

God's Time

Called to the Journey



Back: Jillian, Sam, Sarah, Sean, Sarah, Daniel, Lindsey
Front: Sister Michelle, Kelly, Paige

Mission Trip to Louisiana

By Sister Michelle Sinkhorn

When you think of spring break, do you think of beaches, time with family, hanging out with friends, parties? That's what I would think of, but not these Bellarmine University students. Bellarmine is a Catholic university in Louisville, Kentucky. Instead of a trip to the southern shore beaches, these

college students chose to travel south to Lake Charles, Louisiana, to spend a week helping those in need. I was blessed to be able to go and serve with them. Lake Charles and the surrounding areas were hit by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike. We spent the week helping an organization called Project Build a Future, which helps build houses in the low income area of the city (similar to Habitat). It was a week full of many laughs, hard work, and adventure. We met some really neat people. I was very impressed with these university students and really enjoyed spending the week working with them!

Two days were spent scraping and painting a house for a Lake Charles resident.



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For more photos from the Bellarmine trip, visit Facebook.

High School Come & See Weekend

February 26–28 we had eight high school girls with us for the weekend. This was their chance to “Come & See” and learn about the “Treasures of the Hill,” the theme for the weekend. The girls had a wonderful time meeting our sisters and getting to know them. They even got to play Guesstures, which was really fun and gave all of us some great laughs!

Besides learning about our sisters and hearing some of our vocation stories, the girls had the opportunity to make cookies of all kinds for Saturday night’s get-together with the community. They made chocolate chip, oatmeal raisin, ginger snap, and sugar free cookies. Everyone raved about how delicious the cookies were.

The weekend offered the girls a chance to share prayer and meals with the sisters as well as have fun and learn about our way of life. Those attending came from St. Louis, Missouri; Louisville, Kentucky; and Huntingburg, Tell City, Rome, Princeton, Poseyville, and Fort Branch, Indiana. Sisters Jill, Teresa, Barbara Jean, Michelle, and Agnes Marie served as team members for the weekend.

Our next high school weekend will be February 25–27, 2011.

Top photo: (back) Sister Barbara Jean, Sandra, Sister Agnes Marie, Aimee, Kathleen, Amanda; (front) Sister Jill, Sister Teresa, Vanessa, Anna, Haley, Klyne. Not pictured: Sister Michelle.

Middle photo: Participants in the high school Come & See weekend spent some time in the monastery bakery.

Bottom photo: During recreation time, visitors played games with the sisters.



For more photos from the high school Come & See Weekend, visit Facebook.



“When I told him, he asked what I’d be doing in Indiana. I said I hoped I’d be teaching, doing youth ministry, playing guitar at Mass – just as I’d been doing. And that’s how it turned out. But, for me, doing them as a Sister of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, as a part of this community, makes all the difference.”

Is religious life for you? Take the first step and get to know your Sisters at thedome.org. You can read our latest blog postings, take a virtual tour, and make plans to visit with us.

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For more information, please email Sister Michelle Sinkhorn or Sister Agnes Marie Dauby at vocation@thedome.org or call 800.738.9999.



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Sister Teresa Gunter appears in the 2010 issue of *Vision* magazine.

What I do... as a Ferdinand Benedictine



Sister Mary Jane Kiesel

Current ministry

Ministry to the sick and elderly

Name of the place you minister

St. Joseph Parish

Location of the place you minister

Jasper, Indiana

How long have you ministered there?

17 years

Approximately how many people do you serve (typically)?

20 homebound people as well as others in nursing homes and hospitals

What ages of people do you serve?

All ages — mostly elderly, depending on the situation

What is a typical day like in your ministry?

It is difficult to call a day typical. I plan, and God seems to change my plans.

Tell a story about something that has happened in your ministry.

I was called on to visit a young family — mother, father, and three children. I visited them every weekend and grew very close to them. The father had cancer and eventually was bedridden in a hospital bed. They talked very openly about their relationship with each other, truly a very close-knit family. The mother took excellent care of the father. The father grew very weak. I dreaded the day when God would call him home. One morning when I arrived at their home, the mother met me at the door and told me that her husband had died during the night. After hugs and tears, I asked how the children were doing. She said that when the children got up that morning and she told them about their dad, the youngest son, about 4 years old, said, "I know, Mommy. Daddy came to my bed and told me goodbye before he left." Certainly it hurts to be a part of their pain, but I also have many precious, faith-filled moments in my ministry.

How do you do what you do differently (from someone else in your position) because you are a Ferdinand Benedictine? How do you share our Benedictine and monastic values?

By promoting private prayer and communal prayer, seeking God in the ordinary, growing in self-knowledge, serving the poor, and living a simple lifestyle

How do you find meaning in the ministry in which you are presently engaged?

In moments like the story I described. And Seeking God in the daily, prayer, and the ministry to the sick and elderly — that is how I find meaning in my ministry.

How does your Benedictine, monastic community life support you in your ministry?

My sisters are good pray-ers, good players and are interested in my life and ministry, and I certainly appreciate them!

Sister Mary Jane visits a parishioner.





