

God's Time

Called to the Journey



Bellarmino University students pose sporting their new hats.

Service: A student's perspective

By Amber Cunningham

Sophomore at Bellarmine University

This year a group of six students and four chaperones made the trip from Louisville, Kentucky to Lake Charles, Louisiana. We set out to help improve a neighborhood of houses built by Project Build a Future. The time is meant to assist the citizens of Lake Charles; however, in the two years I have ventured south, I've found that the students gain just as much from the volunteer opportunity. While most students spend their spring breaks working or on a beach perfecting tan lines, the students on this trip come to give their time and reflect on their faith. With a priest and a sister on the trip, we were all exposed to two wonderful aspects of the Catholic religion.

Celebrating Mass frequently and having nightly reflections within the group truly bonded us all. Amongst the chaos of school, any chance to step back

from the pressure and really consider what is important in this life is a blessing. My passion for my faith comes from the wonderful people I have encountered through Catholicism. Some of the role models of my life come from my religious involvement. The open discussions of faith and religion that occur during the trip are insightful and help me understand my personal relationship with God and others.

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Service: A student's perspective

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Performing service for others, in my experience, always benefits the individual. All of the travelers put their full effort into the work we performed whether that be painting, cleaning, weeding, or digging in order to find drains. It is exciting to see the impact one week of service can make. Even at times when we could not see the impact and our efforts failed, we were not discouraged because we had the constant positivity of some of our group. Sister Michelle speaks often about her time spent serving, and the idea of a lifetime of

Bellarmino University is a Catholic university located in Louisville, Kentucky, about an hour from the monastery.

service has often intrigued me. I am rejuvenated in mind and soul every time I make the trip to Louisiana or simply serve in Louisville or back at home in Cincinnati. The feeling of helping others continues to draw me back to the trip year after year. I am already looking forward to next year's spring break.



by Brittany Janis

Borrowed from bustedhalo.com

Five Ways to Celebrate Easter, without eating your weight in Peeps

- 1. Celebrate with “family” not with candy.** For many, even celebrating Easter at all is a challenge. Taking the initiative to make plans with others will go a long way toward making your Easter meaningful, because sometimes just getting up and to a church on your own can be difficult. Having brunch [with family] afterward gives you time to reflect with others on the homily and what Easter means for you in your modern life. Also an Easter brunch is a great incentive to get out of bed. Luckily, brunch is usually fairly inexpensive so you can either go out, or make your own if you're feeling ambitious.
- 2. Go fly a kite.** In Bermuda every Easter, “Bermuda Kites” are built and flown to symbolize Christ's ascension into heaven. In the Netherlands and parts of Germany, “Easter fires” are built at sunset on Easter Sunday to bring community together and celebrate the coming of spring and warm weather. Lots of regions have fun and different ways to celebrate Easter.
- 3. Start your spring-cleaning.** Easter is a time to start anew. Just as Lent gave us the time to remove unnecessary habits from our life, we can use Easter as a time to remove unnecessary objects. If you're anything like me, somehow over the winter months you've managed to accumulate more stuff than you could ever use, so use Easter weekend as a time to cull your closets.
- 4. Give new life.** Celebrating Easter is intrinsically linked to welcoming Spring and the new life that comes with it, so do your part to bring new life into your community by planting trees, flowers or other perennial plants.
- 5. Commit to your personal rebirth.** Most people are tempted to return to the many bad habits they fasted from during Lent, and forget about them until next year. Think of ways that the sacrifices you made during Lent can become part of your everyday life. Even if you didn't give up anything for Lent, use Easter as a day to give yourself a new start. Make a commitment to healthier living, to being a better person, and to focusing more fully on how your actions relate to your wellbeing and your own personal spiritual journey.



What I do... as a Ferdinand Benedictine

Sister Rebecca Abel



Current Ministry

Librarian

Name of the place you minister

North American College

Location of the place you minister

Rome, Italy

How long have you ministered there?

12 years

Approximately how many people do you serve?

300

What ages of people do you serve?

25-75

What is a typical day like in your ministry?

Prayer 6 a.m., Mass, breakfast, then off to the library. Mornings are spent in the office with clerical-type stuff (purchasing, searching requests, organizing information, studying new programs, etc.) since most of the students are in class. In the afternoons, I try to work in the library and to be present to answer queries, assist in searching, reference, etc. Usually my work day ends between 4:30-5:30 p.m. when I return to the convent for lectio and personal prayer time. Evening prayer is 6:30 p.m. followed by supper at 7 p.m. The evening is brief, just long enough to catch the 8 p.m. news (CNN International) and in bed by 9:30 p.m.

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

The exciting aspect of my ministry, work as a librarian, is that there are many people who need my skills. My ministry as the librarian for the North American College is very rewarding as students, faculty and visitors regularly remark on the excellent quality of this collection and the service received.

Sister Rebecca helps out in the monastery library while home during the summer.

How do you do what you do differently (than someone else in your position) because you are a Ferdinand Benedictine?

My day begins in prayer, like the dawn, it comes very early and quietly without the frantic pace that many Americans have at the beginning of their day. My free time in the afternoons, (time not working) is time for prayer and meditation whereas laity have family responsibilities. Since Sister Susan and I have different work schedules, there is a quiet atmosphere in the convent. I am usually alone in the afternoons and can pray and read in an atmosphere of silence. Yet the communal prayer in the morning and evening give me a time of sharing with another. Also, our communal activities foster the Benedictine spirit of community.

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

My ministry is serving others for their informational needs. The people I serve will one day serve the church as sacramental ministers and I find meaning in helping form and shape their knowledge so that they will have the background needed for this ministry.

