

Giardini, Mary D.

From: Mt. Irenaeus <peace@mountainonline.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 1:49 PM
To: Giardini, Mary D.
Subject: Making All Things New! - February 2025 - A Felt Sense of Hope



Making All Things New

February 2025



Hope ~ Karen Pulaski Director of Faith Formation

*"Hope is the...feeling we experience when we see – in the mind's eye - a path to a better future. Hope acknowledges the significant obstacles and deep pitfalls along the path. True hope has no room for delusion."
~Dr. Jerome Groopman*

Our world cries out for hope now more than ever. For many, hope may be defined as believing that things will turn out for the best, a sense of optimism. I believe that hope is much more complex and elusive. One of the archaic definitions of hope is "a feeling of trust." God calls us to trust that He walks right beside us, both in joyful moments as well as moments of profound challenge. Trusting in God does not mean life will be without hardship, but we are graced with the knowledge that we do not walk alone in that suffering.

As an incarnational people, we believe that God so loved us that He chose to become human so that He could enter into our suffering. He is not a God that is removed and "far away" but rather one who lives in and is ever present to each one of us.

Our Franciscan charism reminds us that we are on a lifelong journey that also calls us to constant renewal and transformation – not just for our own personal growth but so we can go out into the world and be agents of change. Following this call requires time for prayer,

reflection and contemplation. It is through authentic and deep relationships that create a grounding community that we can then hold each other up in this journey.

For me, this is the greatest gift that the Mountain offers to all who experience a Mountain way of life – a Gospel centered life based on compassion, love and yes – hope. For if we believe we all are "co-laborers" with God, and we strive to be on a path of ongoing transformation, then we must also believe that the world can transform right along with us, one person at a time.

Can we continue to trust, even when life is challenging?



**Jandoli Women in
Communication visits the
Mountain**
~Delainey Muscato, SBU '25

I have been to the Mountain a total of three times. This most recent time I visited was my favorite.

Although I'm an atheist, I still enjoyed my time there because it was not *all* about religion. It *was* all about connecting with the other girls in our club and reflecting on ourselves.

The other two times I've been to the Mountain, I was with people who wouldn't let me fully enjoy the moment.

Having the opportunity to go without those people allowed me to fully immerse myself in the experience of going to the Mountain.

I was able to find meaning in everything we did, even in the smallest things, like making dinner together or just drinking tea and chatting.



Mountain in the Home Reflection
~Susan Luka

I graduated from St. Bonaventure in 1985 where Fr. Dan and his ministry were a very big part of my life on campus. As a student I only heard about his dream of building the Mountain, but never got the chance to experience Mt. Irenaeus firsthand.

Living in Chicago, the Bona connections didn't happen all that often, so when Fr. Dan reached out to me about hosting a Mountain in the Home or attending a Mountain on the Road event, I was all in.

Hosting an event was a family affair. In fact, one year we were fortunate enough to have Fr. Dan bless our new home. Since his passing this past summer, I was hopeful that these events would continue.

This February there was a Mountain in the Home event taking place in Chicago, so I was eager to attend and brought along my husband and our adult children. They all

All the activities allowed me to reflect on myself and create deeper connections with the people around me.

This last time at the Mountain was probably the last time I'll have the opportunity to go. I'm truly so thankful for the experience I got to have and hope everyone has a chance to experience the same thing.



have come to know Fr. Dan, his Mountain mission, and the impact it has had on my spiritual life.

It was a wonderful evening of prayer, connection, community and fellowship. The spiritual renewal was just what everyone in the room needed. We reflected on the challenges and the blessings our lives offer. We were able to build deeper connections with one another and the atmosphere was warm and welcoming.

Mt. Irenaeus is a special place that I wish I could enjoy on a regular basis but for now an event on the road will have to do. It's amazing how one feels experiencing the power of the Bonaventure Connection on or off the Mountain.

If there is an event near you be sure to carve out time to attend and bring your family along. They will thank you for doing so.

Heralding the start of kitchen renovations at the Mountain is a new kitchen tabletop. The coming weeks will see new cabinet doors, replacement flooring in the nook adjacent to the dishwasher, and updated countertops.

"The kitchen continues to be renovated; after changing over all of our major appliances, we are now choosing new countertops, replacing drawers and refinishing all of the wood finishes," said Mike Fenn, executive director. "This is only happening thanks to our generous friends who have supported us over the years, including during our past Day of Giving."

Mike added, "Jim Plukas and Sue Besecker, siblings who have both made a big impact on the Mountain, have been helping with the renovations of our kitchen. The most recent change has been the island countertop. Worn after the slicing of hundreds of thousands of veggies over the years, it has been replaced, and the community loves the new one."



Guests may notice these changes during the next few months, but Mountain hospitality will continue as always throughout the renovation process.



Stephen Copeland reflects on the Franciscan Provincial Synod

Fr. Dan Riley and I loved Thomas Merton's essay "Rain and the Rhinoceros" which includes this wonderful line: "It will talk as long as it wants, this rain. As long as it talks, I am going to listen." I thought of this quote often throughout the week of the Franciscan Provincial Synod in Kansas City, Missouri—an experience that was grounded in the deep form of humble listening Merton was describing in his essay.