Sister Mary Cheryl Uebelhor's Story

My desire to enter religious life began at an early age, somewhere around the third grade. As I look back I realize that my call to religious life was probably prompted more by my desire to be a teacher than by anything else. The only teachers I had in elementary school were Benedictine sisters, and I think I equated being

a nun with being a teacher. I had an aunt and cousins at the Ferdinand monastery, and our family usually visited them each summer. I remember being very attracted by the joyfulness I noticed when visiting at the monastery. I was convinced that the life of a Benedictine nun was a happy one.

My parents were fervent in their religion and were very supportive of my choice to enter religious life. Attending church services, deep faith in prayer, and saying the family rosary were all of high priority in my family.

My decision did waver in high school as I began to think more about what the lifestyle of a nun was like and realized what I would be giving up. However, prodded on by other classmates from the Academy who were also entering, I did enter as planned and began life as a Ferdinand Benedictine. During the nine months as a postulant I wanted to leave most of the time, but I couldn't bring myself to make that decision. It somehow seemed to me that I would be a failure, and we threes on the Enneagram try to avoid that.

Sister Mary Cheryl teaches at Brescia University in Owensboro, Kentucky.



During the retreat before entering the novitiate, I finally told myself that I had to make a decision and act on it. By the grace of God and with great relief, I was able to say "yes" to my call. Since that time I have known great peace and happiness as a Ferdinand Benedictine, which I have been now for over 50 years.

As I progressed in religious life, my faith deepened, my recognition of the value of prayer in my life grew, and my commitment to religious life became ever stronger. I very much appreciate the love and support of this community. When I was asked at times to leave teaching to take on leadership roles in the Business Office and the Academy, I did so somewhat reluctantly, but I found wonderful support and appreciation from the community.

Having again returned to the classroom, I try to find God in my students and be open to sharing their concerns and interests. Teaching mathematics does not lend itself to sharing one's religious beliefs in the classroom. But letting students know you are interested in them and concerned about their successes and failures often opens the door to sharing outside of the classroom.

As I look toward the future, I know that I need to remain open to God's call. My life has taken several turns that I would not have chosen, but saying "yes" each time was the right decision for me. As a community, we also need to stay open to change and growth. I believe that our community has much to offer to the society around us. I want to see us share with others the peace and happiness that I have found here in my life.

We would like to come visit you!

It is our hope to get to know you all better in the coming year.

Do you attend a college that has a Newman Center? We can present a discernment program for all the Catholic students who are a part of Newman!



Please email Sister Michelle or Sister Agnes Marie at vocation@thedome.org.

Other contact information is on page 6.

A Balanced Life

This Come & See Weekend was for single, Catholic women who are discerning their vocation to religious life. The theme of the weekend was "Balance: Prayer, Work, Community, and Leisure." Sisters serving on the team for the weekend were Sisters Ida, Laura Marie, Joan, Kathleen Marie, Michelle Catherine, and Agnes Marie. Women taking part in the weekend came from Evansville, Indiana, and Barrington, Illinois.

Sister Kathleen Marie provided the input on the theme for the weekend. She shared how being a sister does not automatically mean we are balanced. Just as many people struggle to find balance in their lives between school, work, family, and friends, we also are challenged to find balance between our ministries, community, prayer, and leisure. Being the math teacher that she is, Sister Kathy compared balancing your life to a good equation. You have to work at it but it can be done. And also like math, balancing your life does come easier to some than to others.

If you were unable to attend this weekend, never fear. This summer, June 25–July 1, will be another opportunity for those who are looking at religious life to come and share in our ministries and learn more about our community and our way of life. You may come for the entire week or, if you can stay for the weekend of June 25–27, that's fine too. For more information or to register, contact Sister Agnes Marie or Sister Michelle.



Back: Sister Agnes Marie, Sister Laura Marie, Sister Kathy C., Sister Joan, and Laura
Front: Sister Michelle and Sister Ida



Every summer, Catholics On Call hosts an annual week-long program at Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago. This experience is designed for women and men (ages 18 to 30) who may be thinking about a life of service in the Church as a lay minister, religious sister or brother, or priest, and those who are undecided and want guidance in determining how God is calling them. If you are interested in attending this conference, let us know and we can help you out!

Dates for the conferences

Thursday, June 3, through Sunday, June 6
(extended weekend program)

Sunday, August 1, through Friday, August 6
(weeklong program)



Future Come & See Events

June 25–July 1, 2010 (week) • October 15–17, 2010 • January 7–9, 2011

- The weekend is free.
- Room, meals, and input are provided.
- Participants will pray, eat, and recreate with the sisters.
- This is a chance to visit with other women who are discerning religious life.
- Your parish, a local Serra Club, or Knights of Columbus may be able to help you with transportation costs. You never know — just ask!

For more information or to register, call the Vocation Office at 800-738-9999, email vocation@thedome.org, or register online at thedome.org/vocations.



Contact Information

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Mission Statement

We, the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana, are monastic women seeking God through the Benedictine tradition of community life, prayer, hospitality, and service to others. By our life and work, we commit ourselves to be a presence of peace as we join our sisters and brothers in the common search for God.

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