

Some say love, it is a river ...  
I say love, it is a flower,  
And you it's only seed.

When the night has been too lonely  
And the road has been too long,  
And you think that love is only  
For the lucky and the strong,  
Just remember in the winter  
Far beneath the bitter snows

Lies the seed that with the sun's love  
In the spring becomes the rose.

~(Lyrics from "The Rose")

**It is almost too much to talk about. It has been your experience as well, I am sure.** Because you have had to carry it, move it, and shovel it off your roof, out of your driveway and your yard. You know what I am talking about! **Snow!** It has been an amazingly frigid winter in the Northeast and, even with the cold, a great deal of snow.

So let me put that word aside and remember with you the reading that comes to us in Lent. As you and I already move towards Easter and the springtime of the Mountain and of your world, we hear God's promise that God's Word would come to us "like snow and rain falling upon the earth," the soil of every day always returns to God fruitful.

*Just as from the heavens  
the rain and SNOW come down  
and do not return there  
till they have watered the earth,  
making it fertile and fruitful,  
giving seed to the one who sows  
and bread to the one who eats,  
so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but shall do what pleases me – for which I sent it.  
Achieving the end for which I sent it.*

~ Isaiah 55:10-11



These days people are even taking "selfie" pictures on toboggans.

Once again, we have for you reflections from some of our friends, members of our Mountain family, who live other places, but share life with us here. Take time and savor each one of these.

We often say in the newsletter and elsewhere that, "The Mountain is not only on the Mountain." It is so apparent these days as I travel with others, most recently with six of our Bonaventure students to offer retreats and times of prayer among young and older adults in parishes, school

**Mt. IRENAEUS**

**FRANCISCAN MOUNTAIN RETREAT**

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halls and motel rooms – living and family rooms as well! We are all coming alive to that which brings us life and we long for it all the more!



Aware of this and attentive to it, we are forming a **Council for Spirit and Life**; a gathering of women and men, coast to coast, some of whom have been shepherding our “Mountain in your Home” events; our regional expression of this hunger to affiliate and find a maturing and nurturing spirituality. We are, like so many, looking for transformation, which at its core is growth – new life through conversion and deep learning. It is both a practice and the responsibility of the Church to help us find and make this experience real for ourselves and others.

**The Word falls on our hearts** – like snow has been upon our earth - as seeds and even as our hearts are cold, the Word broken open in community and our daily practices lends new life to us. Soon we will be looking in more detail about how we might lend to one another what we call “mutual mentoring;” the growth-fullness, the transformational experience of the Mountain beyond the Mountain, in our homes and in our hearts. We have always been and wish to grow our practice of mentoring with one another. This is the way we look at leadership and the formation of leaders. We know that the Mountain has always had a way of lending this learning to us so that we can practice habits of servant leadership in various settings. Some of the members of our Council for Spirit and Life will foster - with others - our Mountain way of servant leadership. We now have our podcasts and a myriad of wonderful articles written by others that, in one way or another, will be accessible to you and to the many that hunger for the nourishment that will foster our growth and are called into the care and service of others. And so, we hope to make these different media available – print and electronic – through the service of the Council for Spirit and Life.

“To Join with Jesus Christ – practices of transformation for ourselves and for our place in the world.” Particularly for those who wish to grow in leadership with us here at the Mountain and in their own region; **June 12-14, 2015 and July 31<sup>st</sup> to August 2<sup>nd</sup> are weekends set aside so that with the leisure and our practices of learning we might come together on the Mountain and lead each other further on retreat.** You might put one or both of these dates on your calendar now, soon a postcard will alert you to additional summer offerings at the Mountain.

**We have a new and renewed team for Mountain outreach for our region.** We are listening to our local leadership to better serve you and others who are nearby and look to not only our **Wednesday Evenings of Re-Creation June 24 and July 1, 8, 15, and 22**, but wish to spend more time and other times on the Mountain. When the spring finally comes to this hillside we will look to others to join us in turning over our vegetable gardens and helping us select and reestablish our primary flower beds. Please reach back to us if you are interested in participating in gardening with us.

**Often we speak about our Mountain Companion Program.** With the help of **Kevin Kriso, ofm** and **Erica Fleishman-Roethel**, and others, we hope to further publicize this and make known to you and others the possibility of joining us for the month of this coming August to be an August companion, a daytime Companion or being a Companion for a month or a year or more.



Students helping brother Joe stock up on fire wood.



Students come to the Mountain for an afternoon barbecue.

**We have always been conscious that our life has always been more than “only the friars;”** we have been, from our beginnings, women and men seeking the spirit and spirituality of Francis and Clare, we are more conscious that we need to open our life up to that seminal experience for everyone who wishes, at Mt. Irenaeus and beyond.

I have found myself, through these winter months, waking often before the sun is up to take time in prayer and in the awesomeness of the woods, feel the longing of others’ hearts for the fullness of the Son that is rising now. **Christ is the promise of the One we call the Father, the Spirit.** This Spirit has been given to each of us, to the Church and to the world to work for and bring new life for the earth. Joining with women and men of other traditions now and opening ourselves to the richness of other cultures, we are finding our way, to the particular appreciation of one another and of the movement of the Spirit in each one of our steps, our paths, our walks, our day.

