

"Set your hearts on the Kingdom of God and God's Justice, and the rest will follow in turn."
Luke 12:31

March 8, 2013

Dear Friars of the United States:

We would like to invite you to the 2013 "Contemplative Days" being held June 24 to 28 at Mt. Irenaeus Franciscan Mountain Retreat. Knowing that all of us are called in different ways to review our lives and that our OFM provinces are in a time of conversation about the future, we welcome friars from around the United States to join us for this special time.

Almost from our beginnings, we have gathered with Franciscan men and women, and also for a few years with Camaldolese Benedictines, to enjoy and explore the quiet at the Mountain and to learn from one another, deepening our contemplative practices. We have gathered, sharing common prayer, meals and conversation, knowing that we each enter and have lived a contemplative life in various ways.

Aware that even we who live here at the Mountain have our own unique journey into what we call our Four Sisters of Wisdom -- silence, solitude, simplicity and service -- we welcome your own hunger for this life and your own practice.

We often choose articles to read on a particular theme. This year, our reflection will be, "Hearts Listening to the 'Sign of the Times': Living Franciscan Contemplative Life Today." The theme is suggested both by the direction of our Order and the call from our Minister General and others to read the signs of the times and look at where we are growing, how we might find ourselves engaged with one another as Provinces and brothers across the United States. Contemplatively our hearts want to open to each other and to the world at this time, particularly being attentive to what the Word of God and the world have to say to us.

Most of each day will be open for participants so that we might read, rest, and roam around Mt Irenaeus which comprises 400 acres of trails, woodland, ponds and open spaces as well as a chapel, hermitages and a large timber-framed common house, the House of Peace. We have available for single occupancy 14 rooms in cabins and hermitages. Reservations are being taken on a first come, first-served basis.

Our time is meant to be reflective, but also conversational. Michael Blastic, OFM, in one of his articles, notes the significance of the word "conversatio," which opens up meaningful engagement both in the world and with one another, finding in its midst the sacred, the abiding presence of God and our openness to God's Good News for others.

Please contact us before Monday April 22 for a place in our Contemplative Days. You can use our phone number 585-973-2470 or this email address mmarc@sbu.edu.

With fraternal affection,



Daniel Riley, OFM
Mt. Irenaeus

