

**Giardini, Mary D.**

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**From:** Mt. Irenaeus <mgiardin@sbu.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 28, 2024 8:17 PM  
**To:** Giardini, Mary D.  
**Subject:** "Making all things new" Aug 2024 - Mountain Visitors and Companions and more!



## Making All Things New

August 2024

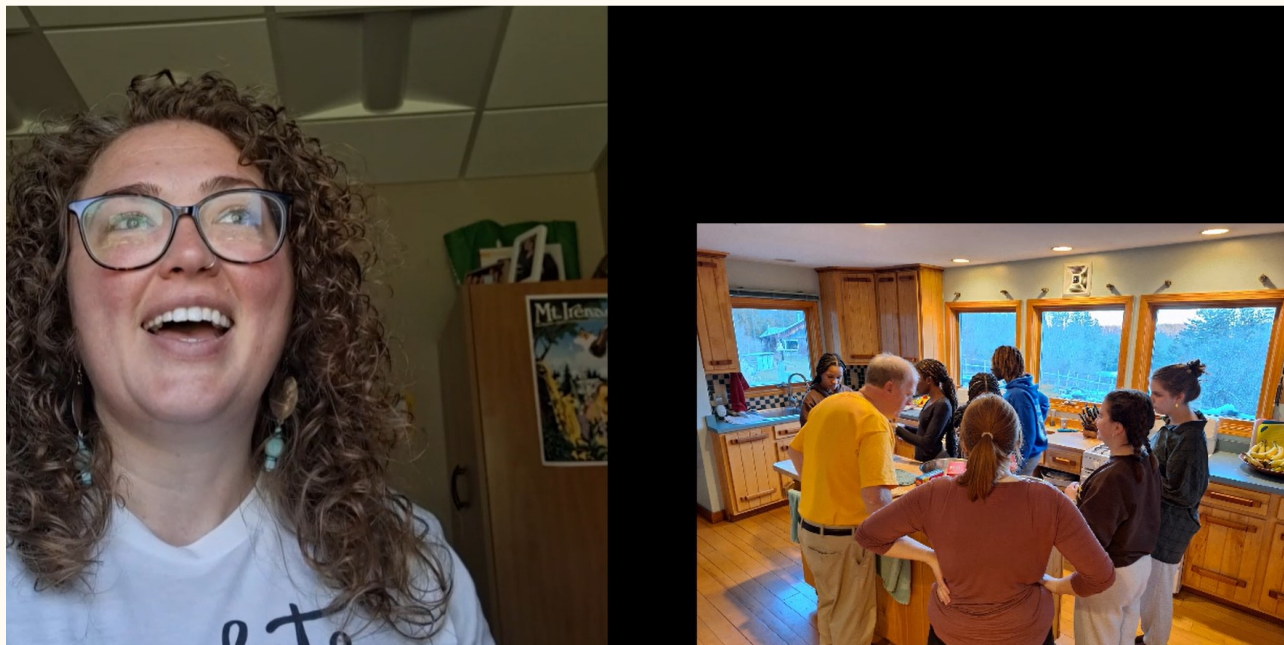


In his compelling homily for our beloved founder and friend, Fr. Xavier Seubert invited us to consider the many places that Fr. Dan inhabited: "All these places from Mt. Irenaeus to the Bonaventure community to Big Sur...He unfolded his life and the Spirit was there, and the places in which he was, absorbed this Spirit and became part of it. And when we enter into these places we enter somehow into the Spirit that Daniel left there."

From its beginning, this space of the newsletter has been inhabited by the words and voice of Fr. Dan. As we curate this month's news, the absence is tender and palpable. And yet, we trust Fr. Dan would want us to continue, and together, we will show one another how to honor this void while trusting always that Fr. Dan's spirit is infinitely and sacramentally absorbed in all that this communication is, and all that it will be.

As we honor Fr. Dan in this space, we will also celebrate his life in our upcoming print newsletter that will be dedicated to his legacy, his impact, and his dreams for the future of the Mountain.

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### **Voices from the Mountain!**

Natalie, the Mountain's Ministry Coordinator, gives us an update on the summer events and what we have planned for the SBU students now that they have returned to campus.

Natalie has been with us for almost one full year now and is making a tremendous impact on our reach to SBU students and more. Her joy for people, ministry and God is shown each day with her laugh and welcoming presence. **Click on the video above to hear her update.**

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## Confirmation Class Visits the Mountain

On a bright, sunny Sunday in June, the Mountain welcomed a confirmation class from Allegany County on a retreat. The students spent the time with their teacher, the friars, Natalie and our Summer Companions Alexis and Astou. We would like to share with you reflections that Astou and some of the confirmands shared with us.