As I find myself opening my heart even in the darkness of early mornings and now with you in the light and hope of this page and - soon hopefully - with your presence at the Mountain, **I ask you to join me, with others, so we would open our hearts to our world.** At a difficult time for leaders to find hope, we find that hope here, feel it within our hearts and pass it on to you. It truly is that hope that St. Paul talks about in Romans.

*And – hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

~ Romans 5:5

Let that Word ring out in our hearts; let it be the Word that falls from the sky now – dare I say it – rather like snow(!) falling into our hearts and into the earth around us, lending fertility to our lives so that we might nurture others on the new food of fellowship and the new peace for all.

*Peace!*

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MOUNTAIN IN MY LIFE...**

The Mountain has had a profound and very positive impact on my life. Twenty eight years ago Fr. Dan Riley, ofm presided at the wedding of my wife Barbara & I and we have been blessed with 3 great children who are now 24, 22 & 20 years old. We are now adapting to a new mindset of no longer having teenagers!

After graduating from SBU I joined GE where I have been for 29 years. The corporate world is very intense and trips to the Mountain over the past 3 decades have always provided me with a strong grounding of what’s important. Every time I visit the Mountain it helps me re-align my compass and be more present to my faith to God. I also visit the Mountain with my best friend from Bona’s, Joel Serra, and our time together has also enhanced the value and deep appreciation of our lifelong friendship.

In an effort to give back to the Mountain, several times a year I conduct keynote speaking events on Leadership in exchange for donations to the Mountain and to Fr. Dan.

We have welcomed Fr. Dan into our home as he and the Mountain leadership “travel On the Road,” and feel blessed to have been able to share his love and peace with our family and friends in Wisconsin.

As the Mountain is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the people and the mission of the Mountain are held extremely close to my heart.

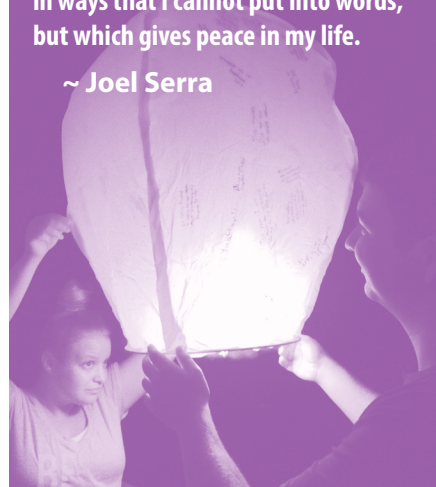
~ **Bob Cancalosi**

## **MOUNTAIN MEMORIES**

My memories of the Mountain are many and all of them good. From meals made delicious by the effort of many hands, to the solitude of a walk in the woods, time spent at Mt. Irenaeus has always been special. I have been inspired by the elegant faith of the Franciscans and overwhelmed by their dedication. At the Mountain I have found the power of redemption offered by the grace of nature, the courage to tell my best friend, Bob Cancalosi, that I loved him and his family and the wisdom of silence in a world overwhelmed by technology and progress.

My favorite memories, however, have risen from joining in the celebration of Mass at Holy Peace Chapel. No place that I have ever been so beautifully brings the grandeur of nature inside and no Mass that I have attended elsewhere has meant so much. Whether in the splendor of a world re-awakening in spring with flowers blooming on the hillside, the magnificent colors of autumn or the silence of fresh winter snow, each celebration has been an event of beauty and joy. The resonance of the wooden floors, walls and ceilings brings color to every voice joined in song (and to that magnificent laugh of Dan Riley) and the craftsmanship evident in the structure renews my faith in the goodness of those with whom I walk on this planet. It is in a word, perfect. And in those moments, I have felt the presence of God in ways that I cannot put into words, but which gives peace in my life.

~ **Joel Serra**





## PEAKS AND VALLEYS

It is challenging for me to identify a singular moment of significance when I think about Mt. Irenaeus. They include the overnight before my first year at St. Bonaventure when I met some of my best friends, coming back and helping with orientation the follow year as an actively engaged student leader and forming relationships. Then there was the year I was part of the residential community a couple years after I had graduated and was able to meet tremendous students and faculty from St. Bonaventure as well as many others from the region who are part of the Mountain community. These moments make me smile. But I realize these are some of the highlights.

From the summer of 2000 to today, there have been many valleys contrasting the peaks. Opposite of my involvement with Mt. Irenaeus as a student was my time doing many other things. I left the residential community to pursue opportunities that built on, but were distinct from, the work of peaceful re-creation in a contemplative community. Even today, I am committed to supporting the Mountain's mission while not being able to align my growing family's nap and lunch schedule with Sunday liturgy that strains to accommodate rustling children. Multiple times I have gone many months without communication with Fr. Dan or others, but I know and trust there is space for me when I come back. And, to me, that's one of the richest elements of the Mountain life: welcoming people for the first time or for the first time in a while. Life and relationships are dynamic and fluid, and I'm grateful for the loving embrace that has been extended--and re-extended--multiple times.

