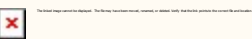


From: Mt. Irenaeus <mgiardin@sbu.edu>
Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 3:41 PM
To: Giardini, Mary D.
Subject: "Making all things New!" November 2023 - Pilgrimages and updates from the Mountain

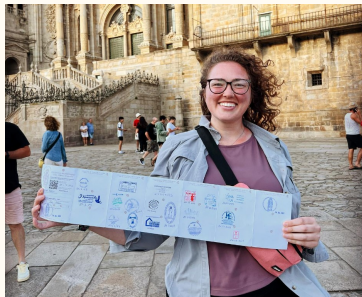


Making All Things New

November 2023



In this season of Thanksgiving, Fr. Dan invites us to reflect on how we can use the gift of Franciscan Pilgrimage to Renew the Face of the Earth.



Natalie's El Camino Expierience!

In early 2019, I began researching routes of el Camino de Santiago, an ancient pilgrimage bringing over 350,000 people yearly to la Catedral Basílica de Santiago, which houses the tomb of St. James (St. Iago) - one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ.

With the groundwork of information and inspiration, my walking partner and I decided that in July of 2023 we would walk el Camino Inglés, or the English/Celtic Way - a route less popular today, but the main route that Irish and UK pilgrims walked in more ancient times.

Every day, we walked through bustling cities, sleepy villages, forests and grain fields, over mountains, and along highways and farms. We followed the typical Camino marker: a yellow scallop shell on a blue background, collecting stamps from churches, cafés, or hostels on our way. After six days we received Compostelas, completed Camino route certifications, and totaled over 142km/88mi/216,000 steps.

Eucalyptus floated in the air throughout the Camino; however it was never more welcomed and appreciated than when I thought, "I don't think I can keep walking up this hill/in this heat/in this rain/with these blisters, etc." In those moments, a breeze would suddenly pick up and bring the bright, sharp sweetness of eucalyptus to the center of my senses. That refreshment lifted the cloud from my

mind and shifted my focus, calling to mind the ever-present love of the Creator who brings us exactly what we need for our journeys.

Intentionality is a central part of any pilgrimage, so I asked my community for intentions to carry on the way. They poured in, filling over three pages of my journal - some in double columns. I kept that journal in the main pocket of my backpack so that it pressed against my back and I felt the outline of it with each movement. After a while, the pressure of the book blended in with the straps pulling my shoulders, the weighty water bottles in the side pockets, the constraint of the chest strap, and the blisters on my toes. When we carry others with us, there is weight there - responsibility, pressure, concern, even pain - however, as we continue the work of carrying each other that discomfort fades, becoming part of the journey. We don't forget who we carry or why we carry them - we just don't mind the weight as much. ¡Buen Camino!



This week, I had the opportunity to interview Br. Joe Kotula on his, and part of our Mountain family's, recent pilgrimage to Assisi, Italy. Here is some of what we talked about!

C: What went into your personal planning before leaving for Assisi?

JK: I spent time on retreat reading books on Francis and Clare to get myself excited for the trip and to get in touch with the places we were visiting. Besides that, I spent time at the Mountain doing tasks to get ahead of the trip so I could really focus on the present; I did not want to be worrying about things at home. Lastly, I packed!

C: Where did you feel God most in Italy?

JK: Probably La Verna and the San Damiano cross. When I realized the cross we sat in front of was over 800 years old, I was struck by the power of God. Thinking about how God spoke to Francis through that image was also really powerful. At La Verna, it was impactful to be at the site where the stigmata took place and imagine what it was like for Francis to be there.

C: As a seasoned world traveler, what made this trip different?

JK: The people I traveled with. It was so special being with board members and other friends of the Mountain and getting to see the profound joy they had being in the places important to Francis and



As our bus pulled into Assisi from the beautiful Umbria countryside, Sr Margaret Carney came over the loud speaker, her words were simple yet profound, "We have arrived in Assisi, welcome home!"

Like many of us, going up to Mt Irenaeus, has always felt a sense of going home, the welcomeness, the time to slow down, reflect and be rejuvenated. Our pilgrimages arrival in Assisi had a similar sense of, welcome, familiarity, and anticipation, to connect with each other, God and disconnect from many parts of our daily lives.

