

God's Time

Called to the Journey



Sisters Diane Fischer and Marilyn Schroering enjoy a quiet, lovely place on the monastery grounds.

Discernment: Listening to God's call

By Sister Jane Will



WHAT IS DISCERNMENT?

When we speak of discernment, it's necessary to begin by looking at the end — our ultimate or final end — which is the goal of all persons — union with God. Our desire for happiness, holiness, and wholeness is God's invitation to us.

Discernment is directed toward finding the will of God and responding to it.

How do we do that? Discerning is not easy and it takes work, time, patience, and lots of prayer.

It takes faith — faith to know and believe that God is an active God — that God is acting and speaking in every event. And secondly, it is to believe that the Spirit of God dwells within us helping us make our choices.

Discernment is listening and responding to the Word of God. The Word of God is spoken to us in the persons, actions, events, and circumstances which come into our lives daily. It is through the fabric of

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the common, ordinary, day-in and day-out living that God's presence is made known in our lives. Discernment includes all my life — past, present, and future. Only in the light of the past can the present be discerned, and only in the present events can future be discerned. In discernment we see all the encounters we have in life as a call to become who are — who God calls us to be.

DISCERNING A VOCATION: A vocation is a mystery; it's a calling and usually not a sudden calling. It is seen as a result of a dynamic ongoing relationship between God and the individual. It is being open to be grasped by God instead of our grasping. A vocation is a calling that becomes more evident to the individual as she grows in knowledge of herself and the roles she feels called to play in the world based on her self-awareness and God's call for her.

There are no absolute rules to measure for sure if one has a vocation or not. There are some natural signs, however, that will help you in your discernment. Note how these three basic signs speak to you.

1. **A DESIRE FOR THE LIFE:** Am I inclined/drawn toward the life? Do I get a certain amount of satisfaction in thinking about myself as a sister? Do I feel joy, enthusiasm, or some kind of positive feelings?

2. **RIGHT MOTIVATION:** Do I want to work for the betterment of the world and to help bring others to know Christ? Do I want to live with like-minded sisters, to share a common faith, values, prayer, and to live community life?
3. **FITNESS FOR THE LIFE:** Am I able to live comfortably, cheerfully, and generously in community without undue stress on my personality and on my mental and physical health? Do my interests, abilities, and competencies mesh with religious life?

Prayer is essential to discern God's will. Pray sincerely to know what God has planned for you and the courage to embrace it generously. Come before God with open hands; let go, abandon yourself to God's will, for in God's will is your happiness.



Life Awareness Weekend

If you are considering a life choice and wondering ...

Is God calling me? How will I respond?

If you are a single man or woman, age 18-35, asking these questions ...

Here's your opportunity! Join other searchers to share, learn, and pray with others.

The Life Awareness Weekend program for single adults started in 1983 in Houston, Texas. Its purpose was to provide single adults an opportunity to learn more about religious vocations and to begin the discernment process, if they choose to. Several religious sisters, brothers, priests, and diocesan priests will be at the event.

When: June 10-12, 2011

Where: Sarto Retreat Center, 4200 Kentucky Ave., Evansville, Indiana

Directions/Transportation: Upon request, a map will be sent with directions for those traveling by car. Transportation will be provided from the Evansville airport.

Registration Deadline: May 20, 2011

What I do... as a Ferdinand Benedictine



Sister Kathleen Marie Cash

Current Ministry

Math Teacher / Soccer Coach / Director of Liturgical Music

Name of the place you minister

Trinity High School

Location of the place you minister

Louisville, Kentucky

How long have you ministered there?

2 1/2 years

Approximately how many people do you serve (typically)?

135 in class / 1400 in school

What ages of people do you serve?

14-18

What is a typical day like in your ministry?

I teach five classes a day, monitor one study hall, meet with my advising group to talk about life. I generally arrive early one day a week to practice with the liturgy band for upcoming Masses or special events. I stay after school several days a week to coach soccer. Every day is different but every day is exciting!

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

My students know that the bell does not dismiss them from class. When the bell rings, they wait quietly in their seats until I have finished any final announcements and then I let them go. Typically, I do this by saying, "God bless your day!" On one particularly frustrating day, I was upset with my students for talking throughout class, not doing their homework, and generally misbehaving. At the end of class, I simply said to them, "See you tomorrow." They all got up and left. A few minutes later I looked up from my papers and saw one student still sitting in his seat. "Why are you still here?" I inquired. "My day's no good unless you bless it," he replied.

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

I try to be a good Christian, Benedictine presence to my students. Though I teach math, I still pray with them regularly and talk about my spiritual journey whenever I have the opportunity.

On the soccer field, I am known as the "nice" one. When the other coaches are screaming and yelling at the players, they'll come to me for the much needed words of kindness and encouragement. I try to be tough but loving and I think my players see that.

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

I love teaching and working with students. I have a strong passion for math and I have so much fun finding new ways to explore that subject with my students.

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

I come home to a loving, supportive group of women. Some of them are teachers and they are great mentors when I need help or new ideas. Others just care about what I do and how I'm doing, and I enjoy knowing that we are all supporting each other through our everyday lives.



Sister Kathleen Marie provides encouraging words for her soccer team at Trinity High School.

Sister Diane Fischer's story



Sister Diane (left), along with Sister Ann Francis Hillenbrand, welcomes guests to Kordes Center.

