plan, but it was decided that we should have a pause until we get things figured out and the dust settles. Fr. Dan stated that a pause is not a stop. We need to develop a lateral conversation and have a true relationship with SBU.
- ✚ Jeff reported that SBU is in the semi-final stage for hiring an Advancement VP. When hired Jeff wants that person to renew conversations with the Mountain.

Terri Marrie reported in for the Nominations Committee. She reviewed the job bio on Sr. Kathy Dougherty and recommended her for the Board. **Motion by Jackie Lanzillo** – vote Sr. Kathy Dougherty onto the Mt. Irenaeus Board. Seconded by Greg Licamele. Unanimous approval.

The Nomination Committee is still in talks with Matt Cressler to join the Board. He is going to join the Communications Committee in January.

Jackie Lanzillo gave report on the 2023 Auction. Overall very positive. Raised - \$32,474 with fund a need being \$4,800.

Mary Schlosser has resigned from leading the Auction after 2023. Jackie wants to honor her in some way.

Greg Licamele reminded everyone that Giving Tuesday is coming up on November 28th. He and Mary G. are working on advertising that to our benefactors.

Mike Sullivan, Buildings and Grounds will have a call on the solar batteries and Dean will join that call.

Mike Fenn is still engaging Mr. Habermehl about purchasing his land.

Meeting adjourned.

Next Board meetings:
February 3, 2024 – Zoom
April 27, 2024 – at Mountain