

**Giardini, Mary D.**

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**From:** Mt. Irenaeus <mgiardin@sbu.edu>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 27, 2023 10:32 AM  
**To:** Giardini, Mary D.  
**Subject:** "Making All Things New" April 2023 - Fr. Dan's reflection, visitors to the Mountain, and more!



## Making All Things New

April 2023



[Fr. Dan reflects on the peace of humble service.](#)

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## **Franciscan Volunteer Ministry Retreat Reflection: Katie Sullivan, Executive Director**

Mt. Irenaeus has been a sacred place for generations of the Franciscan Volunteer Ministry (FVM) community. FVM first came to the Mountain in 1989, and a tradition that has continued for our yearlong, faith formation and volunteer program is to have one of our annual retreats on the Mountain.

This March, we had our Spring Retreat with the Mt. Irenaeus community. Some of the words we have used to describe our time include: rejuvenating, peaceful, encouraging, hopeful, perspective, simplicity, spiritually enlightening, and “retreat — one of the truest forms of a retreat I’ve been on.” We delved deeper into Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* and its invitation for us individually, communally and as a society.

We shared in a contemplative hike one night, drinking in the stillness of the night and the beauty of the stars. We delighted in sledding and in feeding the birds from our hands. We even had a hermit day, a dedicated opportunity for individual reflection and time in creation. One evening, we were also blessed to have about 10 people from St. Bonaventure and a few of our Alums join us; having their insights and experiences further nourished our souls! Overall, we relished being in the “here and now.” We shared our faith in prayer and conversation. We broke bread together, helping in preparation of our meals, celebrating their deliciousness, and helping in cleaning up afterwards. We had joys that bubbled into laughter, and tears resulting from deep sharing. Experiences of mutual listening and sharing brought greater depth to existing relationships and opened up opportunities in new ones.

As always, we are ever so grateful for our Retreats with the Mountain community!

So you can hear from many of us, here are a few other reflections on the experience:

“It was a beautiful time of quiet and collecting myself. It was a blessing to be there and pray with FVM apart from the busy-ness of our ministry sites, and to reflect on who we are before creation.”  
~ Hugh Macsherry, OFM

“On the Mountain, I felt comfortable and at ease with everyone there. New people felt like old friends and I could easily talk about personal experiences without fear of judgment. In fact, I felt encouraged to share. My favorite moments were when we would be invited to talk about our experiences and everyone there was welcome to share. And afterward, we would talk or reflect on what was shared, hours and even days later.” ~ Kristyn Demers, FVM

“Being at Mt Irenaeus is like putting the brakes on our hectic deadline-driven lives and gives us an opportunity to rest in the embrace of God's Grace, to appreciate life in general and our blessings in particular.” ~ Michael Duffy, OFM

“It was helpful to take a step back to enjoy nature, communal meals, and silence after busy and stressful days of ministry. Also, having quiet times, conversations, and walks around the land stripped down our usual lives to the most simple aspects, which I really appreciated.” ~ Joe Fenerty, FVM

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## Franciscan Intentional Communities: Mike Fenn

In March, we hosted a half dozen friends who joined us for a long weekend of reflection and planning. Our common goal was to talk about Franciscan Intentional Communities, to share an experience of such a community at the Mountain, and to support those who are seeking to join or evolve one themselves.



What is a Franciscan Intentional Community? These communities are:

- **Ongoing relational gatherings of people, inspired by Francis & Clare, who choose to cultivate a shared, Spirit-led life through diverse expressions of community.**
- **Circles that honor the dignity of each living creature through mutual kinship, responding to the needs of the world through both prayer and contemplation, and practicing authenticity, mutual vulnerability and simple living.**

This conversation and consideration of an expansion of life came out of our new relationship as part of the Franciscan Federation. We welcomed those who joined us to enter into our intentional community with us, sharing in our prayer practices and helping prepare and clean up after our meals.

We officially established ourselves as the Franciscan Intentional Community Network (FICN), and we affirmed the group who gathered to be part of a coordinating committee moving forward. Part of our upcoming work includes creating a database of Franciscan communities across the country, promoting these communities with our other Franciscan friends, and in virtual communication, and creating a website that would share documents to help other communities in a variety of ways.

While we got plenty of work accomplished, our time together also cultivated important relationships that will steward this work. There is a larger Franciscan community out there than I



realized a few years ago, and the Mountain is becoming more engaged in that world, which will help sustain and grow ourselves into the future!



### Her Campus - Spring Workday Trip

Our Her Campus club had a wonderful time working at the Mountain this month during their Spring Cleanup. What sparked our decision to attend the cleanup was a brand deal we secured with Garnier, who in return for the products, asked us to participate in a sustainability project or something that assists the living Earth. What better place to complete this than at the Mountain?

