

**As spring breaks out upon us  
and clears the roads of snow  
and dries up places that had been muddy and messy,  
let us hear and rejoice with the call  
“to make all things new!”**

**You might remember the Broadway musical, “Auntie Mame.”** There is a wonderful song from the show. I will share with you the lyrics. While offering a contemplative retreat a few years ago in California, and playing this song sung by Mame, the rooms participants filled with smiles as we felt the sense of Mame’s song, possibly already knowing it might be ours, “Open a new window, open a new door, travel a new highway you never traveled before, before.”

Possibly you have been with us at Mt. Irenaeus a number of times or are still hoping to make your way here. This is a place of journey, of open door-ness and “new windows” that call us to look out on the world in a new way while at the same time we look in on and listen to our hearts. Our heart is our true place of journey and from which we see truly ... “rightly”... as the fox says to “The Little Prince.” With others who have gathered here, we open our lives to one another and hope and wonder about our ability to continue to “travel a new highway.”

Recently, we had our hearts and the house filled with wonderful young people from Bona’s who, finding their way and sharing their journeys, opened an evening of conversation naming risks that we take to open “new doors,” traveling to new places within ourselves and with each other to transform the world - how risky it truly is and .... Oh, so fulfilling it will be!

**Young and old alike, we need to encourage one another to head out on this highway of life, to begin anew, begin again, to - as our mission statement says - begin to believe we can “make all things new in Jesus Christ.”**



A meeting of spirits – students from four area colleges attend our spring Intercollegiate Retreat.

We hope you receive this newsletter during Easter time. It is a holy time for Christian people and spring is a holy time for the whole earth, for all women and men of all traditions, young and old, who feel with the earth the call to come alive, to raise up anew. This sounds like a list and a tall order. A contemplative way of realizing it would be a sphere of inclusion and ongoing growth, of needs and possibilities and persons. We become more willing to stretch if our hearts are rooted in hope and our vision remains simple, clear and Christic. Mame would sing with open arms and open voice, “open new windows, open new doors, you can travel a new highway you have never traveled before!”

We want to celebrate Christ through this season, the One who has died for us that we might rise with him from the dead and

**Mt. IRENAEUS**  
**FRANCISCAN MOUNTAIN RETREAT**

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1980's Alumni attend Mass at the Mountain.

be free of all that would be death dealing and live the freedom of life's journey with others.

We are called to journey more freely in the world. We walk bearing a cross that is our own unique pathway in this new life, having an aspect of suffering about it – it is not always about our sin. Rather, it is the suffering of becoming transformed as we are anointed in Christ's own journey. The discomfort, the rub of the Cross on our shoulders is the felt change that our bodies and our hearts sense. Our feet now want to tread a different path and be as Isaiah says, "Beautiful are the feet on the mountain tops which bear Good New."

**Now and for more than 30 years a community has been gathering, seeking and creating, deepening their hearts so as to renew the face of the earth.**

Our first calling was to be a Gospel community of encouragement welcoming the "spring awakening" of each other's lives. In the early 70s we dreamt of a place for weekends or retreats "away" for students, faculty and others from St. Bonaventure University, as well as other colleges and families from far and wide. We knew the need for friars, sisters and others in the cities who were serving the poor. We wanted a place in the woods for prayer and newness of life for all. **Fr. Alban McGuire**, who was our Provincial at the time, said, "Yes, the Mountain - a place for prayer and peaceful re-creation." Both he and **Mathias Doyle** (then President of St. Bonaventure University) directed us to be independently incorporated.

## Not a "retreat house" then what? ...

We spoke over time - and continue to speak among ourselves - of "a neighborhood of communities." We wonder how women might join us here and, indeed, how we might grow what has been - from the beginning – an experience of youth joining us for summers or for a full year or two to live the life while rolling up their sleeves, joining in our daily work here on the Mountain as well as our ministry to Bona's and other places.

**Persons of different ages and places, traditions and beliefs**, have been coming here from our beginning to consider what next path they might take, what door is opening for them, what new highway lays before them.

Spawned by the Spirit of their internal journey which takes us out into the world, *we never understood ourselves as a "retreat house!"* Stepping aside was always getting ready to step back in, deepening our hearts was always listening to a way in which, as our heart is transformed, we would deepen our commitment to the world. We were longing for a family of discernment as well as rest and refreshment. Commitments made here have traveled to other parts of the world, to many cities and rural areas in America. Bona grads and others have, as they have told us, chosen a path because they walked, climbed or rode their way here to Mt. Irenaeus.

**And so our Communications Committee and others are helping us to try to find a better word**, a descriptive one for our life rather than "retreat house" or retreat facility. **Bob Jones**, then Chair of the University's Board of Trustees and whose professional life was spent building homes, when he was here to dedicate our "House of Peace" said, "Let me take exception to your name, this is not a 'house,' it is a 'home' and meant to be a home for others."

