



**What could be more basic and also, incidental as we consider how simple it is and essential that we be aided in one of the biggest things in life...a welcome, a gesture that truly opens a door, holds a door wide open, especially now when we all stand on a new “threshold” together!**

As we often do at the Mountain, and now more and more on the road, let us pause for a moment. Take a deep breath and sit quietly. We often “remember” and “reflect” on the Mountain so that our next “response” might “reflect,” be integrated with how we are living our lives. *What is it we have observed in our world that we would like to participate in, change or encourage? “What has changed me? What encourages me to live well with others?” “What do I want to recreate? What do I want to encourage that might even be life changing?”* Stay with me even if this already sounds too philosophical ... a simple example follows.

Did you graduate from a school where it was the usual practice for someone to hold a door open for you? (Is there a smile across your face right now?) Someone would be standing there, with a smile...possibly seeing you from 15 or 20-feet away, holding the door, as you arrive, not rushing you, but welcoming you.

Yes, holding the door wide open! You might have recognized the face, but not know the person – or possibly the person holding the door is a stranger to you, or you to them. In fact, the person coming your way might be a guest on this campus experiencing this delightful, apparently random gesture.

What could be more basic and also, probably, incidental? However how simple it is and essential that we be aided in one of the biggest things in life...a welcome, the opening of a door, holding a door wide open.

Today we stand on a threshold together. Life in today’s world is often liminal; a time of passage between times and cultures. We are on the doorstep of a “new time,” we might say “a new Heaven and a new Earth.” There has been a lot of research to help us understand that door steps and doorways are manifest in our



**Mt. IRENAEUS**

**FRANCISCAN MOUNTAIN RETREAT**

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The Men's Rugby Team ate a lot of food . . .but also did a huge amount of work.



On this the second of our "Food for the Journey" renewal weekends the participants gathered in La Paz Hermitage for Saturday.



These Mountain Community Leaders are the future leaders in the Church. Watch out world!

spiritual/psychological walk each day. We might feel significant anxiety regarding our ability to negotiate a simple entrance or exit, be it a time in our life or place with other people. I might sense loneliness and I might ask, "Am I the only one standing at this strange door?" A liminal moment might invite a willingness to have our hearts open, to find or make an opening as well as to hold open a door. It suggests an attitude as well as a gesture or a habit, something as simple, we often say, as a warm smile.

However, so many doors are or seem to have become closed to you, possibly so many that we are expecting the next door to be locked.

We are in a time in the world when we are called upon to open doors. St. Bonaventure University is known for this, though I am sure not the only place on the planet, where people are kind enough to open doors or hold doors open!

For years, and from coast-to-coast, at weddings and receptions and graduations I have heard stories of the simple generosity of persons who help others learn the habit of opening doors. Today when we welcome younger persons and their parents onto our campus, guests from around the world, to Bona's and into Holy Peace Chapel, our House of Peace here at Mt. Irenaeus, we know that people immediately appreciate this. It goes without being said.

The Mountain, named Irenaeus, which means "peace maker," makes a point of not locking our doors, having no "closed doors," no path or way closed to you or others.

We know that many of our institutions have felt to us "closed" or "office hours only" without a welcome that says, just "walk in." We have become very alert to concerns about immigration and people who have crossed over, come into a country or a room seemingly unwelcomed or, indeed, not wanted. We might feel our own shame or embarrassment when we have backed into a party or stepped into a conversation that was not first "ours" to be in. The contrast is significant and the subtle, simple movement of another to help us feel "at home" is also very significant!

Feeling unwelcome in society or place of worship was one of the concerns surfacing in the Church back in the 1950's into the '60's. "Good Pope John XXIII," now named "Blessed" personified this great desire and became the driving force for the great and beautiful Ecumenical Council, simply called now, Vatican II. The Church in Europe seemed unwelcoming. Liturgies felt cold and distant from the people. Then, wonderful research in both Scriptures and Liturgy brought us to the time when Pope John and others said, "Let us now open the doors and windows, seek a new life together... welcome, welcome, come in."

Today so many ask, "what do you think of this new Pope, Francis?" Here is another door-opener, in fact one who would hold the door, who has acknowledged the need for mercy and the welcoming of others. Not random, but intentional and conscious, this welcome is deep and will be long lasting. The chill of our past times which we are coming through is changing to a warmth of a welcome we all need. It is our responsibility, now, to cross the threshold together!



Mt. Irenaeus also began in the hearts of many with this great desire to open the doors and create a new welcome for many. Practices and habits that had been ours up until that time just were not working, were not adequate as a welcome for youth. Young and old were polite with us, but not always among us.

