

Giardini, Mary D.

From: Mt. Irenaeus <mgiardin@sbu.edu>
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 11:00 AM
To: Giardini, Mary D.
Subject: "Making all things New!" October 2023 - Meet Natalie, FAN, MOTR, Workday, Auction, Events... and more!



Making All Things New

October 2023



Fr. Dan invites us into the seasons of Franciscan community at the Mountain and upon God's earth.



Meet Natalie Pronio, our new ministry coordinator!

Tell us a little bit about yourself!

I grew up on a farm near Hershey, PA with my three siblings, and all of us have a deep love of nature, exploring, travel and good food. My family owns an Italian grocery store in Hershey called Pronio's Market which my great-grandfather opened in 1919. My dad still runs it today. I graduated from Bona's in 2009 with a degree in Journalism/Mass Communication, and have worked in the press office of the PA Attorney General, in production and marketing for small publishing companies, and as a content writer. For the last 12 years I've worked in parishes in PA and MD in campus, youth, and young adult ministry.

What is your exact job title at the Mountain and what are your day-to-day roles?

I am the new ministry coordinator for the Mountain, and so far it's been a lot of work and a ton of fun! We're still figuring out how this position will develop over the year, but for right now one of my biggest roles is student engagement and relationship building. I'm doing my best to meet

as many students as possible to build relationships on campus, and working with the friars and Mountain team to lead events at the Mountain for students as well as for our local community.

What drew you back to Bona's after years away?

It's so funny – I wasn't really looking for a new job; but multiple fellow alumni sent me the ministry coordinator job posting for the Mountain and said, "this sounds like you." At first I kind of brushed it off but after three different people suggested it to me, I figured I may as well apply and see what happened. Being back on campus and at the Mountain for my final interview was so powerful – it really reminded me of what I love about Bona's and the Mountain, and I had a deep sense of peace about the possibility of returning. The incredible sense of community and the Franciscan tapestry that weaves through everyone on campus and at the Mountain are some of the wonderful gifts I experienced as a student, and I recognized them immediately when I came back.

What is your favorite part about connecting with students?

Bona's students and faculty are such a unique group of people – I think this might be an opinion held by a lot of alumni - but as I get to know the people currently on campus, it's apparent that that uniqueness is ever present. It's been so wonderful to connect with students in this past month, and I've loved hearing about their families, what brought them to Bona's, what they're enjoying (and dreading) about their chosen majors...just really getting to know people and learning from them about what they need.

What are you most excited for in your role for the rest of the academic year?

I really struggled internally my first year or so on campus and being at Mt. Irenaeus as a student was one of the reasons I chose to stay at Bona's, so now being so present both on campus and at the Mountain in a new way is a huge gift. I'm really looking forward to working with the Mountain and UMin teams to serve students, and to welcoming as many people as possible to the Mountain – especially anyone who has not yet had the chance to experience everything the Mountain has to offer!

Anything else you would like to share :)

I'm a huge fan of good books, music, movies, and conversations; I always have snacks and candy in my office; I love to hike and explore new places! Come visit me in UMin!



Our Path With A Justice Circle

~ Karen Pulaski

Have you ever heard of a Franciscan Justice Circle (FJC)?

Inspired and supported by The Franciscan Action Network, "FJCs are local grassroots affinity groups, inspired by the Franciscan charism, that unite to advocate for social and environmental justice. They are independent, ongoing, volunteer-led groups empowered to ... engage in important local issues, challenging policies that perpetuate injustice and advancing policies of peace, justice, and care for creation through advocacy and action ... (Franciscan Action Network Website)."

Late last fall, Anne-Claire Fisher who is a professor at St. Bonaventure University as well as a Secular Franciscan and active community member at Mt. Irenaeus, approached a group of us with a desire to start a Justice Circle here in Western NY. Many responded enthusiastically and our Justice Circle was born! Our circle is varied, made up of other SBU faculty, members of Mt. Irenaeus, 3 sisters of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, staff from SBU's Campus Ministries, as well as caring community members. Our hope is to be able to include students this year as our circle grows and matures.