### **Astou Sidibe, Mountain Companion:**

Being at the confirmation retreat with these young students was such a great opportunity that I was able to experience. It was a moment that I felt proud that I can take part in to be able to tell them about my journey as a Muslim and for them to understand that each religion has its own perspective in life. After taking a long walk through nature and up the mountain I was able to tell them that I, as a Muslim, recited the Quran that was verbally revealed from Allah Swt (The Most High) to Prophet Mohamed peace be upon him through Angel Gabriel, while we walked up the mountain. I recite the Quran not only for myself but also for the creations of Allah like the trees because we are taught that the trees can testify for you on the day of judgment. This is why we honor creation because we believe that everything is alive, and all the trees, leaves, grass, or any animals around you that heard you recite the Quran will intercede for you in the day of judgment.

### **Aly M.:**

"My experience at Mt. Irenaeus was very peaceful. I loved how out in nature everything was. It's a very close-knit community and I loved that."

### **Sierra C.:**

"I felt like my experience at Mt. Irenaeus was very positive. I loved the environment and the people there were so kind. I really enjoyed going to the church and seeing how differently it operates from other churches. I would definitely go back there sometime in the future!"

### **Lydia K.:**

"I really enjoyed going to Mt Irenaeus and liked how different it was. The mass was very interesting, and I liked seeing how differently you can express your faith. Walking around the property and being able to talk to different people and see their views was fun."

### **Reece W.:**

"The retreat was very enjoyable. The sense of community was very inspiring and shows how depending on people and listening to each other is very important, especially in your relationship with God! We took time to reflect what we have learned and to understand our



relationships. Getting to attend a different style of mass showed how there are many different ways to learn the teachings and practices!"

**Addy C.:**

"The retreat was amazing! I really like how close everyone was there. I like the difference in the Mass setting and how they prayed for the LGBTQ+ community! It is very inclusive there and I think they keep their teaching very modern while still being connected to God."

**Jack C.:**

"The Mountain was a very good experience in all. It was interesting to see how other people get closer to God, and at the end, I definitely felt like my relationship with God was strengthened."

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## **Evenings of Re-Creation Reflect the Power of the Slowing**

Birds sing and late afternoon sun streams through Holy Peace Chapel, scattering light gently throughout this sacred space. It is time for "The Power of the Slowing," the theme of 2024's July Evenings of Re-Creation at Mt. Irenaeus.



As with all Wednesday Evenings of Re-Creation, prayer started in the Chapel, followed by time on the land and a dish-to-pass supper in the House of Peace, before culminating in the Celebration of the Eucharist in the Chapel.

The first evening, on July 3, coincided with the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, prompting a reflection on "Touch My Wounds" – Christ's and our own – and proclaiming the Cantic of the Creatures in choir. Two weeks later, Br. Joe Kotula, ofm, reminded the group gathered in the Chapel that we are not simply slowing down, but rather we are experiencing "the slowing" as an actual encounter.

Reflections on the first few Evenings of Re-Creation share the encounter:

**The slowing reminds me to take every opportunity** to observe God's beauty because if you live in the fast lane, you will miss many beautiful things. **Br. Ricky Madere, ofm**

**The first Evening of Re-Creation's** theme, The Power of the Slowing, has made me more intentional when I am on the Land. The inner wisdom from being in God's presence from the stillness has Creation speaking beauty and peacefulness, that is a true gift... I have learned from Gerald May's book, that

"fear is beautiful." I will keep that thought in the back of my mind if I experience a bear encounter one evening... As we continue with the theme, I will look forward to the wisdom I may gain from the gift of the Mountain's beautiful creation, "praised be You, my Lord." **Michele Bednar**

**To me the Power of the Slowing is being granted the Grace** to be in a moment where no outcome is expected, only being, resulting in a sense of utter peace. **Mary Casey**

**As I walked the Land** during the first Evening of Recreation, I reflected on the words spoken in the Chapel - "Real quiet is Presence": All I could think of is how many more things could I learn...and maybe, more importantly, how many things could I unlearn that didn't serve me well simply by practicing the Power of the Slowing. **Linda Bysiek**

**The naming of and now being so aware** of "The Power of the Slowing" has allowed me to more understand actions I have taken and am taking in my life. As long as I can remember I would pursue time at the ocean, in the mountains, on the river, in the forests, on the lake shores or the waterfalls. I would find peace with my friends and strangers in these places. It is the wilderness I pursue because in the embrace of Mother Nature, she pulls me into her rhythms. This to me is "The Power of the Slowing." I realize now I felt that the first time I set foot on the 600-acre St. Bonaventure University Franciscan campus. I feel it always on the Mountain. We all share it, and it brings us together. **Jim Vendryes**

The source of "The Power of the Slowing" is Gerald May's book, *The Wisdom of Wilderness*.