Central to the synod were "conversations in the spirit," where lay and religious participants sat at small tables and were encouraged to each share what stirred in their hearts. But what was emphasized most in these conversations was not the sharing but the listening. The temptation for most in dialogue is to formulate one's own response while someone else is speaking, thus making the experience more about ourselves than the person speaking. In these conversations in the spirit, the goal was to consciously confront this temptation, further opening our ears of the heart to the person sharing.

This deep form of listening opens the senses to the movement of the spirit in our midst, a hopeful model for reform within the Church but also a challenge to each of us in our own



Play in the Snow Reflection ~Audney Burnside, SBU '27

I always find myself incredibly grateful for the moments I can spend in His creation! This "Play in the Snow Day" at Mt. Irenaeus was no different.

The snow was falling, but something even greater was moving all around us. I think for each person this is something different, maybe peace, comfort, fun, ease, or perhaps even God Himself.

I was blessed to have my best friend (who is also my roommate) at my side for this special day, and know that our bond was deepened even further than it already is. She is one of the people I see all the goodness of the world in, so the environment was perfectly suited for and equally matched with her.

relationships and society. To model this form of listening in other spaces of our lives, I believe and hope, could lead to similar healing and reform—a spiritual evolution flowing from our ability to listen with the ears of our hearts.



Feeding the birds, walking in the icy snow, sledding, and settling by the fire for evening prayer summed up a perfect day.

In my prayer before our lovely breakfast for dinner, I thanked God for bringing everyone together, and specifically said that although I am sure everyone had their reason for coming, the most beautiful part is that He had a reason for them to be there too. One of the greatest parts of the Mountain is that every time I go there I realize I get to discover to some degree something deeper and more vulnerable about myself, and only hope that other people can have a similar experience.

All in all, whether it regards swimming in the pond in the heat of summer, or playing like children in the freezing cold, Mt. Irenaeus gives me something to be grateful for in EVERY season.



Come and Enjoy

Feb 27—7:00 pm—Mountain on the Road at Neumann University, Aston, PA

Feb 28—7 pm—Mountain on the Road at Parish Community of St. Helen, Westfield, NJ

Mar 1—1:30 pm—Mountain on the Road at Holy Name College, Silver Spring, MD

Mar 2—10:30 am—Mass and Light Reception at Bishop Ireton High School, Alexandria, VA

If you'd like to join us at one of these events, please sign up at www.sbu.edu/alumni

Please join us if you can!



Asian Students in Action visits the Mountain ~Samay Saxena, SBU '25

Since my freshman year at Bona's, The Mountain has stood as a sanctum of healing, friendship, love, and most importantly, hope.

My annual trips with the Asian Students in Action Club (ASIA) have become a hallmark of my four years at Bonas. As ASIA members go around sharing their aspirations for college, it was this year, as a senior, where I truly realized how much we have all grown individually, as a club, and as a family.



Mountain 101 Game Night ~Claire Fisher, SBU '25

Over my four years at Bonaventure, I have seen a lot of campus buildings and groups develop. One of my favorite changes I have seen is the 'rebirth' of Mountain Community Leaders.

While there has been a long legacy of Mountain Community Leaders, there was a short pause due to the pandemic. Now that

Inevitably, The Mountain is a community belonging to all Bonnies, where they are encouraged to be hopeful, inspired to dream big, and accepted for who they are.



we are fully back and flourishing, the new wave of MCL's hosted their first event: Mountain 101.

Mountain 101 is a fun game night the five other leaders and I hosted on campus to help other students learn more about the Mountain core community, Mountain staff and the property's history.

We often talk at the Mountain about how we are not just a "place" or physical location. Rather, we are called to bring the mission "down from the Mountain" and to our communities. Mountain 101 is one small way we do that!

The six student leaders delegated different responsibilities such as hosting the actual event, shopping for food, ordering prizes or creating the structure of the trivia game.

I am so excited to see how the MCL's will continue working together to create impactful retreats for our Bonaventure peers!



Spring Work Day

AT MT. IRENAEUS

Saturday, April 5

Schedule

10:00a.m. - Arrive at Mt. Irenaeus

10:15a.m. - Prayer and work group assembly

12:30p.m. - Group Lunch

4:00p.m. - Work concludes

Some of the activities for the day may include prepping the garden for planting, tending flower beds, deep cleaning the House of Peace and cabins, clearing tails, splitting wood and other activities.

Sign up so we know you're coming:



Questions? Need overnight accommodations? Call the Mountain:
(585) 973-2470



Upcoming Events:

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

Every Sunday - Mass is at 11 am with a dish-to-pass brunch following Mass.

All are welcome - we'd love to see you!