Some things have obscured the practice and habit of Jesus Christ who not only welcomed people to the table, but sat at the table of others who welcomed him, notably "sinners and prostitutes." Jesus himself was excluded because of his own lack of what we call "class." And yet, we now proclaim him as "The Way," "The Gate," "The Door," "The Passage."

Throughout time, young people in particular as well as the elderly, women and children, have experienced discouragement and displacement from the rest of us. And, therefore, there has been a special need to welcome them, and so the Mountain.

The unfolding of our "On the Road" ministries began over 15 years ago. It continues when Bonnies, and others who never attended Bona's, understand the holding of the door, the opening of the house, the invitation to quiet and our

gathering in prayer. Our "In Your Home" ministries and a number of our ministries help us remember that, "the Mountain is not only on the Mountain" and that we are truly "marketplace people looking for the Mountain and Mountain people readying for the marketplace" – help us walk in the world that may seem welcoming or unwelcoming. Our hearts open and are ready to practice a habit of openness with those who either seem closed or closed out. We come to this threshold together.

Jesus invites us to know that fear is useless and what is needed is trust. With Pope Francis and many other religious leaders who cry again for conversation, conversatio, a Franciscan understanding would be engagement, trust and reverence of one another and the risk to tell the truth in love. We might find our journeys to be common practices of presence in a world that would have us feel, at one time or another, alien or alienated.

From our very beginning Mt. Irenaeus has been a place of welcome for people from other cities, cultures, from the countryside to other colleges, people from different traditions and practices who would look for the tradition of welcoming and the habit of making each other at home. Language, color of skin, wealth, doors left closed and hearts that long for openings, borders that seem to be established beyond reason and built of fear, ask us to reason and to wonder and then to open our hearts and our lives to one another.

## The Mountain Calendar of Events

*"Mountain on the Road" and "Mountain in Your Home" Gatherings:*

*October 10, 2013, Syracuse, NY*

*October 11-13, 2013, Boston, MA and Albany, NY*

*November 16, 2013, Silver Spring, MD*

*November 17, 2013, Northern VA*

*For more information contact Michelle Marcellin,  
716-375-2096 or mmarc@sbu.edu.*

### ***A New Way to Join in Our Annual Auction Fun We're Going Online with a Few Special Items***

Each year friends of Mt. Irenaeus gather together to raise needed funds to support the Mountain. This year is no exception with our annual auction taking place on November 2, 2013.

Many of you have told us that you would like to join us for the evening but you are unable to travel to the auction to be with us that day.

So we are bringing a Mini-Mountain Auction to YOU!

Please watch for information over the next month about our online auction.

You will be able to bid on very special and unique items.

Watch for more information and happy bidding!



**“All who participate in the mission of the Mountain join with Jesus in making all things new by creating and nourishing a community that transcends a particular place, opening to all peoples, ages and cultures.”**

**(From Mt. Irenaeus Mission Statement)**

Finally, as we have celebrated the Feast of St. Francis, we remember Francis’s great greeting, which is one of welcoming, “Pace Bene,” peace and all good! To all of us and to all of you, welcome to the wholeness and the fullness of this new time, right here, right now, as we enter through the simple “singular entrance space” of love.

This is a new springtime even this fall my friends! Even as each day may be getting colder, let us throw open the doors!



*Pace Bene!*

### ***Thank you for making the Mountain Mission possible...***

It is difficult to express in words how the Mountain mission has made and continues to make a difference in people’s lives. But I can tell you that I have seen it time and time again over the last four years as I have been a part of the life of the Mountain in West Clarksville, on campus, and “On the Road”.

I have heard it in the stories that people share and in their interaction with each other. I have seen it in people’s eyes as I have talked one on one with them. I have seen it with the generosity that people have given of themselves and their treasures. I have seen it with the friars as they work among themselves and share their lives with others. And perhaps, most profoundly of all, I have seen it in my own life and in my family’s lives.

In my experience, the base of this mission, the thing that keeps drawing me back is the steadfast LOVE I feel at the Mountain. It is alive there and if we choose to enter into it, it grows within us and around us.

Thank you for all that you have given to make the Mountain Mission continue and grow. Your gifts make it possible for the LOVE of the Mountain to continue to bless so many...including me!

Mary Schlosser

Coordinator of Development and Volunteers

### ***A Year on the Mountain***

In a world full of noise, movement and frenetic activity, it is often difficult to hear anything beyond the hum of conversation, industry and traffic in the air. I, like many before me (many of whom are currently reading this newsletter), found a place where much of that noise and need for movement is placed aside for a time. This place is known and loved as the Mountain or Mt. Irenaeus, and I am coming to the close of thirteen months living as a lay person in Community there. I am a Mountain Companion.

