

**“Try to realize the dignity God has conferred on you.  
God created and formed your body  
in the image of his beloved Son,  
and your soul in God’s own likeness.”**

-St. Francis of Assisi

**My friends, with our head, with our heart, even on our knees, this day we have entered our Lenten journey, walking in the “footsteps of Jesus Christ.”**

**Easter already blazes before us in the light of the Risen One.** What we long for is here. Each day, each moment, invites us to find the path that takes us not into preoccupation with ourselves, but with purposeful service of others. It is often said that our Lenten journey is a path to a new Springtime! Trust the fact that you are already on your way... with new life, Spring is in our hearts!...in our world!

Francis of Assisi, sensing death, had a deep desire to find life with God. He both “left” and went into the world. He left family, position and property and found “solace in fierce landscapes,” peace in remote places and in his heart to bring to others. He traveled into the marketplaces from mountain caves as others would join him to go among the people fostering a Springtime that began to spread throughout the world.

Francis tells us that he chose to “walk in the footprints of Jesus Christ.” He invites us to do the same; to *find the path*, to *follow the path* on the earth under our feet. We are invited to step deeply into the footprints of the One who walks for us, before us, now with us.



**As I pen these reflections I think of so much that is going on in our world.** We look at each other with great amazement and simply say the word, “Egypt!” ... we wonder where else, what else, who else will be longing for freedom and peace. Francis went to Egypt and sought a conversation with Malik al-Kamil, the Ayubid Sultan of Egypt, whose faith was Islam. They both were seeking the “peace that is beyond all understanding.” Francis sought ways of non-violent engagement in the midst of a bloody and brutal conflict. Francis of Assisi and the Sultan risked peace... They *became* a Lent, a new Springtime for their time, for their Assisi, Rome and Egypt, the fragmented world of their day.

**Saints Clare and Francis saw the need to walk “the Way.”** Gathering in places of solitude, they entered into the midst of the marketplace of their time – they did not shun the world. The early brothers and sisters, sought out places with the people in the cities, even as they had secreted themselves in fraternal conversations resting in the woods above these urban places the night before.

We too are often in two places, but they don’t always seem interrelated. We need to find our way “*here*” right here, wherever *here* might be, through our Lenten season. Our “walk” as we find our way offers us a deepening interrelatedness. We draw aside for conversion, renewal and reform, not for an artificial sense of perfection in this, a penitential time.



Mountain Friends and family who gathered “in the sun.”

**Mt. IRENAEUS**

**FRANCISCAN MOUNTAIN RETREAT**

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Rather, it is a time to both change our ways and find "the Way." Hope for our way offers other hope, alternatives ... another path to explore, another way from *here... now* and *somehow together* into the New Day.

St. Bonaventure would invite us to stand up, come to full stature before the God who loves us, the One "in whom we live and move and have our being." Often said, we are an image of God, "Imago Dei" a reflection of God, "like God," as Bonaventure would say, we each are a "similitude." We are called by this great peaceful power of the Spirit to *imitate* God, offering with Christ new life, healing one another and our world.

RECEIVE the HOLY SPIRIT

**Recently, as we walked through the snow on the Mountain and looked out for Spring,** the sun sprung up, lighting our shear, white landscape with amazing blazing colors – orange, yellow, pink. Dawn! It was time for Morning Prayer as we walked up the hill toward our Chapel.

**Oliver McGonigle and two of his friends, alums from other colleges, had arrived two nights before for some time with us.** They were leaving that morning for the University of Notre Dame. Western New York, famous for "overcast skies," changed that morning to a strikingly blue sky with these dazzling colors, the sun dancing before Ollie's friends, as they came to prayer and readied to leave with all that was ignited in prayer.

"We don't have a place like this there," said his friend Peter from Notre Dame as Ollie smiled. "Bona's has it; the Mountain is a gift for Bona's and others." "We find we are people here, not only in a place," he seemed to say.

Our Morning Prayer reflected the longing we heard from each other as well as thanksgiving for the light that dispels our darkness. We heard it in Ollie's friends and many before and since then. *Both the hills of our hearts and the landscape of our world are thirsting, longing for this light of freedom and peace as it was in the time of Clare and Francis.*



Our conversations from the morning session continued during a break time on the porch of the Spallone's home.

