

God's Time

Called to the Journey

A spectacular rainbow
shines over the monastery
after a storm on April 28.

Tools for discernment: gathering evidence

There are various tools which we can use when we are discerning God's call in our lives. One of those tools is to gather the facts, to gather the evidence. As we discern, we need to look at our abilities and limitations — spiritual, mental, and physical. Gathering such evidence can be hard work, but it's important to try to obtain all the pertinent facts that are available to us. Some questions you might ask yourself in order to reflect on your experience include:

- What is the most life-giving choice for me right now?
- Where is my deepest desire?
- What are my gifts?
- What are my commitments?
- What do I hear God saying?
- What motives are driving me to choose one choice over another?
- When/where do I feel a gentle nudge or a tug toward a choice?

- What do people who know me say about my gifts and abilities?
- Where am I resisting God's invitations?
- If I were on my deathbed, what choice would I wish that I had made?

These would be good questions to share with a spiritual director, someone who can listen to you and what's happening in your life and in your prayer and who can help you keep your focus on what God is asking of you at this time. If you don't have a spiritual director, consider contacting your pastor, campus minister, or diocesan office to ask for a list of trained spiritual directors in your area.

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As we gather the evidence of our lives, we need to ask ourselves how open we truly are. Do I have an agenda? Or can I present God with a blank check, and let God fill in the amount? Sometimes I need to let go of whatever my plan happens to be and be able to give God a blank check, not one that I've already filled in. However, while it is important that I can present God with a blank check, I also need to be able to set some kind of overall goal and purpose in life.

These two actions/situations are not necessarily contradictory. I need to remain open and willing to go with whatever God unfolds before me, but I also need to know what my basic purpose in life is. Jesus has told us in the Gospels that our ultimate purpose in life is to love one another. So, as I discern throughout my life, I need to ask myself: What choices can I make to help me be the most loving person I can be?

As we discern choices in life, we need to look at all the information and weigh our choices carefully. Who am I? Who have I been? We need to learn to read our own lives for the clues that can help us discern what God desires for

us. One way to reflect on our lives that can help us prepare to discern is to make a time line of our life story. Take some paper and markers and reflect on your life journey, from birth to the present. Reflect on these questions and include this information on your timeline:

- Who have been the significant people in my life and what impact have they made on me?
- What has been the experience of my education?
- What do I do in my leisure time?
- What's my work history? What have I learned through my various jobs or positions?
- Who taught me to pray? Who is God for me now? How do I nurture my relationship with God?
- How have I made other decisions in my life?
- Is there a pattern to how I make good decisions?

As you reflect on your life, pay attention to the gifts God has given you. Consider how you are called to put those into use today and in the future!

Helpful web sites



www.pray-as-you-go.org

This web site is maintained by the Jesuits in Britain. On it you will find a daily 10-12 minute meditation on one of the Mass readings for the day and much more. These podcasts are a wonderful way to start your day.



www.usccb.org/nab/today.shtml

This is a site of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and features the daily Mass readings. The readings are also available in podcast form to load on your MP3 player.



www.thedome.org/vocations

This is the vocation section of our own web site. On it you will find helpful information such as answers to common questions, profiles of our newer sisters, maps of where our sisters came from and where they minister, suggested reading material, videos, and much more.



www.vocation-network.org

This web site has many exciting features to help you discern your life's calling, including a match service — with religious communities, that is!

www.religiouslife.com/glossary.html



Vocation terms — Vocation, novice, charism — what do they all mean? This extensive glossary defines common terms used with Church ministry and, in particular, those associated with the vocations to the priestly and consecrated life. The terms were selected, edited, and

adapted from the *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, by Father John A. Hardon, SJ, founder of the Institute on Religious Life. This glossary is intended to assist in developing a greater understanding and appreciation of these specific and sublime vocations.



What I do... as a Ferdinand Benedictine

Sister Jill Marie Reuber

Current Ministry:

4th grade teacher

Name of the place you minister:

Saint Bernard Catholic School

Location of the place you minister:

Rockport, Indiana

How long have you ministered there?

3 years

Approximately how many people do you serve?

15 students

What ages of people do you serve?

9 and 10 year olds

What is a typical day like in your ministry?

I arrive at school at 6:45 a.m. I like arriving early to get ready for the day and spend time just in the quiet in my classroom. A few of us teachers also gather in the morning to socialize before the students come. The students arrive at 7:30. We either attend Morning Prayer or Mass every day. This is one of the greatest aspects of teaching here at Saint Bernard. We start each day in church with prayer. I think it is a great aspect to help the students spend time with God. The mornings are filled with reading, math, and religion. The afternoons are filled with social studies, science, and writing.

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

I asked my students what story I should tell, and this is what they wanted me to share. In 4th grade we study about the great state of Indiana. At the beginning we talk about how Indiana is divided in three regional parts. I had received from another sister a cookie cutter in the shape of Indiana because she knew that I taught Indiana history, and I thought of a great lesson about where the regions are using cookies. The night before, I made Indiana-shaped sugar cookies. For class the next day, I took white icing and three colors of food coloring. Each student received a cookie and the three colors of icing. They then iced their cookie with the three regional parts of

Indiana. Of course then they got to eat their cookies. My students can still tell you the three parts of Indiana and where they are located.