This time has been filled with prayer, ministry, work, food, conversation and peace. We consider the Mountain a place of learning and education and I have found that to be extraordinarily true during this year. I have learned the importance of mentoring and meaningful conversation in personal and relational development. I have been given the gift of listening in a way that opens me, my relationships and my world beyond being mine. Through servant leadership, mutual mentoring and forming a relationship with many of you and others I have been given more in the last year than I can ever give enough thanks and praise for.

As I prepare to move onto a new chapter in my life and journey with my fiancée I can say that the Mountain will remain an important part of that journey. It has formed me into a man of faith and contemplative prayer with openness to others that I would never have thought possible in my life. I thank each of you for your love and support of Mt. Irenaeus and I look forward to continuing to be a part of the life and ministry of the Mountain.

~ Martin Spear, SBU ‘11



## SUMMER MEMORIES AT THE MOUNTAIN

God blesses us every season at the Mountain with many graced moments and wonderful visitors who come and spend time with our Community. One moment of grace, both difficult but privileged, was sending forth one of our brothers from the Mountain to the valley. Fr. Bob Struzynski retired to begin a new life with a Franciscan Community in Butler, NJ. He left so much goodness and wisdom with us and no doubt took plenty of the same with him to St. Anthony Friary in the Garden State.

Another wonderful memory was our Evening of Recreation program which unfolded during four consecutive Wednesdays in July. Our over-riding theme for those gatherings was Unpacking the Good News.

We drew a large number of people, many from the local area and parishes, who joined us for prayer, time on the land, dinner, Mass, and faith-sharing. We shared and discussed our understanding of the Good News, how it touched our lives, helped us to experience both God's presence and healing, and empowered us to bring Christ's Gospel to others.

One last memory of note was our Franciscan Contemplative Days. At the end of June friars from other houses in Holy Name Province gathered at the Mountain for fraternity, prayer, and a sharing of the fruits of contemplation. Together we delved into the fertile Franciscan contemplative tradition and fed one another with wisdom, peace, and fraternal affection.

- **John Coughlin, ofm**



Who knew playing the dirt could be so much fun?

## MOUNTAIN IN YOUR HOME

"There is a light that has overcome the darkness. There is no darkness that can overcome the light". In the Rochester area for the last two years we have had a series of "Mountain in Your Home". The whole idea is to bring the light of Mt. Irenaeus into the homes of the Alumni of St. Bonaventure and others, to replicate a part of Mt. Irenaeus in the local area. The goal is to bring the spirit of St. Francis, St. Clare, and St. Bonaventure into homes and out into the places where people work and play and live their lives.

About every three months, we have one of these gatherings of "Mountain in Your Home". The response has been wonderful and enthusiastic. We have found that we need the times of refreshment to look at where we are and where we are going. We start with a period of getting to know one another, catching up and sharing news.

Then we form a circle and break open a word of scripture with Fr. Dan Riley, and others who have come with him from the Mountain Community. After the time of sharing from our life experience, we pass a loaf of blessed bread which everyone takes. Then we share a simple meal to which everyone has contributed.

The evening has grown to the point where we have invited friends and relatives to be a part of "Mountain in Your Home". Please contact the Mountain office (716-375-2096 or mmarc@sbu.edu) if you are interested in joining one of our gatherings "On the Road."

- **Bill and MaryLu Coffey**



Our Cross Country Teams have had a great season since their Mountain visit. Coincidence?



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In addition to the printed newsletter you're reading, we will begin publishing a monthly email newsletter soon. We invite you to subscribe as we expand ministry to more online mediums.

### **Sign up by:**

--Texting MOUNTAIN to 42828

--Visiting [www.mounti.com/subscribe](http://www.mounti.com/subscribe)



The opening photo in our last newsletter was of the friars at Mt. Irenaeus and a community of men from the Seneca Nation, The Faith Keepers School. We have found with one another a ground of understanding and spirituality.

### ***13th Annual Mountain Auction to Take Place November 2, 2013***

The planning for the Auction is well underway. The evening begins with the celebration of Mass at 5:00 pm in the University Chapel on the St. Bonaventure University campus. Auction/Social begins at 6:00 pm in the Robert R. Jones Board of Trustees Room, Doyle Hall, where cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and desserts will be served. This evening has become a very popular social, spiritual and beneficial one for the Mountain and all who attend.

The Auction has been our largest fundraising gathering each year with over \$30,000 raised and donated last year. The gathering is successful each year because of the generous gifts donated. Thank you for your generosity to us each year! For any further information on the Auction please contact Michelle Marcellin at [mmarc@sbu.edu](mailto:mmarc@sbu.edu) or 716-375-2096.