**A month ago, on a small barrier island called Don Pedro, off the coast of Florida,** a number of us gathered in a unique Mountain retreat to celebrate "The Mountain in the Sun." (On our website at [www.mounti.com](http://www.mounti.com).) We gathered with one another, enjoyed meals, walked the beach and, indeed, found "footprints in the sand." We made our way together on a sandy path ... sunlit, Son-lit for our footsteps. We believed we were "gathered in God's glory" ... "rediscovering our own glory."

St. Irenaeus (172 CE) was gentle and insistent in telling us of the *beauty* we are still becoming. This is our full, complete, "uprightness", our full stature of beauty, *the glory* Bonaventure also names. We may have stumbled and fallen but we can now stand upright and grow... glow with glory.

***the dignity God has conferred on you. God created and formed your body in the image of his beloved Son and your souls in God's own likeness.*** We might wonder why we are *suspicious of this "dignity," doubt this about ourselves? Possibly we were not taught this deep and beautiful truth of being God's Image.*

Reflecting a bit on a quote from St. Francis, "**Try to realize**

This is why we at the Mountain wish to "teach it" today, extending it with our hearts enflamed to the very heart of the world.

There have been places and times, possibly even in our religious upbringing, when it was more about rules and regulations, fear and intimidation, rather than this deep relationship we seek in the defenseless God, our Brother, Jesus the Christ. The relationship that rises up for us, first from our baptism as we were held in the loving arms – or stood beside – the ones who sponsored us, we consider today. This is the amazing moment of our literal emersion into the dying and rising of Jesus Christ. We recall places and times, and there has been "a sea shift in our life." We might be longing for it now, a whole new beginning, no half steps!



We gathered on Don Pedro Island, from near and far, to find and foster and reconfirm again God's glory, our life in the light of Christ. Rich themes almost "too good to be true" helped form us as **Kim and Mike Spallone** graciously opened their home and their island to us. Kim went out of her way to find houses that would take us in as singles and couples. Mike, in his thoughtfulness, unfolded in humorous ways his own delight in having us together, grilling an outstanding meal for us as Kim, **Michelle Marcellin** and **Kate Nolan Clemens** had made their way to a market on Friday finding food that would take some of us through Monday. We made steps, meals and found a path together in the sand, on this Earth.

### For the Florida retreat we chose to open to two ancient teachers.

We heard and basked in the light of St. Irenaeus, an early pastoral theologian, and St. Bonaventure, a humble and famous Franciscan teacher. Each of them, at one time or another, seemed to be discounted or passed over in our theological history for other's "ways of seeing," other's theologizing. (We might remember that, as the ancients told us, a theologian is one who prays, opens faith so that others might see. They shared their prayerful perspective of God's light, helping us find light for our path.) St. Irenaeus and St. Bonaventure help us to see ... anew ... who we are, who God is and where our paths lay in the world ... in the sand, on the mountain, in cities and in our homes so that we might "go among," go forth with others.

**There is in life's complexities a simple moment that unfolds and holds all others.** So often it seems simple in the sense of passing, rather than simply deep, unique and lasting a moment that unfolds all other moments in our lives. It is a step into the One who we walk with who invites us to be on the journey. The One who says, "Let everything else go and come and follow me." In another place Christ says so beautifully to his Disciples who wonder, "How do we find this life... Come and see!" We follow the dusty road, we walk the sands of the desert and the beach, we walk in our world with him. We are one, "the gate of heaven is everywhere."

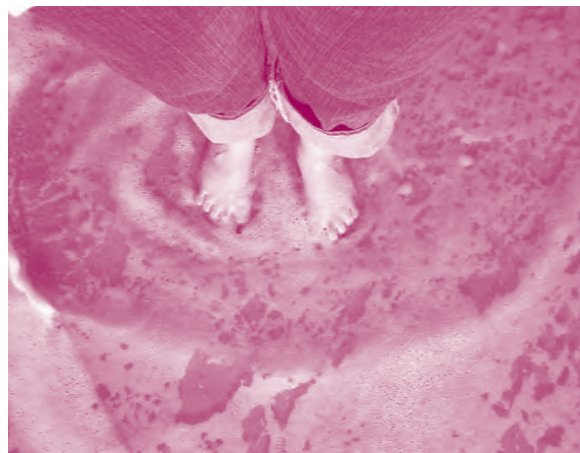
**Easter will again proclaim this year in all of its "ortho-doxy"... "true light" beaming forth that Christ is victorious!** We are free... Oh Egypt!... making, finding "footprints in the sand" with others who long for peace and freedom.