While it took several discussions and deep sharing, our group eventually decided to focus on advocacy, education and development of student leadership related to Pope Francis' Laudato Si (Care of Creation). We felt we were in a unique position by being surrounded and supported by a Franciscan culture and mission, a well-educated faculty, access to research, and a large student body that expressed an interest in care of creation. All Justice Circles are offered support by the Franciscan Action Network and it was through that organization we learned of a Youth Leadership Conference being held in Washington, DC this month that focused on creating real change related to Laudato Si (please see www.franciscanaction.org to learn more about this conference). Thanks to a very generous grant from the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, Mike Fenn and I, along with Alice Miller Nation, Director of SBU Campus Ministries, to take 7 students to this conference for what we hoped would be a transformational experience! Students had the chance to learn from many speakers, network with students from other Franciscan colleges and universities, and experience a Justice Walk on Capitol Hill. The weekend culminated with offering an opportunity for role playing in preparation for our face-to-face congressional office visits which were planned for the last day of the conference.

FJCs are an organic extension of our Franciscan traditions and offer an opportunity for prayer, reflection and deep sharing that also goes hand in hand with "taking this to the marketplace," allowing us to put our faith into real concrete action. We are each called by God to find our own place in caring for creation as well as to advocate and care for the marginalized among us who experience the greatest impact of our current climate change challenges, to be a voice for those who have no voice but bare the biggest burdens.

"FJCs are open to any 'Franciscan-hearted' individuals – lay or professed, and not limited to Catholics – who are called to this advocacy. The Circles uniquely provide a space where people with Franciscan hearts can unite in their desire to actively live a holistic lifestyle of justice that embraces both charity and advocacy (Franciscan Action Network website)." There are several FJCs in the nation. While each circle has its own unique focus and direction, we are all connected to each other - we are all one. Together, and with God's love and guidance, I believe we can make a difference. Are you perhaps feeling a call to join or begin an FJC in YOUR community? Contact us for a place to start.

FAN Justice Leadership Conference - A Student Reflection

To say this trip changed my life would be a wild understatement.

To begin, this trip would not be possible without the grant our school recieved. I am so, so thankful for all the work that was put into the grant research and writing, the funding itself, and the general planning of the conference done by FAN staff and many volunteers.



When we began the trip, I knew a few faces from our school, but that was it. By the end, I was so sad to leave the new family I had made. From less serious moments such as swing dance lessons or a Bill's game veiwing, and more serious times such as deep, reflective prayer, I learned so much from the youth and mentors around me.

We started the weekend looking internally through panels, small group discussion, individual reflection, even art! How do I connect with nature? What is Laudato Si calling me, and the Franciscan family, to? What points along my spiritual journey have I heard God calling me to protect His creation?

After this reflection, we turned to action. We all gathered because we felt the call to protect our common home. What do we do with that call? Lobby.

One portion that spoke to me was a reflection on "holy rage". For most of my life, I have tended to be a bit of a more pessemistic person. I feel angry about the injustice constatly swallowing our world. Listeing to this panel on leadership and where we channel our 'holy rage' affirmed some of these emotions. Of course we are mad about the state of our world, we should be! But the real question is, what do we do with that emotion? We use it to make positive change.

So, the next few days were spent planning for our trips to Capitol Hill to meet with members of the House of Representatives, specifically asking for co-sponsorship of two pieces of legislation, the Environmental Justice for All Act and the Justice for Black Farmers Act. After hours of prepwork, role-playing and research, we headed out for the Hill on Monday morning.

I had the opportunity to meet with two different offices, the office for Rep. Tonko of NY and the office for Rep. Pascrell of NJ (my home state!). While we met with their staffers rather than themselves, I learned so much about articulate speech, body language, policy and the power just one person can make. We were not made to act alone; God made us in community! When we feel alone, use that drive

to find others like you to make a difference. I felt the power of the entire Franciscan family through those meeting on the Hill.

While we await to see if cosponsorships increase, after we have a new Speaker of the House, I pray that they heard us with the ears of Christ. I am forever changed, and so thankful to have learned from those around me at this conference.



Francis Overnight Reflection, Julia Babcock

Mt. Irenaeus has a magnetic effect on people, drawing them in when they least expect it. My first experience on the Mountain was during my orientation. I stayed the night before with people who have now become my closest friends. This month, the Francis Overnight was an opportunity I could not refuse; the lure of the mountain made the decision to go very easy.

