

This is my Vocation Story



Greg Dougherty

In the Beginning Hello, my name is Thomas Gregory Dougherty II. Born into an Irish Catholic family, my parents named me after my paternal grandfather. They preferred to call me "Greg," so that is what I go by. Both my parents are deceased. My mother passed away after a four-year battle with ovarian cancer and my father died after a sudden heart attack. They persevered in many difficulties and through their fortitude God accomplished something beautiful and good. I draw strength from their perseverance and am forever grateful for the wonderful gifts they bestowed on me and my three siblings.

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My Faith My father, God rest his soul, was not a very religious man. He had little patience, but he had a big heart and an incredible work ethic. My mother converted to the faith before they married. Other than weekly Mass and grace before dinner, our family did not practice any devotions nor prayed the rosary. My paternal grandmother, however, always seemed to have a rosary in her hand. We had a family Bible, but it was never used. My family began drifting away from the Church as we grew older. It is miraculous that all of my siblings have come back to the Catholic Church. Today, we are more Catholic than we were as children - all of us incorporating some devotional practices into our family life. My older brother credits my conversion for that. All of my siblings are very supportive of my pursuit to the priesthood. The roots of our Irish Catholic heritage may have seemed dormant when we were younger, but praise God that they are alive today!

*"God illuminated my soul so
that I could see it as He saw it."
—Greg Dougherty*

My Vocation My call to the priesthood began when I was quite young. At only four years of age I would play priest by pressing pieces of Wonder Bread into the shape of a host and distribute them to my reluctant siblings. I can remember feeling especially close to God as a child, but that relationship was increasingly strained as I grew older and was conflicted between the flesh and the spirit.

Despite the world's hold on me, I still felt called to serve God as a young man. While in high school I co-taught a faith formation class with a very kind woman who encouraged me in the faith. A beautiful Dominican sister also encouraged me by offering singing lessons and inviting me to join the choir. During my junior year of high school, I attended a retreat and enrolled in minor seminary to complete my senior year. My football teammates, however, felt that I was abandoning them so I decided not to attend minor seminary. I began drifting away from the Church and continued to go the way of the world.

Answering the call to the priesthood has required a lot of sacrifice and suffering. It is impossible to chase the world and grow closer to God. I was conflicted and restless throughout my college years and into my twenties. By the time I reached my thirties I had given up on the Church. That was when Our Lord intervened.

Called to serve

The Summer Class of 2018



God in His infinite mercy made me see who I was and the way I was living. I realized that I needed to change. God illuminated my soul so that I could see it as He saw it. I was given the gift of a holy fear of God. I gave my life to the Lord that night and have not looked back.

Shortly after, I was on a mission trip and experienced the tail effects of a hurricane. During this frightful experience, I was overcome by an incredible sense of peace and felt God's hand protecting us. It was upon my return from that trip that I began praying the rosary and I experienced adoration for the first time. I saw Holy Mother Church much differently after the expedition, and I began feeling the call to the priesthood once again. Prior to the mission, I saw the Church as a denomination. Afterwards, however, I came to know Her as the Bride of Christ - upon whom God has bestowed the fullness of His Truth. I made a pilgrimage to a Marian shrine and asked for Our Lady's assistance with my discernment. I finished the pilgrimage with a strong sense that God was calling me to the priesthood.

Called to Serve My desire to evangelize the beauty of our Catholic faith is a good fit for the apostolic work of the Society of the Divine Savior (Salvatorians). Our founder, Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, believed that we are to proclaim and teach by 'all ways and means' the goodness and kindness that Jesus calls us to. In his lifetime Fr. Jordan established the Salvatorians in 14 different countries. We are now in six continents and over 40 nations throughout the world. The Salvatorians are involved with mission work, pastoral care, education, health care, faith enrichment, and more.

"I am willing to go wherever the Holy Spirit leads me to proclaim the Gospel by 'all ways and means' necessary."

-Greg Dougherty

Like our founder, I too have a devotion to Our Lady of the Cross, and was attracted to the Salvatorians by their 'all ways and means' approach to evangelization. It is good that God can write straight with crooked lines. I hope that is what He is doing with me. I have overcome many hardships and obstacles in my pursuit of the priesthood, but one major obstacle still remains. My student loan debt needs to be cleared before I

can enter novitiate with the Salvatorians.

It is humbling to ask for help, but knowing that it is for the good of the Church brings peace. I invite you to share in my priestly formation. This is an invitation to invest in the building of our Catholic faith. The Salvatorians have accepted me as an affiliate and they are supportive of my call to the priesthood. To that end I am working with the Labouré Society to resolve my student loan debt.

As a Salvatorian, I hope to continue serving in education and teaching virtues in Catholic schools. I would also like to continue with prison ministry and working with children with incarcerated parents. But like every Salvatorian, I am willing to go wherever the Holy Spirit leads me to proclaim the Gospel by 'all ways and means' necessary.