My story began many years ago in French Lick, Indiana, when I was a child and my family was converted to the Catholic faith by the Jesuits at West Baden College (now renovated back into a hotel). My faith and prayer were important to me, even at that early age. I attended the Academy here at Ferdinand for my high school years, and there I learned more about my Catholic faith and the Sisters of St. Benedict. I never intended to become a sister, but in the middle of my senior year of high school, I suddenly felt God's call during a retreat. The thought of being a teacher really attracted me, also. The Ferdinand Benedictines were the only sisters I knew, and so I applied to enter after my senior year. At 17, I left home on a Greyhound bus, without the approval of my parents, and entered the Ferdinand community.

No one thought I would enter the monastery, not my friends or even the sisters at the Academy. Therefore, I was determined to stick it out and show them that I was called to this life. I did persevere and after professing my vows, I went out to teach, at age 19, in a classroom with 50 children. My teaching years were good ones. After 24 years of teaching, I became the vocation director for our community, working with young women who were considering religious life. Those years were ones when my faith, prayer, and commitment to religious life deepened. In helping other young women, I felt the need to have a firm prayer life and commitment to my religious life and community.

I had many years in pastoral ministry; I shared my Benedictine hospitality with those that I served. I tried to establish a strong community spirit and prayer life when I served as a pastoral life coordinator of a parish where no

priest was stationed. In my ministry at our Kordes Center, I continued to find God in others and in hospitality and reached out to all those that came. I continue in ministry within the monastery now and answer the prayer requests from our web site.



Community prayer is important to me, along with my personal prayer, and it keeps me focused and strong in my relationship with Christ. I couldn't do without it! Community living is important, as I work, pray, and play with my Benedictine sisters. Throughout the years, the community has helped me to grow in my spiritual and daily life through many programs and retreats and daily living with my sisters. Now, after celebrating my Golden Jubilee in 2006, my prayer and commitment to my vows and Benedictine life have deepened even more. We never stop growing in our love and commitment to Christ in the Benedictine way of life.

As I look to our future as Benedictines, I think that the members of community, along with our prayer life and Benedictine values, will continue to flourish. Our community living will help us to risk and to grow in all aspects of our life and ministry.



Wander our new web!

Check out the sisters' new website. More features, information, and photos await you. And more updates, and stories on how the sisters continually reach out to help others.

Learn how you can join in the fun. Submit personal prayer requests.

Or just enjoy shopping at our online bakery and gift shop.

Visit **thedome.org**

October Come & See

Seven women came from Oklahoma, Indiana, and Kentucky to attend the October Come & See Weekend. The weekend was full of much laughter, prayer, discussion, fun, and games. The theme for the weekend was "Discernment: Listening to God's Call." Sister Jane Will provided the input for the weekend (see the article on the front page). During the weekend the women also had time for a tour, meeting with the vocation director, walks outside, prayer, adoration, recreation with the sisters, and more. They also participated in the regular prayer (Liturgy of the Hours and Eucharistic) and meals of the community.

The seven women at the October Come & See Weekend were joined by Sisters Ida Otta and Teresa Gunter (back row, from left) and Sisters Sarah Yungwirth and Michelle Catherine Sinkhorn (front row, at right).

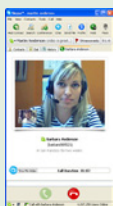


How we can be in touch!

How does a woman, interested in religious life, go about keeping in touch with a vocation director? Well, I try to make it as easy as possible. With the wonderful world of technology these days, there are many options.



Facebook: My page is: www.facebook.com/srmichelle. I have lots of vocation discerners and other family and friends on there. I love to keep people posted as to what I'm doing and share pictures often. You can also inbox me there, find out about Come & See events, and find links to other vocation pages.



IM and Video Calls: I am on several instant messaging programs and find this a wonderful way to keep in contact with vocation discerners. When I am in my office, I am signed in and available. Here's how you can find me:

- AIM: sr_michelle@hotmail.com
- Google Talk: srmichelleosb@gmail.com
- MSN: sr_michelle@hotmail.com
- Skype: sr_michelleosb
- Yahoo Messenger: sr_michelleosb@yahoo.com



Phone: Feel free to call me anytime with questions or concerns or just to chat! My office number is 812-367-1411, ext. 2830, and my cell number is 812-661-9104.



Texting: I enjoy getting and sending texts. Of course, I won't respond if I'm in prayer or a meal. This is a fun way to ask quick questions or request prayers for a test. My cell phone number is 812-661-9104. Just let me know who you are the first time.



Travel: I love to come visit vocation contacts. We have many and you are spread across the United States. I often combine trips and visit more than one at a time, and I also like to get to the local Catholic colleges when I can. If you've been in regular contact with us and you'd like a visit, let me know.

Future Come & See Events

January 7–9, 2011 • March 18–20, 2011 • June 24–30, 2011 (week) • October 14–16, 2011

- 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.

I love Slacklining!
— Sister Michelle

"So you're saying, 'That's great, but what is slacklining and what does it have to do with vocations or religious life?' Well, slacklining is about finding balance, building strength of character, and helping develop focus."

"I learned how to slackline at the same time I was learning how to be a sister and how to live in community. Believe me, they're very much alike and I love both!"

SISTERS
OF ST. BENEDICT
FERDINAND, INDIANA
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Seek. Pray. Share.

Learn more about Sister Michelle, her community, and slacklining at thedome.org/SisterMichelle.

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



SISTERS
OF ST. BENEDICT
FERDINAND, INDIANA
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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.