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

I help my students become a community — working together and respecting one another. I also include prayer every day in my classroom. I also bring many aspects of my Benedictine community to my classroom. One of the rules in my classroom is: "Respect all things as vessels of the altar." This is directly from the Rule of Benedict and something that I live by as a sister, and I want my students to also take responsibility for their belongings and items that they have borrowed from me.

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

I find that teaching students is very life-giving to me. I love to see when a student begins to understand and is really engaged in an activity. I find it life-giving to have a student grasp a concept and run with it and succeed. I love it when we can have a discussion as a class and I can see that everyone is engaged and I can see that learning is happening. That is what makes me want to continue to teach!

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

It is great living with and having other sisters who have taught or are teaching to help me with ideas and for support. I also feel support from others sisters when I can share with them and receive a listening ear for my burdens and joys. I also feel I receive support by having great friends in community to spend time with outside of work.



Sister Jill loves to see a student begin to understand a new concept.

Sister Michelle Mohr's story

My father, Wilford Mohr, and my mother, Grace Marie Lord Mohr, were expecting their second child. It was the 4th of January, 1936. I wasn't due to be born for two more months, but mother went into labor that night. Beverly Ann, their first child, was four years old. She was quickly taken to a neighbors' house for the night. When I was born, the doctor put me aside to attend to my mother. I was blue and showed no signs of life. My father told me years later how he had seen me breathe and the doctor put me into cold water and then hot water until I screamed. These themes of being still and quiet, as well as fighting for my life and my voice, have been underpinnings of my life.

When my sister, Bev, was school age, we moved from our little house in the country. We lived a few blocks from Sacred Heart Church and School on the west side of Evansville, Indiana. I have vivid memories of walking to church with my family and sitting in the fourth bench. When I was four years old, my younger sister, Mary Catherine, was born into our family. Our house was small and we didn't have a lot, but as my mother would say, "We had a lot of love."

Sacred Heart School, where I attended elementary school, was staffed by Providence sisters. I liked these sisters but had a fear of them as well. Attending Mater Dei High School, which was staffed by the Benedictine Sisters of Ferdinand, gave me a more down to earth impression of sisters.

When I was a junior, Sister Kathleen Finis took some of the girls in band to Ferdinand. We were to play our music contest solos for the community. I look back and realize that Sister Kathleen was doing "vocation" work. Not only did we perform for the sisters, we walked around "3 point" with the novices and went to Vespers with the community. I was in awe of Vespers, the church, and the sound of the singing. That experience came back to me over and over until one Sunday after church I walked into the kitchen of our house and announced to my parents that I was "going to the convent." I can't say that I wanted to leave my friends or that

I gave much thought to the fact that I had not completed high school. Somewhere inside I knew that I must go and see. Even now I am in amazement at my parents for supporting me in this decision. I think it was due more to the fact that they trusted the sisters than believing in my maturity to make such a step.

I continue to be moved and called by the Liturgy of the Hours and the life of this Benedictine community.



Sister Michelle has served in liturgy and music ministry at the monastery.

Summer Address

If you will be living at a different address or using a different email address during the summer months, please let us know so that your mail will reach you. Please tell us the dates this address will be effective, and we will make note of that in our database.

Also, if you have moved lately and have not sent us your new address, please do so. We try to keep our information up to date and accurate.

If you would like to do this online, you can do so by going to thedome.org/address.

How the sisters touch lives...

“Thank you, Sister Joanna, for saving my life.”

Homeless women in Evansville never forget what Sister Joanna Trainer did for them, even though it's been nearly eight years since she retired.

Read more about Sister Joanna's story at thedome.org/news-joanna.

Uganda trip an “awakening” of giving and getting

Both Sister Barbara C. Schmitz and Carolyn Fuhs say they received more than they gave during a recent visit with Benedictine sisters and the people they serve in Uganda, Africa.

Read more about their journey at thedome.org/news-uganda.

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



Include us in your summer travel plans

Are you making plans for this coming summer? Consider a visit to the monastery as you do so! We have scheduled a Come & See Week, June 24–30. This week offers you the opportunity to live at the monastery and at one of our mission houses for a week, to pray with the sisters, to share meals, to shadow them in their ministries, and to learn more about the Benedictine way of life.

The theme for this summer's experience is *Seek. Pray. Share. by Service to Others*. In addition to input and discussion around

this theme, you will have time for reflection, opportunities to share with others who are discerning a vocation to the religious life, and time for relaxing with the sisters.

You can sign up to attend at thedome.org/vocations or by contacting us by email at vocation@thedome.org or by phone at 800-738-9999.

We hope your summer travel plans include a visit to our monastery!

Future Come & See Events

June 24–30, 2011 (week) • October 14–16, 2011 • January 6–8, 2012 • March 16–18, 2012

- The weekend or week 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 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.