Too much to believe?! Take time to let it soak in, let it seep in, to our souls so that we might show this truth of freedom and light to others. Take time on this simple path that now takes us into Lent and on to Easter.

*Risk hoping! Risk the path – even when it is sandy and you feel beached!* Believe beyond what has become our "conventional" believing.

**Walk to Easter with one another my sisters and brothers.** We walk already in God's glory for that glory has been given to us. We walk in the One who is already our risen Lord, who "has gone before us into Galilee" and asks us to walk to the mountain, in our homes, through our cities and our world among others ... in the footsteps of Jesus Christ!

*Easter Joy!*  
*Danofu*



One of us took time to reflect on where she stands in the world.



Julie and Jocelyn feeding the chickadees.



Men's Overnight February 2011



Women's Overnight February 2011

Holy text helps to weave for us a sense of continuity, of bringing to our fringed lives the tender hand, the care of the “great weaver.” God will weave us again and again from our frayed brokenness, forming and shaping us in God’s own image. Step aside and chew over these following passages if you wish:



“There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun ... I have no program of seeing this. It is only given. But the gate of heaven is everywhere.”

~ **Thomas Merton**

“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female: for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

~ **Galatians 3: 28**

“It is not you who shapes God it is God who shapes you. If then you are the work of God await at the hand of the artist who does all things in due season. Offer him your heart soft and tractable, keep the form in which the artist has shaped you. Let your clay be moist lest you grow hard and lose the imprint of God’s fingers.”

~ **St. Irenaeus**

“God saved us and has called us to a holy life, not because of any merit of ours, but according to his own image and design – the grace held out for us in Jesus Christ...”

~ **2 Timothy 1: 8-10**



SBU Freshmen in line for supper.



Chris Sterling, a Junior leader for our Men’s Overnight.



The Women’s Swim Team relax on our Chapel floor for a February 2011 overnight.



A good meal cooked together is always part of a Mountain evening.

“JUST AS CHRIST WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD  
BY THE POWER OF THE FATHER,  
WE TOO MIGHT LIVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE”  
Rom. 6:4



## UPCOMING DATES FOR SPRING/SUMMER 2011

- March 20** Memorial Mass for Fr. Dan Hurley  
**March 25, 26** Sojourners gather in Albany  
**March 27** Mountain on the Road in Erie, PA
- April 1-3** Sojourner's Weekend at the Mountain  
**April 8-9** Work and Reflection Overnight at the Mountain  
**April 8-9** Mountain on the Road in Silver Springs, MD/Arlington, VA  
**April 10** Mountain on the Road in Boston, MA  
**April 21-24** Easter Weekend, see schedule below  
**April 30** Mt. Irenaeus Board of Trustees Meeting
- June 18** Mountain in the Home in Keswick, VA  
**June 27-** Contemplative Days  
**July 1**  
**June 29** Summer Evenings of Re-Creation begin – Wednesday evenings
- July 23** Mountain in the Home in Pittsburgh, PA

If you would like more information on our upcoming events, please contact our offices at [mountain@sbu.edu](mailto:mountain@sbu.edu) or 716-375-2096. Some additional information may be found on our website [www.mounti.com](http://www.mounti.com) or our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/mtirenaeus](http://www.facebook.com/mtirenaeus).



**Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup>** we will celebrate a Memorial Mass in our Chapel at 11:00 a.m. for Fr. Dan A. Hurley, ofm, one of the founding members of the Mt. Irenaeus Community. A dish to pass brunch will immediately follow. Fr. Dan passed to the Lord on March 13, 2010.

**SUMMER EVENINGS OF RE-CREATION:**  
 June 29; July 6, 13, 20, 27  
 August 3

*Summer Evenings  
 of Re-creation*

"Seeing and Living Anew, the transformative theology of St. Irenaeus and others"

St. Irenaeus in the earliest days of the Church and others since, point us to this insightful practice, the integration of how we live our day and how we find "the way", in Christ in all creation.

**Join us for these evenings.** Take a walk on the trails, rest by the pond, sit in our Chapel. Bring a dish to pass before our evening meal around 6:00. We often begin with a walk or reflective time from the house at 7:30 and complete our time in the Chapel around 9:00 pm.