~ **Tim Shaffer**



Think about the Mountain and the way you feel welcomed when you are there. Think about how you feel valued. Think about how you realize that everyone's opinion matters, that all feelings are validated. And that all of this comes from feeling loved by Christ.

How are you able to bring these Mountain ways to your daily life? Prepare a meal with someone, talking while you do it. Then sit down at that meal and be pleased that you are there and thoroughly in that moment. Listen. Share. Ask a family member about their day and really listen to their answer. Take the time to talk to a colleague and express your concern and care for them. Pray. Have conversations face-to-face so you can form a relationship not based on typed words, but on real expression. Watch, listen to, and learn from the people you respect and admire. Trust yourself. Step outside your comfort zone knowing you will be a stronger person for doing it. Laugh loud and long. Remember, too, to find quiet reflection time for yourself so the Lord is truly present in your life.

All of these things, and so much more, I learned from my visits to the Mountain since my first step on the property in 1986. I know the journey continues, and I pray that I will continue to watch and learn from all whom I meet at Mt. Irenaeus.

~ **Sue Besecker**



## Mountain Companion Program

Non-friars, men and women, young and old have always been integral to the active-contemplative Gospel manner of life and ministry of Mt. Irenaeus. Some folks come for an afternoon, others have stayed for a month and some have stayed for two years. All of them have enriched the life of the Mountain by their presence and service. As the Mountain moves into a new generation with a further reach, we are encouraged to make this a more regular, conscious and ongoing practice by forming our Mountain Companion Ministry.

Mountain Companions live on site among the Resident Community at Mt. Irenaeus and partner with the Mt. Irenaeus Community in our Gospel manner of life and ministry for a commitment of one year or more. Companions provide servant leadership in a variety of capacities including leading prayer, hospitality, housekeeping, maintenance, ministerial outreach, and more. We work extensively, but not exclusively with college-aged students. Companions are required to possess a high level of energy to relate to this population in addition to a wide spectrum of people in a loving, non-judgmental way. We seek to make "Church" accessible to all.

There are three primary elements considered in this commitment: Spiritual Development-to deepen ones relationship with God in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi through growth/transformation in the spiritual life; Mission/Service - Our mission is to join with Jesus Christ in "making all things new" (Rev. 21:5) through service, Franciscan hospitality, simplicity and prayer; Community life - a willingness to help the community grow, meet the challenges of differing personalities and styles and invite others into our way of life.

Catholic or other Christian, singles, men and women, mature, well-balanced and spiritually motivated individuals in good health and free of financial, family and job responsibilities, flexibility, commitment to grow spiritually, and a sense of humor are encouraged to contact us.

**Mountain Companion Ministry**  
**Mt. Irenaeus**  
**P.O. Box 100, West Clarksville, NY 14786-0100**  
**(585) 973-2470**  
[www.mounti.com/mountain-companions](http://www.mounti.com/mountain-companions)





## HOLY WEEK MASS SCHEDULE

### HOLY THURSDAY

April 2, 2015

6:30 pm

Dish to pass supper

8:00 pm

Liturgy of the Lord's Supper

### GOOD FRIDAY

April 3, 2015

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 4, 2015

11:00 am

Morning Prayer by the pond

9:00 pm

Easter Vigil

### EASTER SUNDAY

April 5, 2015

Sunrise

Service on the Knoll

11:00 am

Easter Sunday Mass – followed by dish to pass brunch.



Mountain Community Leaders reflect on their ministry to campus.



One of those glorious sunny Sundays when we understand the meaning of "Christ is our Light."





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*Our 30th Anniversary celebrations continue across the nation.  
Get information on upcoming events on our website.*

## A MESSAGE FROM MARY SCHLOSSER,

Coordinator of Development and Volunteers

### **Your generosity is helping us near our goal for this year's annual Mountain Fund appeal!**

We thank all of you who have volunteered and contributed to this year's appeal. We have raised 81% of our goal! A special thank you to all of our phonathon volunteers who contributed and made phone calls to others and raised over \$23,250 to date. This effort has been a fantastic success this year! Each and every donation is an important one to help us reach our Mountain Fund goal by May 31, 2015. Please support us with an annual gift this year. Send your donation to Mt. Irenaeus, PO Box 100, West Clarksville, NY 14786 or donate online at [www.mounti.com/give-support](http://www.mounti.com/give-support).

## **PLANNING FOR OUR ANNUAL MOUNTAIN AUCTION IS UNDERWAY**

**+++ SAVE THE DATE! +++**

**This year's auction will be held on November 7<sup>th</sup>.**

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 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 co-chairs Mike Sullivan and Kimberly Palmer would be happy to discuss party ideas/themes with you. For more information, please contact the Mountain office at 716-375-2096 or [mmarc@sbu.edu](mailto:mmarc@sbu.edu). More details to follow soon on the website and social media.