For 12 days, 19 members of our community, including Fr Dan, Br Joe and Br Kevin, mountain staff, board members and friends, pilgrimed from Rome to and through Assisi, taking time at significant places in Francis & Clare's lives. We had the great privilege of visiting Greccio, La Verna, and the Porziuncola, sharing in prayer and learning together strengthened our common

Clare. I have done trips with people and pilgrimages alone, but this was a pilgrimage with people which made it so wonderful.

C: What would you want people to know if they are considering a pilgrimage?

JK: If you are considering a pilgrimage, say yes and go! Beforehand, I would advise you to spend time in deep prayer and to read about Francis and Clare. Preparation is a key part of a pilgrimage. And again, say yes!

~ Claire Fisher and Br. Joe Kotula



thread of spirituality. Naturally, we indulged in delicious Italian cuisine (and wine), with deep gratitude for such great companionship and meaningful conversation.

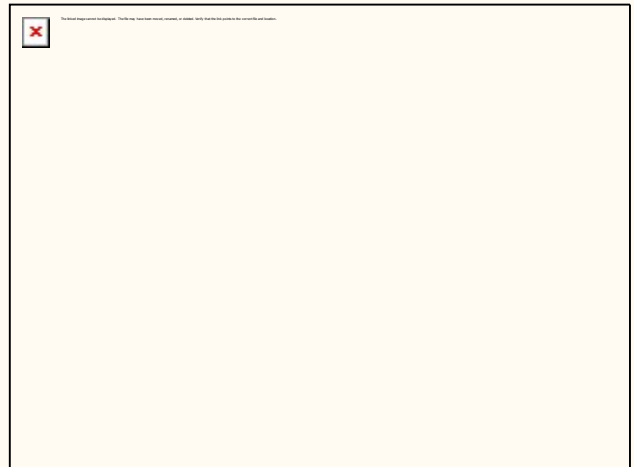
It's always been intriguing and inspiring to learn of the amazing journey that Francis and Clare took to live out the Gospel message. It's even more incredible to experience up close and personal, nearly 800 years after their deaths. Their lives are still so impactful and gently guide us on a path to faith, spirituality and a way of life.

Celebrating Mass in places like Francis' birthplace, St Francis Basilica, the Chapel at La Verna in the spot where Francis received the stigmata, the Vatican crypt, Greccio and the Porziuncola helped connect our practice of mass and walk of faith with more resounding influence. It's incredible how we still feel so compelled and inspired to live out the ways of St. Francis and Clare.

We built further community amongst ourselves as we found time to share in Lectio and Conversatio to continue to expand who we are on our journeys, share reflections and invite each other deeper into relationship along this journey.

Showing up at the Mountain as a fresh-faced freshman in 2001, the idea of joining in pilgrimage with the Mountain Friars in Assisi was only a dream. Our good journeys take many forms, it was truly a privilege to have mine go through both the Mountain and Assisi on this pilgrimage.

~ Ian McBride



"Welcome to share our Story"

Mt. Irenaeus Thanksgiving Dinner

By: Morgan Mcmanus

The Mountain is one of those places you go to get away from the world around you.

This past weekend, myself and many other St. Bonaventure students had the opportunity to spend Sunday up at the Mountain. On Sunday, the Mountain hosted their Thanksgiving dinner with about 25-30 students arriving. Students cleaned, peeled, and cut potatoes and carrots that were harvested from the garden at the Mountain.

Once more and more students arrived, the potatoes were mashed, peas and corn were cooked, the three turkeys were getting ready to be put into the oven, and stuffing was made. When there wasn't anything to do, the students were able to relax in the main house or walk on the property. Natalie Pronio took me and three other students to the labyrinth located up by the chapel. It was fascinating that you would walk in different directions, lose track of time, and as one student said, "you forget that you were walking."



Back at the Mountain, the three turkeys were being cut into slices, the biscuits were placed into a wicker bowl, the peas and corn were done cooking, and the students were hungry. From the looks on the student's faces, everyone can agree that the dinner was delicious.



Mountain on the Road - Alexis Serio

I am proud of myself for saying yes to Mountain on the Road. I didn't know what to expect going into it, but I made many connections with both former Bonnies and people who have become members of our mountain community after this weekend. We shared stories of anniversaries and how time can change the excitement about these anniversaries. We discussed the fears that come from early parenthood, as well as the feelings of fear at the end of life. Our stories of loss brought forth both tears in the moment and smiles as we shared the sign of peace. We all are truly connected to each other through God's love and care. As we spoke of our times of how family has come to us at St. Bonaventure, we all could see how our troubles are not unique.

