



Open arms: Sister Bernadette Pike at Bishop's House in Geraldton. Picture: SAMANTHA ROBIN

Getting back in the habit

A NEW generation of nuns are getting into the habit and adopting a more traditional lifestyle.

Sister Bernadette Pike was in Geraldton this week to speak to Nagle Catholic College students about their career paths and different lifestyle options available to them.

At 31 years old, Sister Bernadette is a young nun - the average age for nuns is 73.

She decided to become a nun at the age of 23 and has never looked back.

"I fell in love with God," she said.

"I was captivated by the treasures of religious life.

She did admit that it was a pretty different lifestyle.

"I was living a young person's lifestyle, drinking and going out to parties, but I wasn't satisfied," she said.

"Wild Turkey was a favourite drink of mine," she laughs. "But it doesn't compare to the life I have now.

"What you receive is far greater than anything you give up."

Sister Bernadette, who was previously studying to be a lawyer, said the life of a nun was different from the movies.

"Being religious isn't about going to church, it is about having a relationship with God and knowing he is real."

She said the younger generation wasn't brought up to consider becoming a nun or a priest.

"Being a nun feels so natural to me, it is like I was always meant to be a Sister," she said.

She said younger nuns and priests were getting back to the old traditions, such as wearing a habit.

The habit is only worn by a small proportion of nuns these days.

"For me, the habit is an external sign of someone people can go to for help," she said.

"It prompts people to think about God, even if they aren't religious.

"I love it because it means I don't have to worry about shopping or deciding what I am going to wear," she said.

— Samantha Robin