When I arrived on the Mountain, I could feel the air around me change. The air was cleaner, the leaves were more colorful, and the view was incredible. One of my favorite things about the Mountain is the majority of the food is grown and harvested by those on the mountain. The first thing I did when I arrived was collect lettuce, squash, and eggplant from the garden to prepare dinner for the night.

At Mt. Irenaeus everyone lends a hand in every meal. It is one of the most beautiful things about the community there. I was put on sauce duty, which was a learning curve for me. I had never made pasta sauce with so many extra ingredients before. I added too much water to the sauce, but we used vegetables and extra ingredients to make it thick enough for sauce. I was encouraged to try the sauce, and it was incredible. I usually don't try new foods, so it was amazing to try something new I made which tasted so good. It was so fun to work in the kitchen with everyone around me. Although sometimes it was hard to maneuver, the beauty came from everyone being together.

My favorite part of the night was our night walk. With no lights, we had to simply follow the person in front of us to the chapel. It was incredibly

Fall 2023 Work Day Reflection, Matthew Lyons

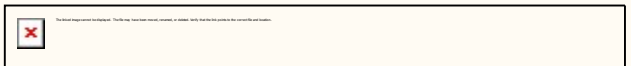
Many of my friends and colleagues had encouraged me to visit

Mt. Irenaeus over the years, but I never headed their advice. To end this year's September, I decided to take my first trip to the Mountain.

When I arrived, I was met with few familiar faces, coffee, and snacks. After getting the chance to meet others who decided to spend their Saturday at the mountain, we gathered as a group to tackle different projects. The work we would be doing was simple, but necessary to help provide and maintain this place.

By the time lunch came, we all worked up an appetite and were grateful to have a warm meal in front of us. What started as breaking bread with strangers finished as if we were just catching up with each other. Once we returned to complete our work, the time seemed to fly before we were met feeling accomplished in the day.

Prior to heading our separate ways, we gathered one last time to reflect on our tasks. Looking around the room, the same people who I once didn't know, I could now recognize. It wasn't just the work we did or the meal we shared, but in the short time we were there we formed a community. One common thing we found in our reflection was we all gave back to a place that gives so much. It truly is in giving that we receive. Today, I now encourage those in my life to visit the Mountain as I look forward to my next visit.



peaceful, bringing me closer to the Mountain, and myself. The walk made the reflection that night more emotional than it ever had before.

When we woke up the next morning to leave the mountain I felt so refreshed. I was ready to take on the world once again. Mt. Irenaeus is one of my favorite parts of my experience at St. Bonaventure University so far. It has become my oasis - a place to escape when I need it most. The mountain has brought me peace, belonging, and love.



Mountain in Your Home in New England

Reflection by: Kate Nolan Clemens ('84)

I was privileged to be a part of and witness to a special evening of care, love and grace in the warm and inviting home of Tim and Kim Brown in Connecticut on a recent September night. Fr. Dan Riley, accompanied by St. Bonaventure's favorite former alumni director Joe Flanagan, gathered a group of local Stamford friends, Bona grads and friends of the Mountain for a Mountain in Your Home. The intimate group of 15 unique individuals joined in deep conversation, prayer, reflection and uplifting support of one another.

I wasn't surprised that the evening produced a "spiritual camaraderie." Some of the group already had close friendship bonds, but what always catches me a little bit by surprise at Mountain gatherings is the willingness of individuals to open up to other unknown people in the circle. But it's the acceptance, openness and love intrinsic in Mountain gatherings that make it "ok" to be vulnerable and bond together in pursuit of a deeper meaning in life. I'm always thankful for these opportunities to share a common thread with strangers and new friends that lead us back to the Mountain.

Mountain on the Road Gatherings

Coordinated by: Joe Flanagan, SBU '74

I recently finished traveling with Fr. Dan to Boston and Connecticut and I was reflecting on our travels that we've taken over the past 30 plus years. "Mountain on the Road," and the smaller and more intimate "Mountain in Your Home" gathering, is an outreach to our alumni and friends of Mt. Irenaeus and St. Bonaventure University.

It's two journeys wrapped into one. The first is the actual travel. We meet ahead of time with the team to review logistics and what part each of us will take - i.e. who will read, lead the petitions or witness at that evening. It might be as simple as who is going to play the music or greet guests as they arrive.