### **Mountain Moments by Greg Licamele**

We're beginning a new series called "Mountain Moments," when we will occasionally share photos from 40 years of our life and ministry on Facebook and in our e-newsletters.

Some photos will have captions, for others we'll let the image speak for itself, and on occasion, a community member will offer an extended reflection and history about a particular photo.

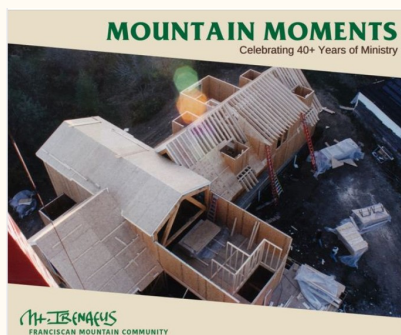
If you see yourself in a photo on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#), please comment and offer a thought or reflection! We would love your memories and reflections on them. Please



share and encourage others to post on them too. Help us reach others we haven't heard from lately.

Our first photo shows construction of Holy Peace Chapel in 1989.

Our second photo reminds us how we've been gathering around tables sharing meals and fellowship for decades! This photo comes from the mid-1990s in the House of Peace.



In the third photo, we have a birdseye view of the building of the House of Peace, which was opened and dedicated in 1995.

For the fourth, we show you that the setting for fellowship takes on many flavors at the Mountain, including decades of washing dishes! That simple act has led to countless conversations and fellowship for so many people through the years. Here's a 1980s photo from the original house at the Mountain (now known as The Other House).



Do you have any photos and reflections you'd like to share? Send them to Mary at [mgiardin@sbu.edu](mailto:mgiardin@sbu.edu) and we might be able to use them in some way!

## Summer Companions Reflect on their time at the Mountain

### Part one of our two part series sharing the voices of our Summer Companions

"Denise, what do you hope to get from your experience here on *The Mountain*?" asked Br. Kevin of Mt. Irenaeus. At that moment, I did not know what to say. I was still thinking, still wondering or was I wandering?

I am fifty-four years old, married 34 years to my personal hero Christopher. We have a son, Lucas, married with two young daughters, and another son Tyler, a friar and previous Mountain Companion. It was through Tyler coming to the Mountain that I found myself visiting and returning for work weekends. My thoughts kept drifting back to the Mountain, but why?



After two weeks of a sun-filled drought, I arrived at the Mountain to the baptism of a summer rain. Stepping through the open door at the House of Peace I felt at home, comfortable, at peace - with ten days ahead of me to live at the Mountain.

Time at the Mountain is not counted by minutes, rather it is counted by moments. Those moments are infused with people and events. It was in the ordinary, day to day moments that I encountered the extraordinary. Whether working in the garden, making dinner or hiking in the woods, my awareness was heightened.

One day I hiked the Francis trail, Tyler's favorite. Whew! It was a doozy! A lot of straight-ups! Sweat dripping, boots moving, thoughts brewing...

As I hiked I began to notice tree stumps in the woods, which took me back to memories of my favorite childhood book *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein. The tree keeps giving of herself to the boy she loves, from her apples to her trunk until she is just an old stump. Even then, she still gives a place of rest for the now-grown boy to sit on.

Then in a ray of sunshine I saw two swallowtail butterflies do a dance in the sky. Seeing this reminds me of my other favorite storybook, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. This book explains in childlike color the metamorphosis of a caterpillar to a butterfly. The caterpillar eats through many things from plums to pickles until he has a stomachache. It is not until he eats through a leaf of the tree which nourishes him that gives him fullness of life as a butterfly.

As I was walking, I reflected that maybe I have more to give than what I previously thought, that I should not be limited by who I have been or who I think I should be, but guided by who God wants me to be. I do not know if I have the perfect answer to Br. Kevin's question, but whether at the Mountain or at home in Hershey, God has gifted me with precious moments and people I love. My hope is to lean into these simple moments I've been given at the Mountain, to keep growing, and to give more of myself to the people I love.

In gratitude for each one of you:

For your words of wisdom and welcoming smile.

For forgetting a friend's name, oh what a game!

For tasty meals made from all over the world,

To cherries and giraffes and thorns a plenty!

For wrong turns to the store for donuts and more,

To chaotic beauty in the fields and on ladders.



To weeding in silence and eating salads galore!

For invitations of welcome to learn something more.

To good morning hellos and yes's to my no's,

From tears to laughter, this time so well spent.

All for naught, if not for you!"

