

# God's Time

*Called to the Journey*



## A Newsletter By Any Other Name

For those of you receiving our vocation newsletter for the first time, welcome! For those of you who have received it before, you may notice a difference — at least we hope you do. This newsletter has a new name and a new look. The name came from a survey we did with our vocation contacts a couple months ago. God's Time was chosen. Because “Called” and “Journey” were so close, we decided to make the subtitle “Called to the Journey.” We would like to offer a special thank you to those who participated in the name survey.

You may also notice a new logo and colors. The cross which represents the letter “T” in “Sisters” is shaped to resemble the wooden frame cross that stands in our monastery church, the crosses in our cemetery, and other crosses found in the architecture throughout our buildings.

The new tagline, “*Seek. Pray. Share.*,” highlights three values and actions that are found, either

literally or implicitly, in our mission statement. We seek God always, pray communally and individually, and we share our Gospel and Benedictine values with others through our ministries.

Another new element is our “mark” (think Nike swoosh). Our mark is a new, stylized rendering of the monastery dome with our founding year. The new colors are shades of purple, orange, green, and blue. It is our hope that someday people all over the world will see our logo, mark, or colors and think immediately, “Hey, that’s the Benedictine sisters in Ferdinand, Indiana!”

We hope you enjoy our “new look” and our new newsletter. We are always open to suggestions for content, so if you ever have any ideas, let us know.

### In this issue

Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz's story

A Profile of Sister Judy Dewig

Alexandra Larsen's entrance



# Sister Barbara Lynn's Story.....

I think it is true that your heart does not rest until it rests in Jesus. I was 25 years old. I had graduated from college, had a car, an apartment, a boyfriend, and a good job, yet my heart was restless. I knew in my heart that, while for many this was a life come true, for me there was something missing. I made a Cursillo weekend with Sister Judy. I got active in my faith. God brought Sisters Ruth Ann, Judy, and Mary Mark into my life. They brought me to Ferdinand "just to see the convent" and the rest was history. I knew the piece I was missing when God brought me to the Benedictine way of life.

Community Life: as the saying goes... this is where the rubber meets the road. This is where God is ever present, loving me into life. Sometimes there are pot holes in the road, sometimes the road is wide open and easy, and other times the road is pretty rough. But for me, traveling the road together is what makes it all worthwhile. Community, our community, is about loving each other into being who God desires us to be. Through it, God calls forth our gifts and heals our wounds. We stand united with each other in our desire to seek God and we stand united in all our human weaknesses. I believe that God gave me this group of women as my own. They are mine and I am theirs. It may sound trite but together we become more than any one of us is alone. God is present to me in the commitment of our novices and in the faithfulness of our infirmaries sisters. God's love is ever present to me in the love we share. My mother asked me before I joined the community, "What can you do there that you cannot do as a single Catholic woman?" The answer for me is that I have a life of love, challenge, and acceptance. Who I am to this group

of women is more important than what I do. They love me into life and call me to see God day after day after day.

God comes to me in my prayer. I like to think of it as my porch time — whenever I can I go outside and pray. There or in the quiet time in my room, I come to a stillness where God touches my heart. There is some insight or awareness of love that comes through

Scripture or through reflection that penetrates my own small reality and brings me to know God's presence. It is there that I can truly come to God as I am. It is there that I can know myself as loved by God. It is there that I know that God is always calling me closer and closer. All my faults, all the million ways I fall short in my own eyes fade away in God's love.

*Hospitality  
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Hospitality is the expression of God's love. I believe wholeheartedly that all of our ministry flows from the love we have for one another in community. This love and acceptance is shared through our hospitality. Whether we are opening our doors to others or listening to a sick parishioner or celebrating a new baby or serving another in any of our ministries, we are sharing our Benedictine charism through our hospitality. It is like a boom-a-rang — you throw it out and it comes right back to you a hundred fold.

Being a Ferdinand Benedictine means I am committed to this group of people, our life style, our traditions, and our expression of the Gospel. We are committed to seeking God together in our love for one another and in the expression of this love through ministry. I have been to many communities and discovered each has their unique expression of love. Our expression is unique because God called us here together to be one.

I believe that what is most important in our future is that we believe in our call. We have been brought together for God's purpose. We must face our future with the love and courage that comes from authentically living our profession. Our past, our present, and our future are rooted in God's love. As long as we express this love in our lives together and in the hospitality we share, we are living out our Benedictine vocation.





# What I do... as a Ferdinand Benedictine



## *Sister Judy Derwig*

### Current Ministry

Learning Specialist (Teacher)

### Name of the place you minister

St. Benedict School

### Location of the place you minister

Evansville, Indiana

### How long have you ministered there?

Nine years

### Approximately how many people do you serve (typically)?

30-35 students each day

### What ages of people do you serve?

5-14

### What is a typical day like in your ministry?

I help students who have been selected by their teacher or through their own request, needing extra instruction to understand concepts taught while they were absent or what they didn't comprehend through classroom instructions. Every forty minutes I have different students from kindergarten to eighth grade needing help with various topics. After school I tutor students requesting further help.

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

A first grader, having a very difficult time reading, found success in decoding some "long words." In his excitement of success, he said, "When my mom hears this, she is going to fly to the clouds with excitement!"