Prayer & Invitation Please join me in praying for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. If we help our children to unplug from the distractions of this world and grow in virtue, we will see a significant increase of young men and women ready to serve the Church in religious life. I humbly ask for your prayers for my Labouré classmates and me to help clear our student loan debt so that we can pursue our vocations. I would be happy to share my witness with you or your parish. Please feel free to contact me at greg@laboureaspirant.org. Thank you for your consideration and God bless you!

-Greg Dougherty

Why I'm Writing

I am not only an aspirant to religious life; I am also a fundraiser for a class of aspirants pursuing the priesthood or religious life. A recent study confirmed that nearly 1 out of 2 aspirants have student loans debt which prevents them from entering their seminaries and religious communities. It is the only thing that prevents many – including me – from entering formation to become a priest, sister or brother.

I am seeking to raise the average aspirant student loan amount of \$60,000 before December 31st for The Labouré Society, a Catholic non-profit that helps aspirants like me. Every aspirant has been accepted by their diocese or community and is required to work and liquidate their assets as to be able to make their own maximum loan payments. Through Labouré, my fellow aspirants and I work together as a class raising donations which will be divided amongst the class and ultimately applied to our remaining student loans. We are blessed to have this opportunity to share our love for God, our vocation stories, and to invite hundreds of individuals to support vocations like ours by financially investing in our future and the future of the church.

At the beginning of our class, we met and participated in an intensive 3-day training on the ethics, practice, and spirituality of fundraising. We are learning practical skills that will help us now and in our future vocations. We have also developed as a team to learn from and support each other. You can see our picture below.

At the end of our class, Labouré will issue awards to each aspirant based on individual effort and the total funds raised. They will administer the awards while we are in formation over a three year period (you can learn more about the program on the back of this letter). If we leave formation for any reason, we will resume our own payments.

Will you join our vocational journeys? Please partner with us and be part of our vocation team so we can answer God's call together!

LABOURÉ

Summer 2018 Class of Aspirants to the Priesthood and Religious Life



Our vocations story videos are online at: www.RescueVocations.org

About The Labouré Society

Why is our Rescue Mission needed?

- There are an estimated 10,000 individuals discerning a priestly or religious vocation in the US annually
 - 42% are blocked from pursuing this call due to education loans*
 - The average vocational 'aspirant' in Labouré owes \$60,000 in education loans
 - Most religious communities cannot assume this debt
 - Most dioceses will allow some debt but have a limited threshold for acceptance
- * (NRVC, Vision Study, 2010)

How does our Rescue Mission work?

Our Aspirants:

- Discern a vocation and are accepted into a diocese or religious institute*
 - Are blocked from entering or continuing vocational formation due to student loans
 - Apply to Labouré and meet intake requirements
 - Are trained in Catholic based fundraising and provided practical tools, personal mentoring, & accountability
 - Share their vocation stories with hundreds of donors thereby building a culture of vocations and evangelization
 - Raise funds for Labouré collectively as a class of multiple aspirants
 - Receive monetary awards from the funds raised by the class
 - Have minimum monthly award payments made to their student loan agencies over 36 months of active formation.
 - Receive final award payout after 3 years and enter freely into a lifetime of service as a priest, sister, or brother
- *(The Institute must be listed in the Official Catholic Directory)

The Labouré Society

- Works with aspirants to utilize all personal means to mitigate their loan amount (loan consolidation, asset review, financial counseling, employment, etc.) prior to acceptance into the program
- Trains each aspirant in Catholic based philanthropy
- Forms a semi-annual 'class' of aspirants that raises funds collectively for all members of the class
- Mentors each aspirant to build a unified team; each individual works toward the collective goal
- Provides ongoing accountability to ensure proper preparation & completion of personal fundraising plans
- Equips each aspirant with an online fundraising platform for donation processing, reporting, marketing and communications, assessment of goals, and class interaction
- Facilitates ongoing aspirant/donor communication and updates after aspirant enters formation
- Manages aspirant award payments while they are in formation
- Completes award payout after three years active formation

What has the Labouré Rescue Mission accomplished?

- Operating since 2003
- Listed in the Official Catholic Directory
- 280+ assisted into formation to the priesthood or religious life
- A network of thousands of praying bishops, priests, religious, families, and singles
- Over \$6 million awarded to aspirants for loan mitigation
- Labouré program support from bishops, superiors, and vocation directors nationwide

LABOURÉ
HELP RESCUE VOCATIONS

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The Labouré Society is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and is listed in the Official Catholic Directory. All donations are tax deductible. Gifts solicited by our aspirants belong to Labouré and are dispersed upon board approved guidelines to ensure full compliance with IRS rulings. Aspirants who leave Labouré are not required to repay any funds disbursed but are strongly encouraged to support Labouré however possible. Funds granted but not dispersed to a former aspirant are made available to other Labouré needs.