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

My Benedictine monastic community life supports me in my ministry by forming my life of prayer and faith. The friendship of sisters in my community assures me that I am loved and cared for even though I am far away (distance) from the monastery.



Sister Brenda Engleman's story

I was born in Loogootee, Indiana, the youngest of seven children. When I was five years old, my father moved us to O'Fallon, Illinois, where he hoped to find a better paying job. My parents tried hard to provide for all of us. My father worked as a welder. My mother often cleaned houses or babysat to help buy us clothes, books, and supplies for school.

Praying was never a part of my growing up; yet, we all were taught Christian values and morals. My mother had been raised in a Catholic home. However, my father was from an anti-Catholic home and would only allow us to attend non-Catholic churches. I always seemed to be searching for God in my life. At various times, I went to the Baptist and Methodist churches. Then during my junior year of high school, I started going to the Catholic Church with a friend of mine. My father did not approve. But I loved the Mass. Not long after, I decided to take instructions from the local priest and was baptized when I was 16. Neither one of my parents was present for my baptism.

After graduating from Belleville Junior College, Sister Mary Sheila, my only sister, helped me get a teaching position at St. Theresa's in Evansville. I was on top of the world, doing what I had always dreamed of doing. Sister Mary Agnes Sermersheim was my mentor and taught me a great deal about teaching and Benedictine living. While in Evansville, I spent most of my free time hanging out with my sister and the sisters at St. Theresa's. However, I fought the idea of becoming a sister myself. NO WAY! I had been dating

a guy for two years and intended to marry him. At the end of my first year of teaching, I finally gave in to God's calling. I said my first "yes" to religious life. At least, I would test the waters.

I have very pleasant memories of these early years in the monastery.

I came to cherish common and private prayer. I felt well accepted by my classmates, and we had many fun times. Sister Mary Sheila was a great support. However, there were some painful times also. My father was extremely upset about my being here. Life at home was especially tough for my mother. Then later, 1969 and 70 were tumultuous years. That's when what we call "the great exodus" of priests and religious began. Some of my best friends left community. Sisters in leadership roles and loyal confidants also chose to move on. It was only through the grace of God that I remained.

During my time here in community, two of my brothers suffered tragic deaths. Sister Mary Sheila developed a malignant brain tumor. In the late 1970's my father agreed to co-validate his marriage to my mother in the Catholic Church. Thankfully, my sister was able to be present for the ceremony. From that day forward, my father openly supported the Catholic Church, and he grew to love the sisters of this monastery. In 1982, Sister Mary Sheila died

with my parents, many sisters, and me at her side on the feast of St. Scholastica. In recent years, I lost two more brothers to cancer. My mother and father are also supporting me in heaven. Doesn't God often write straight with crooked lines?

During my ministry years, I have served as teacher, counselor, principal, and pastoral associate. God has blessed me with a loving, religious community and a caring family. I feel especially privileged to be part of the Stillpoint music group. They are the best friends I could ever have. Today I can sincerely and confidently sing the refrain from my own song, "How can I repay you, oh, God, for the good you have done for me. I will raise the cup of salvation and call upon your name."



Sister Brenda practices with other members of Stillpoint in the monastery choir room.

Happenings around the monastery



Come & See Weekend

Front: Sister Celeste, Kaitey, Sister Michelle, Sister Mary Carol, Sister Laura Marie

Back: Sister Maura, Karen, Rachel, Aureus, Sister Joan

Four women and six sister team members participated in the Come & See Weekend this spring, March 16–18. The theme for the weekend was *Justice Through a Benedictine Lens*. Sister Jackie Kissel spoke to us Saturday morning about the difference between charity and justice and how she works for justice in the Evansville, Indiana area.

Live Church Cam

Do you ever wish that you could just click a button and magically pray with a community? Well, now you can. We have a live web cam of our monastery church, which can be accessed 24/7. You will only be able to hear us though when we are in prayer and the PA system is turned on.

To access the cam, click on the following link or paste it in your web browser (you will need to have Windows Media Player or another media player to utilize the cam).

<mms://smtp.thedome.org/churchcam>

We pray Liturgy of the Hours three times a day Monday through Friday at 7 a.m., noon, and 5 p.m. (Eastern Time). On Saturdays we pray at 8 a.m., noon, and 5 p.m. and Sundays at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Every day Morning Prayer is followed by Mass.



Read more about what the sisters are doing at thedome.org/news

Join us for our Summer Social!

*Saturday, **July 7, 2012***

11 a.m. – 9 p.m. EDT

Over 35 booths of food and fun!

Country store, art show, over 40 handmade quilts, money wheel, musical entertainment, kids' fun and games, bingo, grand raffle, guided tours of the monastery church, and so much more!

Come hungry! We'll have chicken dinners, BBQ, brats, hamburgers, hot dogs, pork chops, walking tacos, baked goods, and lots more!

thedome.org/social • 812-367-1411

Indiana Festival License #126086



Future Come & See Events

June 22–28, 2012 (week) • October 19–21, 2012 • January 4–6, 2013

- The weekend or week is free.
- Room, meals, and input are provided.
- Participants 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 the Knights of Columbus may be able to help you with transportation costs. You never know — just ask!

For more information or to register:

- Call Sister Michelle
 - 812-367-1411, ext. 2830
 - 800-738-9999
 - 812-661-9104 (cell)
- Email vocation@thedome.org
- Register online at thedome.org/vocations.



Contact Information

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Click here if you have a new mailing or email address.



SISTERS
OF ST. BENEDICT
FERDINAND, INDIANA

Seek. Pray. Share.

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.