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

I share my belief about the great need of God and prayer in our daily life. Through example and words, I try to instill in each student the importance of talking with God in praise, thanksgiving, petition, and repentance. Through lived examples, I share our value of hospitality, an acceptance of each person for who they are.

### How do you find meaning in your current ministry?

While teaching students academics and helping them find accomplishments and understanding, I teach life-giving values in the situations in which we find ourselves (respect for one another, affirmation, patience, acceptance, perseverance).

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

The sisters with whom I live are accepting, open, interested, and supportive of my students and ministry. They pray with me for them, and they inquire about their successes and challenges. They also affirm me in my teaching.



# Alexandra Larsen Enters Monastery

By Postulant Alexandra Larsen



The day will always be in my memory. August 23, 2009, 9:45 am. I was standing in the doorway between the church and the Blessed Virgin Room. So many thoughts, feelings, and emotions were racing through my mind. My dad was standing there with tears of joy in his eyes. The whole community of sisters surrounded me.

They all had welcoming hearts and voices. As I listened to Sister Kris, as she led the simple entrance ceremony, I knew that this is where I was supposed to be. My journey with the Sisters of St. Benedict in Ferdinand, Indiana, had finally begun. All the waiting and anticipating was over.



The weeks and months leading up to my entrance were chaotic, stressful, and emotionally draining. My mom was getting married, which was not at all stressful but very joyful, but I wanted to make sure that I was there not only physically for her, but emotionally as well. Then I had to tie up loose ends financially, move out of my apartment and into my mom's house, and then try to get rid of more of my things that I couldn't take to Ferdinand with me. I also had

to tell my friends and family good-bye. I had to tell my fellow parishioners good-bye at my church where I had been a member since 1983. Then I had to move a third and final time in one month — here to Ferdinand. My dad and I drove 12 hours from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to Ferdinand, Indiana.

Once I arrived here, I had to unpack and settle in. After my dad left, it all sank in. I was finally here. It had taken so long to get here because of obstacles thrown in front of me over the years, and the main reason — God's time is not my time. I am part of the community here with the Sisters of St. Benedict. I am home. This is where I belong. I am happy and at peace!

*Sister Teresa Gunter appears in our 2010 Vision ad.*



- Sister Teresa

"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](http://thedome.org). You can read our latest blog postings, take a virtual tour, and make plans to visit with us.

For more information, please email Sister Michelle Sinkhorn or Sister Agnes Marie Dauby at [vocation@thedome.org](mailto:vocation@thedome.org) or call 800.738.9999.

**SISTERS**  
OF ST. BENEDICT  
FERDINAND, INDIANA

*Seek. Pray. Share.*



Monastery Immaculate Conception • 802 E. 10th Street • Ferdinand, IN 47532 • [thedome.org](http://thedome.org)



# Discerning or Discovering God in the Everyday

Two women, from Ohio and New Jersey, joined us for our last Come & See weekend October 16-18. Three sisters joined Sister Michelle and Sister Agnes Marie on the team that ran the weekend. The weekend provided opportunity for input on discernment, finding God in the everyday, and answers to all of the questions asked by the women. There was also time for some informal questions and answers as some of our sisters in initial formation (first stages of religious life) joined the women during the free time in the schedule. Katie, who is from New Jersey and currently living in Philadelphia as a Jesuit volunteer, said, "Talking with the sisters in initial formation gave me really interesting insight into what life is like day-to-day during one's early years in community." She also said of the weekend, it was "a perfect balance of conversation, prayer, and free time." Beth, who is from Cincinnati,



*Back: Beth, Sister Michelle, and Sister Agnes Marie.  
Front: Sister Corda, Sister Becky, Katie, and Sister Jill.*

said that the most helpful part about the weekend was, "the opportunity to participate in the daily life of the sisters. I also liked the meeting with Sister Kris." Sister Kristine Anne, prioress,

met with the group on Sunday morning for comments and questions.

For more information and future dates to visit, see "Come & See Events" below.

## 2010 Come & See Events

**January 8–10 • February 26–28 (high school)**

**March 19–21 • June 25–July 1**

- 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!



*Sister Mary Roman and Katie*

For more information or to register, call the vocation office at 800-738-9999, email [vocation@thedome.org](mailto:vocation@thedome.org), or register online at [thedome.org/vocations](http://thedome.org/vocations).



## *We call our bakery Simply Divine for a reason.*

Our signature cookie is the springerle — anise-flavored, crisp-on-the-outside, soft-on-the-inside. Imprinted with holiday images. Baked by our sisters since the 19th century. (Though the ones we sell you will be decidedly fresher.) Truly the taste of an Old World Christmas.

Our other cookies are special too: almond-flavored almerles, refreshing buttermint, and healthful Hildegard cookies, made from the saint's own recipe. All four cookies have received a coveted Indiana Artisan designation. Which means the state of Indiana thinks they're pretty unique. We think you will too.

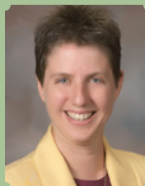
**You'll find our cookies at Ferdinand's Christkindlmarkt, November 21-22.  
You can also order online at [simplydivinebakery.org](http://simplydivinebakery.org).**

## Contact Information

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SISTERS  
OF ST. BENEDICT  
FERDINAND, INDIANA  
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*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.