

# European Roads Led Her Here

SISTER MARY RACHEL CAPETS

When Sister Mary Rachel Capets, 33, was a little girl, never did she dream she would spend a year in Sydney, Australia, working in the World Youth Day 2008 office to plan events like the outdoor concert series. Or even be a nun, for that matter.

As the youngest of six children growing up in Pittsburgh, Pa., she remembers that all during her grammar and high school years, her teachers, the Sisters of Charity, were always telling the children to be open to "the call."

"We never understood what that meant," says Sister Mary Rachel of the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia in Nashville, Tenn. "I never took it a step further to apply that to me personally, until I went to the Franciscan University of Steubenville."

As a freshman she found an environment of people striving for

holiness and encouragement. And she met the Nashville Dominicans.

The turning point came in her junior year, when she studied in Austria for a semester. "I thought I was being called to religious life," she recalls. "It was the first time I was away from family and friends, and I was really able to enter into a time of quiet. I believe my vocation deepened that semester." But with a slight twist.

She hit the European highways and byways every weekend. "I realized that in the eyes of the world, traveling throughout Europe was all very glamorous," she says. "But still, Christ was calling me. He was the one that would fulfill my life and give the fullness of life that I was looking for."

She explains there are always struggles in answering and remaining faithful to Christ. But "trying to remain faithful to daily prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, daily Mass, and regular confession all



Photograph courtesy the Nashville Dominicans  
were helps [to] answering my vocation."

Right away, Sister Mary Rachel was drawn to the Nashville Dominicans' way of life. Her father Victor and mother Kathryn were very supportive. At first they had questions, "which were okay," affirms Sister Mary Rachel, "because the life was new to them. When they saw I was happy, they were happy."

Happy she is in the teaching order. "There are many graces in the classroom," she explains, "and moments when we as sisters act like John the Baptist, introducing and preparing the way for these young souls to meet Jesus. Once the children meet Jesus, it's our role to step aside."

That's what she will do next in Australia. Cardinal George Pell of Sydney invited the Nashville Dominicans to open a mission house there.

As one of four going, Sister Mary Rachel will be teaching religion and working with the faculty for faith formation at Trinity Catholic College, a grades 7-12 high school in the archdiocese.

"Sometimes we think we're doing God a favor saying Yes to him and think we're being very generous," she reflects, "and then he surprises us with his generosity toward us."

— Joseph Pronechen