### Easter 2011 Schedule:

*Holy Thursday*  
**April 21, 2011**

**6:30 pm** - Dish to Pass Supper

**8:00 pm** - Liturgy of the Lord's Supper

*(GOD) FRIDAY*

**April 22, 2011**

**Noontime** - Simple Soup and Salad Lunch

**1:00 pm** - Meditative Walk in the Woods

**3:00 pm** - Liturgy of the Passion Followed by silence on the land and in the Chapel

*Holy Saturday*  
**April 23, 2011**

**11:00 am** - Morning Prayer by the Pond

**9:00 pm** - Easter Vigil

*EASTER*

**April 24, 2011**

**Sunrise Service on the Knoll**

**11:00 am** - Easter Sunday Mass Followed by Brunch (Dish to Pass)

Come early for a walk on the land or a visit to our Chapel, rest in the quiet there. Meals announced here are "dish to pass", bring what you wish to share with others.

### SPRING WORK AND REFLECTION OVERNIGHT April 9-10, 2011

*SPRING*

*"Come try our way of life..." help us, work with us to "make all things new!"*

As spring comes to the Mountain and the earth is revealed again from underneath its carpet of snow, and we see our gardens, our home and work we need to do. The Mountain needs our attention, reflection, and our labor!

We need your help and the help of others. Join us Friday and Saturday and let us work together.

Register through Mary Schlosser 716-375-2081, e-mail [mschloss@sbu.edu](mailto:mschloss@sbu.edu), or leave a message at our Mountain home 585-973-2470 indicating your arrival and departure time.

Our early brothers and sisters valued manual work, participating with one another in a "way of life."

**Consider connecting the practical with the prayerful.** Find below two paragraphs from our Mt. Irenaeus Vision Statement. They weave the story of our work and prayer for April 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> and each day!

"The practical details of our daily living – work, prayer, solitude, community – allow us to experience a life upon which we reflect. The "daily bread" of our life nourishes us for the life of justice, love, and peace here and elsewhere. Living each day in a "down to earth" fashion, we find that we have the gift of coming to "see" a God who loves us far more than we love ourselves.

Jesus models a way of servant leadership that we seek to follow and to reflect upon with one another. We find many concrete examples of this model in the lives of Francis and Clare as well and certainly throughout the Gospel. The simple practices of creating and maintaining the Mountain and its everyday life, as mentioned above, are these "places" of learning where we seek and come to know this God who heals us all and who "makes all things new again." (Check out the rest of our Vision Statement at [www.mounti.com](http://www.mounti.com).)



Franciscan Mountain Retreat

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**Bring the Mountain home with you! Sojourners weekend retreat – April 1-3 – All are welcome!  
Help us. Work with us. Join us. Spring Work and Reflection Overnight, April 8-9.**

### **A MESSAGE FROM MARY SCHLOSSER,** *Coordinator of Development and Volunteers*

**Your generosity is helping us near our goal of \$141,000 for this year's Mt. Fund!**

We thank all of you that have volunteered and contributed to this year's appeal. We have raised 74% of our goal! *A special thank you to all of our phonathon volunteers who contributed and made phone calls to others and raised over \$33,000 to date. This effort has been a fantastic success this year!* **Each and every donation is an important one to help us reach our Mt. Fund goal by May 31, 2011.** Please support us with an annual gift this year. Send your donation to Mt. Irenaeus, PO Box AR, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 or donate online at [www.mounti.com/give-support](http://www.mounti.com/give-support).

### **OUR ANNUAL MOUNTAIN AUCTION IS NOVEMBER 5, 2011.**

**Have a party with a purpose! Host a gift-gathering party for our Auction.**

*Friends have been gathering to collect gifts to be presented the night of the Mountain Auction. A variety of new and unused gifts in different price ranges are gathered, well in advance of the November auction. Parties can be quite simple, possibly a happy hour for a group of friends or a few families for a summer barbecue. Guests could bring individual gifts, or go together to sponsor a get-away package or some other gift.*

**Auction chair Margaret Bryner would be happy to discuss party ideas/themes with you. She can be reached at 716-373-0807 or [mbryner@sbu.edu](mailto:mbryner@sbu.edu).**