February:

Feb 21-23 - 80's Weekend on SBU campus with Sunday Mass at the Mountain at 11 am

Feb 27 - Mountain on the Road at **Neumann University, Aston, PA**

Feb 28 - Mountain on the Road at **Parish Community of St. Helen, Westfield, NJ**

March:

March 1 - Mountain on the Road in **Silver Spring, MD**

March 2 - Mountain on the Road in **Alexandria, VA**

March 1-9 - SBU Spring Break - Some Mountain Team members will be traveling with BonaResponds

March 3 - Franciscan Sojourners Zoom - all are welcome! Email us for more information.

March 5 - Ash Wednesday - Ashes distributed on SBU campus

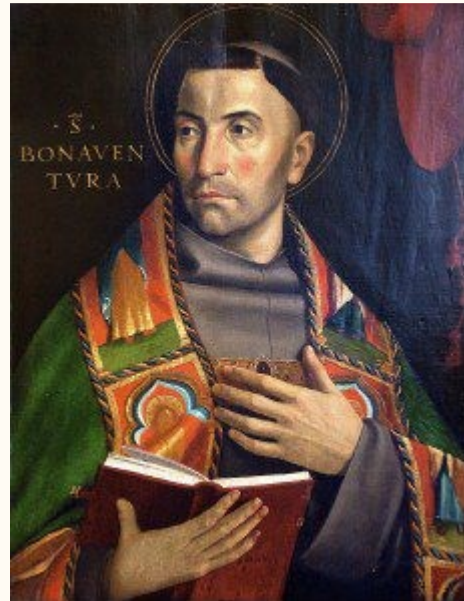
March 6 - Lenten Zoom Series Begins - *More details coming soon on our Events page*

March 14 - Celtic Overnight - Student Event at the Mountain

March 15 - Student Event at the Mountain

March 18 - Year of Service Interest Meeting on Campus

March 19 - Lenten Zoom Series - *More details coming soon on our Events page*



Come and experience St. Bonaventure—not the hamlet, nor the university, but the patron saint of Franciscan studies and learning—at a **Fireside Chat** scheduled for **Sunday, March 23, at 2 p.m., at Mt. Irenaeus** in West Clarksville.

Open to all, the gathering will feature Br. Tyler Grudi, ofm, of the Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe and a 2019 St. Bonaventure University alumnus, and Jean-Francois Godet-Calogeras, a medieval historian, who retired from the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, examining the life and contributions of St. Bonaventure and why he is significant in the Franciscan tradition. Br. Joseph Kotula, ofm, will moderate the discussion.

The program is being co-sponsored by the Mountain's Council for Spirit and Life, Weekends and More Branch, and the Secular Franciscans at Mt. Irenaeus. Persons interested in the topic will be able to participate in

March 21 - Student Event at the Mountain

March 22 - A Discussion on Social Justice

March 23 - 2 pm - St. Bonaventure Fireside Chat at the Mountain - all are welcome!

March 28 - Student Event at the Mountain

March 29 - Closed Event at the Mountain

April:

April 3 - Lenten Zoom Series - *More details coming soon on our Events page*

April 5 - **COMMUNITY**

WORKDAY at the Mountain - please save the date and help if you can!

April 6 - Franciscan Sojourners Zoom - all are welcome! Email us for more information.

April 13 - 11 am - Palm Sunday Mass with dish to pass brunch to follow

April 11-13 - Student Event at the Mountain

April 15 - Lenten Zoom Series - *More details coming soon on our Events page*

April 17-21 - Campus Offices Closed

April 17 - Holy Thursday Mass

April 18 - Good Friday Mass

April 19 - Holy Saturday Mass

April 20 - 11 am - Easter Mass with dish to pass brunch to follow

April 25-27 - Mt. Irenaeus Board Meeting Weekend

May:

May 4 - Franciscan Sojourners Zoom - all are welcome! Email us for more information.

May 9 - Student Event at the Mountain

May 13/14 - Student Event at the Mountain

person or via livestream; additional information will be forthcoming.



2025 Jubilee Holy Year!

2025 is the Jubilee Holy Year, the 2,025th anniversary of the Incarnation of our Lord, an "event of great spiritual, ecclesial, and social significance in the life of the Church." The concept of "Jubilee" has its origins in the Book of Leviticus (chapter 25) as a special year of reconciliation, pilgrimage, and coming home. Pope Francis has designated the 2025 Holy Year as a time to renew ourselves as "Pilgrims of Hope."

www.usccb.org/jubilee2025



May 16 - University Ministries Reception and Candlelight Ceremony on SBU Campus
May 17 - Baccalaureate Mass on SBU Campus
May 18 - SBU Graduation
May 24 - Closed Event at the Mountain
May 26 - Campus Offices Closed
May 31 - Summer Companions Arrive!
May 31 - End of our Fiscal Year - **Last day to help this year's Mountain Fund!**

June:

June 6-8 - SBU Alumni Weekend - check out our table at registration and visit us at the Mountain on Saturday for an open house or on Sunday for Mass!

June 13-15 - Closed Event at the Mountain

June 23-27 - Franciscan Friars Retreat at 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)

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