**~Denise Grudi**



I'm Br. Ricky Madere, OFM. I'm from Louisiana and I did nine months of mission work in Jamaica. For my summer ministry site, I had many options, but I chose Mt. Irenaeus. I needed a place to contemplate and reflect on my experience in Jamaica. My time at the Mountain has been very fruitful and has had many interesting interactions with people from different parts of the country. The community here at the Mountain does care for God's people and we embrace everyone regardless if you're Christian or not; you are treated as family. We encourage dialogue between everyone in any situation and let peace, not anger, prevail. We at the Mountain play a huge role in bringing together everyone and many different groups

come here. We have dialogue, and we listen with an open heart. The slowness has been a welcoming thing for me; it has given me a great deal of time to reflect and contemplate. Observing God's creation and hearing the birds tell you good morning and seeing brother groundhog, brother deer is a thing of beauty.

**~Br. Ricky Madere, OFM**

Hi! My name is Christy and I'm from Australia. I grew up in and am currently working at the wonderful and busy city of Melbourne. I was fortunate enough this year to take some extended time off work to holiday in America and decided to spend some of my time with the Franciscan community at Mt. Irenaeus.



Living at Mt. Irenaeus has been such an enriching and unique experience. While some of you may take access to the Mountain for granted, to me there does not seem to be many places in the world like it at all. Built deliberately with an open invitation to all, to be at peace and spend time in both contemplation and community. The Franciscans at the Mountain certainly do this well, and I have a lot to learn from them.



Their way of life is counter cultural and laughs at the face of the things I am often guilty of holding to the highest esteem - productivity, busyness, marking off an endless to do list and accomplishing in an externally obvious way. The Mountain instead fosters internal growth and teaches us to look within and around ourselves, somehow, without using any words at all. While work is an important part of life at the Mountain I could still clearly sense the invitation to slow down and remember that my highest calling is to relationship - with God, others and myself.

I feel really blessed to have spent time getting to know the friars and people of Mt Irenaeus. Their message of gifting God's welcoming love to all touched my heart and I hope to carry it with me all the way back home.

I will end with a quote (which is also a prayer) that I love which reminds me of the Mountain.

"Incarnate Word in Whom all nature lives...Set pools of silence in this thirsty land." from James McAuley (famous dude from Australia).

~Christy Sajan

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## **Upcoming Events:**

**Schedule and ways to participate can also be found online [HERE](#).**

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

### **August:**

**Aug 30** - Student event at the Mountain

**Aug 31** - Student event at the Mountain

### **September:**

**Sept 2** - Office Closed, please call the Mountain at 585-973-2470

**Sept 6** - Student event at the Mountain

**Sept 9 & 10** - Special online event - more info coming on Aug 29 by separate email

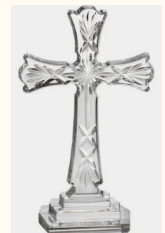
**Sept 20-22** - Mountain Board Meeting

**Sept 28 - 11 am - 4 pm** - Family Weekend Open House at the Mountain

**Sept 30** - St. Francis Week begins at SBU



**Save the Date  
and  
Participate!**



**Our annual online auction  
runs -**

## October:

**Oct 3** - Transitus

**Oct 5 - 10 am - 4 pm** - St. Francis Workday at the Mountain

**Oct 7-11** - Friar Contemplative Retreat - Brothers, email Br. Kevin Kriso for more information at [kkriso@sbu.edu](mailto:kkriso@sbu.edu)

**Oct 9-15** - Karen, Natalie and Students at the Franciscan Action Network and Siena Conferences

**Oct 14** - Office Closed, please call the Mountain at 585-973-2470

**Oct 19** - Student event at the Mountain

**Oct 25** - Student event at the Mountain

**Oct 26** - Adult Women's event at the Mountain - reservations needed - contact Karen at the Mountain - 585-973-2470

## November:

**Nov 1-10** - Mountain Online Action

**Nov 8-10** - Mountain Board Meeting

**Nov 24** - Student Thanksgiving Dinner at the Mountain

**Nov 27-29** - Office Closed, please call the Mountain at 585-973-2470



## **November 1-10!**

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!

Consider bidding on sports memorabilia or tickets. Maybe you'd enjoy travel or dinner with friends and family. We have trips and excursions to various locations!

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 through our operating budget.

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If you would like to leave a prayer request or you can help answer other people's, please click on this link below.

**PRAYER REQUEST**

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Don't know what to get a loved one on a special occasion?

Do you need help showing support to someone in their time of loss?

### **Consider one of our Honor or Memorial cards.**

When you donate in Honor (for a living person) or Memorial (for a deceased person), we will add their name to our prayer list for the next month. For all Masses in that month, we will remember this person in our prayers. Also, if you provide an address, we will send out one of our beautiful cards (pictured to the left), to the person you honored or the family of the deceased.



Click on the donate button just below and make sure to check the box that says "I would like to dedicate this gift" and fill in the needed information.

We do not set a specific donation amount on these cards.

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