Together with Fr. Dan, Bona students and frequently with Br. Joe, we have traveled to over 200 places in 21 states meeting hundreds of friends of the Mountain and Bona's. We gathered in churches, retreat centers, homes, hotel rooms, basements and even once at Disney World. Sometimes we meet in small

groups, more often in much larger ones and once a hundred or more before our women's NCCA basketball game in North Carolina.

It has been a journey in another way - a spiritual journey - especially with and for our students. This spiritual sojourn is the core of why we go On the Road. The students bring enthusiasm and points of view that add much to our Mountain on the Road experience. Their leadership in many ways helps to open up the conversations during our gatherings. As Fr Dan often says "they are ministers in training." Each of our programs has a different feeling - a reflection of those in the room - the sharing, laughter, deep conversations, sometimes just Holy silence. Our guests bring into the room their personal journey and leave refreshed with new spirit that that could not be predicted in advance.

For me - the growth I've seen in my spiritual trip can be attributed to the program, but also to the conversations Fr. Dan and the students engage in the while traveling. It might be over a meal, or just talking in the car on our way to the next stop . Finally our "Mountain on the Road" travels would not be possible without the generous support of our friends John and Kay Meisch.

Join us for our next one!



Save the Date and Participate!

**Please save the date for this year's
Online Auction!**

**Our annual online auction begins
TOMORROW - October 20 to 29!**

Show your support for the Mountain community, its mission and its message of simplicity, stewardship and prayer.

There is something for everyone! Bid on an auction item or an experience!



DID YOU KNOW?

Each October, Franciscan communities throughout the world celebrate the Transitus of St. Francis of Assisi. Many Catholic institutions celebrate the feast day of their patron saint, but the Transitus is an additional celebration, unique to St. Francis. It is typically observed on October 3, the day before his October 4 feast day.

The Transitus, from the Latin word for passage or crossing, commemorates the completion of St. Francis' earthly life, and his passage through death into eternal life. It may seem odd to reflect on death. Yet, for Franciscans, St. Francis' teachings - those he spoke and those he embodied through his actions - are more than just a set of inspirational ideas. They are an example of how to live life well, pouring oneself out in service to others for the glory of God, and even how to suffer with joy. However, as a vowed religious, St. Francis' life was also a testament to the Christian belief that the life we enjoy on this earth is not all there is.

Consider bidding on sports memorabilia an autographed Josh Allen hat or a St. Bonaventure UNFURL golf bag. Maybe you'd enjoy dinner with St. Bonaventure President, **Dr. Jeff Gingerich** and his wife Betsy, hosted in their home for up to four guests, or an exclusive brewery tour for 10 people at Rohrback Brewing Co. in Rochester, NY. There are handcrafted items, made by Br. Joe, including a creche and a table. Stock your pantry with homemade canned goods, the product of the Mountain's own gardens and lovingly processed by Br. Kevin and many helpers. Decorate your home with original artwork by Fr. Dan.

All proceeds directly support the Mountain community and its dedicated outreach to share the Franciscan values with others by allowing for the maintenance of the Mt. Irenaeus community through the Mountain's Capital Improvements Fund.



A Path Unimagined!

Fr. Dan Riley was interviewed earlier this summer for a feature segment in the St. Bonaventure Magazine! If you didn't get a chance

to read it, or perhaps you didn't receive a copy, click on the picture to go to SBU's website and read Fr. Dan's story and stories and updates from other SBU alumni!

We have a limited number of extra print copies available in the office if you would like one. Only while supplies last.

Upcoming Events:
[schedule and ways to participate can also be found online here](#)

October:

October 20-29 - Mountain Auction

October 29 - OFS meeting at the Mountain after Mass and Brunch - all are welcome to join.

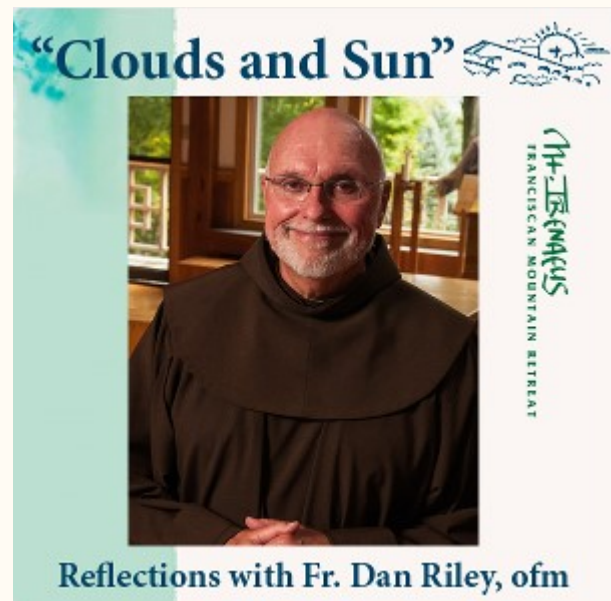
November:

November 5 - Franciscan Sojourners Zoom - for more information, [please click HERE](#)

November 11 - Mountain Board Meeting

November 17 - Mountain on the Road in Erie, PA [Register HERE](#)

November 18 - Mountain on the Road in



"Clouds and Sun" Podcasts

["God's Bounty is Beyond Our Imagination"](#)

Pittsburgh, PA [Register HERE](#)
November 19 - Mountain on the Road in
Cleveland, OH [Register HERE](#)

November 17-18 - Intercollegiate
Weekend

November 22-24 - Offices Closed for
Thanksgiving

November 28 - Giving Tuesday - New
Video will premier!

November 26 - OFS meeting at the
Mountain after Mass and Brunch - all are
welcome to join.

December:

December 3 - Franciscan Sojourners
Zoom - for more information, [please click
HERE](#)

December 2 - Advent Decorating Day -
more details coming soon.

December 4 - Christmas Tree Lighting on
SBU Campus

December 24 - Christmas Eve Mass at 8
pm

December 25 - Christmas Day Mass at 11
am

December 31 - New Year's Eve Vigil at 8
pm

December 31 - OFS meeting at the
Mountain after Mass and Brunch - all are
welcome to join.

January:

January 1 - New Year's Day Mass at 11 am

January 7 - Franciscan Sojourners Zoom -
for more information, [please click HERE](#)

["The Light of Clare"](#)

["Looking Out From the Mountaintop"](#)

["The Abundance of Jesus"](#)

["Food For Our Journey"](#)

["Joining In On God's Party Line"](#)

[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.



"Franciscan Lectio" Podcasts

Fr. Dan Riley, ofm, invites us into the world
of Franciscan Lectio, a companion podcast
to [his book](#).

[Gazing at What's Present](#)

[We All Have a Story](#)

January 28 - OFS meeting at the Mountain after Mass and Brunch - all are welcome to join.

Send a gift in memory of someone to be held in prayer for the month of November - which includes All Souls Day!

Join us for Mass on any Sunday at 11 am and stay for our dish-to-pass brunch!



Thank you for the many ways you help support our mission to "Make all things New in Jesus Christ!"

Your financial support of the Mountain Fund allows us to pay the utility bills, buy groceries, maintain our website, provide transportation for our SBU student guests, pay for printing and postage, and so much more!

We appreciate you and pray for you and your family.

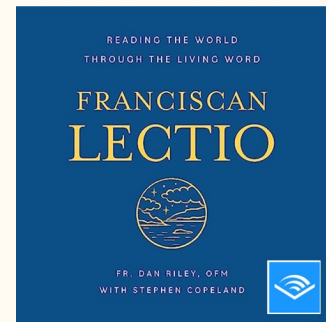
Come visit and pray with us!

Consider making a donation in memory of loved ones for All Souls Day this year.

Support the Mountain

EXCITING NEWS!

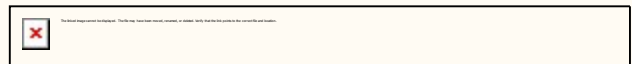
Fr. Dan's book ***Franciscan Lectio: Reading the World through the Living Word*** is now available through **Audible!**



Do you enjoy listening to Fr. Dan speak? Follow along as he reads his book aloud! Hear how he emphasizes or reads passages in a different way than you would read them.

Fr. Dan says, "Listening to ***Franciscan Lectio*** as an audiobook seems to be more direct than its print edition. Because listening and seeing are two different activities, you may enjoy both forms of the book as a way of informing and transforming your heart."

Learn more about *Franciscan Lectio: Reading the World through the Living Word* by [clicking HERE to visit our website](#)



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

Be sure to add our email address to your address book or safe senders list so our emails get to your inbox.

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