Before this trip, I didn't know the team members John Marshall or Joe Flanagan, but by the end of the weekend, it felt like I had known them for years. Having the opportunity to share meals and stories with

this group gave me a wider outlook on the connection we share through the Mountain. I truly felt connected to the group I was with and was able to deepen my faith with their help. I went into this experience feeling like a small part of what the Mountain is about, but I came out feeling like I made a difference in many people's lives.

Claire Fisher played a major role in my success during Mountain on the Road. She mentored me in many ways throughout the weekend, especially in the way she made me feel comfortable to share what was on my mind. She opened up the discussion on the first night, which allowed me to know that I could share my own experiences without judgment. I felt very welcome in the Mountain community during this time and I can't wait to experience this again!



THANK YOU!

Our Auction Was a Success!

Another successful Online Mountain Auction is in the books! We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who bid on gifts, donated items, or chose to Fund-A-Need. Thanks to the overwhelming support of our bidders, we have grossed over \$33,000, exceeding our goal of \$30,000,

Each year, the Auction is an opportunity to showcase special Franciscan and Mountain treasures, Bona gear, and cool tech gadgets. Some of this year's most popular items were Fr. Dan's paintings, Br. Joe's handmade creche, and the dinner with SBU president Dr. Jeff Gingerich.

Proceeds from the auction go directly to the Mt. Irenaeus capital improvement and operating budgets, both critical to sustaining the manner of life and ministry of the Mountain each and every day! We are especially grateful to our friends who selected to fund special needs of the Mountain,



Wooden Tau Cross handcrafted by Br. Joe - 3" tall

DID YOU KNOW?

What does the Tau Cross Symbolize?

The meaning of the TAU, a letter of the Hebrew and Greek alphabets, is found in the ninth chapter of the prophet Ezekiel. This passage describes how persons who had turned away from sin to a life of goodness were saved from destruction. As a Franciscan symbol, the TAU is a sign of conversion.

St. Francis of Assisi eventually signed his letters, not with his name, but with this symbol. Many Franciscans wear such a cross on a piece of leather. It represents a journey never completed this side of heaven. The Tau reminds us of St. Francis' saying, "Let us begin again."

Today, Franciscans wear the Tau Cross as a sign of their commitment to Christ and the power of his love to transform us into the very best person we can possibly become.



including utilities, food for students on retreat, and gardening seeds and supplies.

In addition to raising funds to support the Mountain, the online auction enables us to connect with friends near and far

~ Karen Karaszewski

Young Alumni Advent Zoom Series Invitation from the Mt. Irenaeus Young Alumni and Friends Leadership Team

As we begin this year's Advent Season, the Mt. Irenaeus Young Alumni and Friends are inviting friends of the Mountain to join us for a three-part Zoom series.

Our theme for this series is "There is Room at the Inn - Come Join Us." Now at the beginning of our fourth year, groups of young alumni and friends have joined together on Zoom to share evenings of conversation, faith, and support to create a Mountain experience away from the Mountain. We all live lives with many responsibilities and commitments, so let's take time together to pause, reflect and act to re-energize and renew our relationships with each other and with God.

Since our first Advent Series in the winter of 2020, we've gathered and discussed ways of preparation and fellowship that we embrace at this time of year. This year, as always, we're asking those friends of the Mountain who are seeking a Mountain-style experience of meditation, conversation, and prayer to join us.

The dates for the three 90-minute evenings are Thursday, December 7; Tuesday, December 19; and Wednesday, January 3 from 8:30-10 PM EST. Feel welcome to attend one, two, or all three sessions from where you currently are.



The Mt. Irenaeus Board of Trustees met on Nov 11 in the McGinley-Carney Center for Franciscan Ministry on the SBU campus. They would like to welcome with a thankful heart our 3 newest members to the board. Returning to the board after several years absence are Michael Sullivan from Elmira, NY and Fr. Tom Conway, ofm from Boston, MA. New to our board is Sr. Kathy Daugherty, osf from Philadelphia, PA.

To see the full list of Mt. Irenaeus Board members, please [click on this link](#) to visit our website.

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

November:

November 22-24 - Offices Closed for Thanksgiving

November 28 - Giving Tuesday - New Video will premier!