Most of the women had never been to the Mountain before, so there was some sense of wonder as we drove up that morning. As soon as we got there, we felt welcomed and at peace. The weather was perfect, the conversation was flowing, and we were having fun while being productive. We did a variety of activities such as wood splitting, cooking, trail clearing, and indoor deep cleaning. By the end of the day, the time had flown by and we were much closer than we were a few hours before. We are so thankful that we were able to work with the Mountain this semester and we cannot wait to come back!



### Allie Leis: Reflection from her time at the Mountain during Holy Week

I've come to the Mountain yearly for Holy Week and Easter since my freshman year at St. Bonaventure in 2010. There is beauty inherent in the ritual and tradition of Holy Week Masses, and in the newness of the wildlife awakening in the Spring. One event I look forward to every year on Holy Saturday is the creation of a lamb cake. Much like any visit to the Mountain, making the lamb cake is both familiar and new each time. Though it's the same process of baking and group decorating, differences in people and circumstances (and occasionally an under-greased baking pan) result in an ever-changing and often reflective experience. I find the simplicity and fellowship of working together to craft this little cake to be healing in much the same way as time on the land or in the Chapel; there is a peace and contentment in the soul that comes with performing simple tasks in communion with others, which has always been part of the spirit of the Mountain. Though I'm planning to remain in Michigan long-term, I will return each year for Holy Week as long as I am able. What better place is there to celebrate the hope of new beginnings!





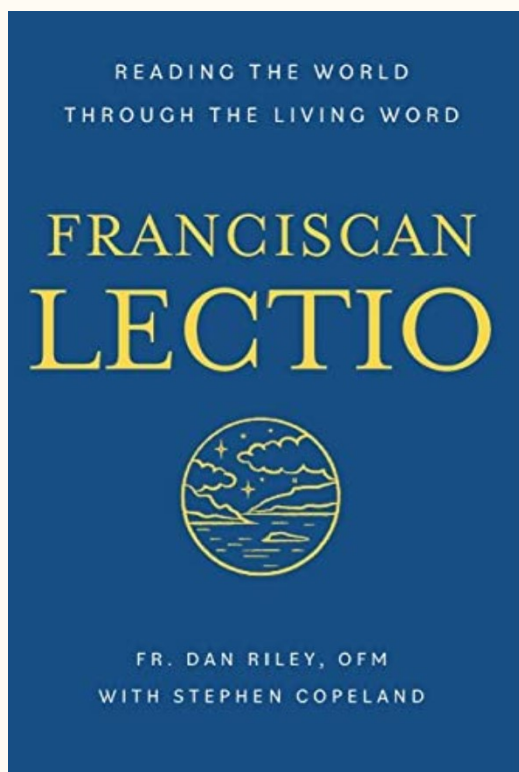
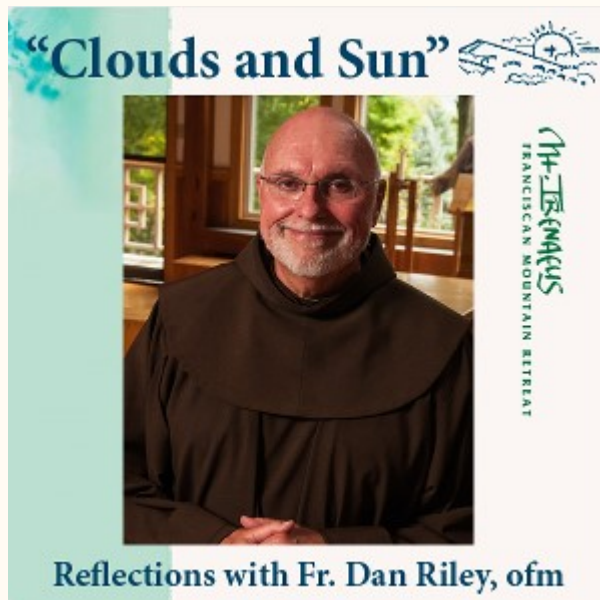
### Upcoming Events:

[schedule can also be found online here](#)

**April 30:** Mountain on the Road in Atlanta, GA - [click here for more details](#)

**May 1:** Mountain on the Road in Charlotte, NC - [click here for more details](#)

**June 28 and July 5, 12, 19, 26:** Evenings of Re-Creation



### Fr. Dan's Podcasts

["The Truth of our Easter Journey"](#)

["Don't Let Fear Stand in the Way"](#)

[You can find more podcasts, and many other resources at mountainonline.org/be-still-and-pray.](#)

You can also [check out our video library on our YouTube channel](#), which includes reflections from the friars and Mountain Companions, and behind-the-scenes looks at our way of life.

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The Mission of Mt. Irenaeus is to join with Jesus Christ in "Making all things new!" (REV. 21:5)

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