## Mountain Companions; looking for others to share our way of life and ministry!

*We are in the invitational mode, even as we define, detail and carefully organize a Companions program. I brought back materials years ago from related sites and we have had the experience of people living with us, ministering beside us, working with us already at various times. Our growth and our capacity to live and serve well invites us to reach out with great intentionality and to invite others in with us.*



Students enjoying themselves at the Winter Overnight.

One of the biggest challenges we and others face in the world today is sustaining a mission reliant on volunteers and benefactors, finding others who wish to commit to this mission, as well as help find friends and resources. We look now to you, asking you to join our conversation about the significant and unique needs that are presented in attending to such a significant and unique mission. Our life has flowed from here, possibly to where you are – out to the world to other cities, homes and places.

Please take some time and consider *your* life, the new windows out from which you might see the world anew, a “new door” that you might help us open, creating new pathways and highways for others. Continuing from our beginning, the Mountain continues to intuit a mission, to grow in contemplative service to others. Now with a Pope named “Francis” and a path and a practice of mercy, love and service, we are finding one who clearly and specifically wants to connect with our mission, our vision and find our way. Help us to find what we need to continue to live this new way, this new day, to open “new windows,” open “new doors” and travel a “new highway,” we never traveled before, before ...!

Easter blessings my friend,  
Dan Riley, ofm

## **SUSTAINING THE MOUNTAIN: FORMING FAITH AND LEADERS FOR THE FUTURE**



Webster’s dictionary defines SUSTAIN as “To give support to.” - “To nourish.” As we approach the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Mountain in the summer of 2014, over 25,000 students, alumni and friends have been “nourished”, recharged and refreshed after a visit to the Mountain or in Mountain on the Road gatherings in homes across the nation. The Mountain Movement has not only produced profound life changing and personal spiritual growth for all of us, but our Mountain experiences have provided a template for life upon which many students, alumni and friends have based successful careers, family enrichment and community service involvement across the United States.

Many of us remember and participated in the “early years” of the Mountain as Fr. Dan Riley and Fr. Dan Hurley and many benefactors obtained the land and built the early structures. Still others of us remember the construction of the Chapel and the building of the House of Peace. What a joy for all of us to have walked the trails, prepared and shared a meal, became “new timbers of the Church” as we celebrated Liturgy in the Chapel and made lifelong friends because of our time at the Mountain both as a student and as an alumnus. Just as the Friars have nurtured our faith life for so many years, for more than a generation, we ask for your continued generosity in helping the Mountain become self sustaining in order to offer essential programs and services to future generations of students and people of all ages, cultures and faiths.

How can you help us sustain the Mountain?

- By helping us reach out to Mountain supporters by hosting a “Mountain in Your Home.” We need to get the message out of our additional resource needs, and our student programming to sustain our mission.
- By volunteering to make “thank you” telephone call to our benefactors.
- By pledging to our endowment over a 3 to 5 year period.
- By coming back to the Mountain for a weekend in order to nourish and recharge your entire being and to discuss in person how you can sustain the Mountain for the next generation.
- By giving to mission sustaining opportunities through bequests and other estate or planned gifts.

~Michael Hahn, SBU '64, Development Committee Chair



## “The Mountain is in you even if you’ve never been there.”

Those of us lucky enough to have the Bonaventure experience realize that we are different. We have something inside that is hard to explain. We may try to describe it in terms like spirituality or faith, but it’s not that simple. We are drawn to people. We lean in. We have deep relationships. An outlook on life that sees possibilities.

I believe that something is in the spirit of Mt. Irenaeus. Born of St. Bonaventure University but not confined there. It started with small gatherings where people often felt, for the first time, comfortable to express their feelings about Faith. Eventually a physical Mountain emerged. A place of gathering and retreat. A place where the spirit could truly grow, intensify and find depth. Our story doesn’t end there. In fact, it actually begins. Just as the roots of the Mountain were feelings and small gatherings, these events are happening all over the country and sometimes the world. People leave the Mountain and carry the Spirit compelled to

share the gift of fulfillment. The kind that it grows as it is shared. The Spirit works in many settings like the Family, the neighborhood or even the office.

Now we are cooking (as Dan would like to say). We have Mountain gatherings in homes; we call them “Mountain on the Road.” We have people telling more people about this experience and how it makes them feel. Most important we all engage others in a way that is knowing and deep. Our new Pope is showing us that he is in on this little secret of ours. He is engaging society they very same way. How amazing it is that this flame lit many years ago on campus is really part of a bigger idea. A movement. The Mountain is not only around us. It is in us. For that we are grateful.

How can you help this movement grow? In one word, engage. Come to the Mountain. Talk about the Mountain. Give to the Mountain. BE the Mountain.

