

# This is my Vocation Story



Matthew Kendrick

**In the Beginning** Hello, my name is Matthew Kendrick and I am from Washington state. I am one of two siblings and was brought up in a Protestant home. I remember going to church most Sundays and everyone in my family had a firm desire for God with a loving respect for Holy Scripture. My greatest influence in these early years was my grandfather who would read and talk scripture with me for hours. Sometimes we would quote our favorite proverb to one another or recite the psalm that was on our mind that day. The joy he found in the scriptures, especially in the words of Christ, still inspire me today.

**Home:** Washington  
**Community:** Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest  
**Degree:** Philosophy  
**Alma Mater:** Gonzaga University  
**Occupation:** Grocery Clerk

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**My faith** Being raised in an environment that expressed many Christian ideas, I felt comfortable in the faith practice I was in. It wasn't until about age twelve that I began reading the scriptures in a new way. The Holy Spirit started to speak to my heart on things such as the need for baptism, reception of communion, and even Church authority. Though I had no idea what the answers were to these questions that were being raised in my heart, I still kept seeking. I became progressively distant to the Protestant church and by tenth grade I was only attending because of obligation rather than devotion. It was in this year that my friend invited me to holy Mass to see what the Catholic Church was about. I had been brought up in an environment that was very anti-Catholic and had heard that Catholics were idolaters. While at Mass I did not understand much of what I saw, but when the consecration took place I went from sitting in rejection to kneeling in adoration. The emotionless expression that I had entered with began to change and I could feel

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*—Matthew Kendrick*

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tears rolling down my cheek. I don't know how to properly explain it and even if I could it would not compare. At that moment and ever since, I have believed that that little piece of bread becomes the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ. After leaving that church, I was a different person and I started researching this mysterious event. I learned about Church doctrine, Church authority, and the Eucharist.

The words of the saints began to fill the holes and answer questions that had touched my soul at the age of twelve. My life plan was to become a minister and from a young age I had felt a call to serve God. After high school I told my grandfather that for years I had been wrestling with my conscience. I told him about that Sunday Mass I had experienced and my desire to become Catholic. Though he did not agree with the decision, he knew that I loved the Lord Jesus and I was faithful to scripture. He always gave me encouragement. I told my parents about my desire to enter the Church, yet sadly it was not received well and I was met with an ultimatum. At that moment I knew I had to become fully committed to the gift God had given me in the Catholic faith. It was at this time that God called me out of a life of security and comfort to a life of faith. I was unsure if I was ready, but the words of scripture were very comforting and hours of adoration made my heart firm for His will to be done. I knew that I could not live apart from my faith and had to choose God even in the midst of family struggles. So I transferred my job, got an apartment and moved to Spokane, Washington.

# Called to serve

## The Summer Class of 2018



**My Vocation** While living in Spokane, I became very active in the Church. I found joy there and was surrounded by great friends. Though I had much to be happy about, every time I went to Holy Mass or adoration God seemed to unsettle my comfortability. I would look at the people receiving Christ in the most Holy Eucharist and would be filled with an unexplainable longing to serve them. I prayed a lot with the questions, “what am I seeking?” and “what will satisfy me?” I got in touch with a Franciscan priest who gave me advice and counseled me on various steps I could take in perhaps pursuing a vocation. One day while talking with him about my love for the sacraments and my longing to bring people the Eucharist, he made a statement that still sits with me today which was, “consider priesthood.” I then met with my spiritual director for many months discerning priesthood and through prayer and support decided to apply for seminary. I was accepted into the college seminary program and learned about responsibility, pastoral care, and community life. My time at the college seminary was important because it showed me what God wanted of me and what God did not want of me. Though I had many positive experiences in formation I was unable to fully find my charism inside that community. The traditional texts, the Extraordinary Mass, and the devotion of the parishioners in traditional communities was something that grabbed my heart. I realized that I had developed a traditional expression and found a rich Catholic heritage that God spoke to me through. After exiting the college seminary, it gave me a blessing to explore this traditional heritage of Catholicism and see how God was working in my life.

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**Called to serve** The Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest is a community that provides a traditional Catholic heritage. They seek to preach Christ as King by using the unbroken teaching of the saints and the glorious methods developed by the Church throughout its history. After visiting the institute community and being witness to the importance placed on the sacred liturgy, I felt at home. The importance of the desire to spread the name of Christ Jesus reminds me of my early years, the holy longing to convert with the methods of the saints and the sacraments deeply connects with my feelings for priesthood. Going out to other countries and allowing people to experience the sacred mysteries is deeply rooted in my spiritual identity. One of the sayings of the institute is “the Church saves us; we do not save the Church.” By implementing the historical methods of the Church people are able to be brought into a connection that will save their souls. This will to save the souls of mankind for Christ is my greatest desire. Though I am unworthy to undertake this calling and am disadvantaged by my financial obligations, I believe God’s will can accomplish all. I look forward to my formation and being taught ways to reach the faithful wherever they may be and grow in all areas of life. Humbly I continue this journey forward trusting in the good will of people and the holy will of God.

**Prayer & Invitation** The need for priests in the world is very grave and the desire from the faithful for priests has never been greater. Please join with me in praying for vocations with a daily rosary asking that the blessed Mother of God bring us holy priests for the glory of her Son’s kingdom. I ask in a special way for you to keep my fellow aspirants and me in your prayers asking that God would give us strength in these formative times. I invite you to join me and the Labouré Society on my vocation journey in prayer and through your financial support. To learn more about my story please contact me at: [matthew@laboureaspirant.org](mailto:matthew@laboureaspirant.org). Together may we walk our path towards Jesus Christ.

–Matthew Kendrick

## 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!

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# LABOURÉ

*Summer 2018 Class of Aspirants to the Priesthood and Religious Life*



*Our vocations story videos are online at: [www.RescueVocations.org](http://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.