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 9 - SBU Reading Day Away at the Mountain

December 10 - Blessing of the Brains and Christmas at Bona's

December 23 - January 1 - Mountain Offices Closed on Campus - please call 585-973-2470 if you need to reach the friars.

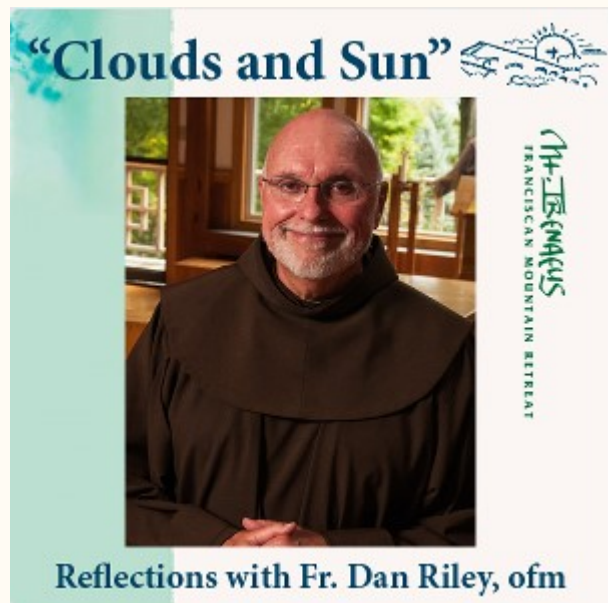
December 24 - Christmas Eve Mass at 8 pm

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:



"Clouds and Sun" Podcasts

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

["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.

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

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

January 19 & 20 - SBU Student Overnights - TBD

January 27 - SBU Play in the Snow Day/Overnight

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

February:

February 2 & 3 - Mt. Irenaeus Board Meeting

February 4 - Franciscan Sojourners Zoom - for more information, [please click HERE](#)

February 14 - Ash Wednesday - Ash distribution at SBU, not at the Mountain

February 16-18 - 80's Weekend on SBU campus and at the Mountain

February 18 - 80's Weekend Mass at the Mountain at 11 am with brunch to follow

February 25 - OFS meeting at the Mountain after Mass and Brunch - all are welcome to join.

March:

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

March 18 - Franciscan Volunteer Ministries Evening Away with SBU Students



"Franciscan Lectio" Podcasts

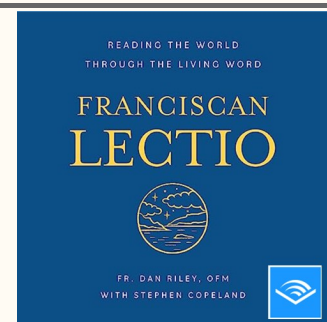
Fr. Dan Riley, ofm, invites us into the world of Franciscan Lectio, a companion podcast to [his book](#).

[Gazing at What's Present](#)

[We All Have a Story](#)

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

March 24 - Palm Sunday Mass at 11 with dish to pass brunch to follow

March 20 - April 1 - Mountain Offices closed. Please call 585-973-2470 if you need to reach the friars.

March 28 - Holy Thursday - Mass at the Mountain

March 29 - Good Friday - Mass at the Mountain

March 30 - Holy Saturday - Mass at the Mountain

March 31 - Easter Sunday - Mass at 11 am with dish to pass brunch to follow

April:

April 20 - Workday at the Mountain - please help if you can!

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



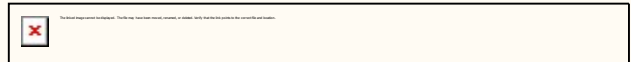
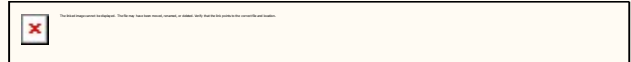
Thank you for the many ways you help support our mission to
"Make all things New in Jesus Christ!"

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.

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](#)



SAVE THE DATE for GivingTuesday!

Be sure to save the date, Nov 28, for the video premier of an update on Mountain life from our brothers and sisters in residence at the Mountain.

If you'd like to help us on GivingTuesday with an early gift, you may use the button just to the left where it says **SUPPORT THE MOUNTAIN**. If you'd like to ask for a prayer or leave a prayer for another, please click on the button that says **PRAYER REQUEST** and follow the directions.

PRAYER REQUEST

Come visit and pray with us!

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

Support the Mountain

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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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Mt. Irenaeus

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