~Tim Brown, SBU ‘85

## HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT THE POWER OF YOUR HANDS? THE DEEP, INTRICATE POWER THAT WE EACH HOLD WITHIN OUR PALMS?

Have you ever thought about the power of your hands? The deep, intricate power that we each hold within our palms?

The power to love. The power to pray. The power to eat. The power to give.

Our practice at the Mountain and in gatherings throughout the world is to hold hands during the Our Father and then embrace each other with hugs -- anchored by our hands.

Our hands also give us the power to tell stories. To type. To create.  
To edit. To serve as digital ministers.

In the last 12 months, the newly formed Mountain Communications Committee has been using its collective hands to further shape and mold the communications identity and palette of the Mountain. To call us by our first names -- Greg, Shannon, Mike, Sue, Dan, Kevin, Mary, Dave, Brian, Don, Maddie -- we’ve gotten our hands “dirty” in ink, icons and images. We have blessed one another, and hopefully you, through new digital tools such as an email newsletter, Facebook posts asking for prayer intentions, website content, prayer posters, podcasts and more planned in the coming months.

Our world continues to shrink yet it expands with possibilities, including communications tools. As Fr. Dan noted in this newsletter, the Mountain is everywhere including on our phones, computers and printed materials like you’re holding now. With our committee’s hands, our circle is trying to animate the Mountain’s mission to connect with you.

But we’re one small group gathered in a virtual circle. We can all serve as digital ministers and caring communicators with our own two hands. We can hold hands in prayer across time zones on the Mountain Facebook page. We can share online meditations from the Mountain website with friends in need, as I have done, to help send a soothing message. These tools are powerful, especially when we hold them in the palms of our digital hands. But our call moves beyond just holding them; it’s to share and give.

The Mountain family across the country and the world will never be in the same place at the same time like a traditional faith community, but our call to gather is an ancient one that transcends time and space. We can communicate, pray and share with each other no matter our location. We invite you in and welcome you from near or far with the power of your hands to help make all things new.

~Greg Licamele, SBU ‘99



Preparation of the Eucharist.

Hello friends of the Mountain! My name is Mike Madonna and I am a sophomore at St. Bonaventure University. I have been in love with the Mountain since the first time I traveled there. Since that first time the Mountain has become so much to me. It is a refuge in times of trouble. It's a place where I can meet new friends and catch up with old ones. A friend of mine once appropriately put it like this: "It's the Mountain, enough said."

Now I've been lucky enough to go on a few Mountain on the Road trips with Fr. Dan. Never in my wildest dreams would I have ever thought that one day I would be traveling around the country to help such an amazing man like Fr. Dan share the Mountain's message. Recently we went to Fordham College in NYC. It was quite the experience. The beautiful thing I've found about the Mountain is that every time you go there it's a different experience; different people, different discussion, and even different food. The same goes for Mountain on the Road. This particular adventure turned out to be very different. There was a Bonaventure game at Fordham that night so we were on a slight time schedule. Despite this, we ended up hanging out long past the time we were planning on starting the formalities.

I was blessed to meet some wonderful people on this trip. One couple in particular (if your reading this, I hope you are both doing great!) told me about themselves and their time at Bonaventure and their relationship to the Mountain. I completely lost track of time while we talked. I learned so much from them. When we finally started our official gathering the night only got better. To hear and see so many people from so many different walks of life come together united with one purpose is something words cannot describe. Tears were shed, laughter was shared, and by the end everyone felt like family. I may not remember everyone's names but I will never forget what was said and the emotions that were shared.

Fr. Dan often asks me how I bring the message of the Mountain to others. How do I bring my love and my light and let it shine forth for all to see? Well I'm going to give it a shot right now. I encourage all of you to visit the Mountain or participate in a Mountain on the Road. I can only do so much in a small text so I pray that one day I will meet you. I hope that I can stand next to you, talking and laughing with you, sharing our stories and our faith. We are united by a love for the Mountain and a love for God. Until that day I will say this simple word that holds so much meaning: Peace.

~Mike Madonna, SBU '16



SBU students and Fr. Lou discuss finding God in "The Book of Creation."



Mountain on the Road meets in Jesuit territory – Fordham Prep School in the Bronx.



On the Road at San Damiano Retreat House in Danville, CA with young ministers.



We all have gifts to bring to the table.



**MOUNTAIN**  
**IBENAEUS**

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## **Holy Thursday**

**April 17, 2014**

6:30 pm Dish to pass supper

8:00 pm Liturgy of the Lord's Supper

## **Good Friday**

**April 18, 2014**

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 19, 2014**

11:00 am Morning Prayer by the pond

9:00 pm Easter Vigil

## **Easter Sunday**

**April 20, 2014**

Sunrise Service on the Knoll

11:00 am Easter Sunday Mass – followed by dish to pass brunch.

