

This is my Vocation Story

Cullen Hilliker

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Hi, my name is Cullen Hilliker. I believe that joining the Dominican Friars is my next "yes" to God. This is my story.

In the Beginning

I am from Two Rivers, Wisconsin, am the middle of three children, and grew-up in a Catholic family. My family has been an incredible gift from God, and I am forever grateful for them. Some of my childhood hobbies included reading, running, camping, and getting beat in any sport by my older brother.

My Faith

Although I attended Catholic school, my faith was not a priority and I did not take it seriously. However, in high school my youth group took a pilgrimage to Poland and this experience changed my life. On the trip, my eyes were opened to the beauty of the Catholic Church and the joy that comes with trusting in Jesus.

Since this encounter, I have slowly ordered my life to desire Jesus because I learned that He is the only source of sustained happiness in my life. Anything that hindered this goal was slowly weeded out. The more obstacles I removed, the more intimate my relationship with Christ became. I became convicted by His love and grew in willingness to sacrifice anything for it.

My Vocation

God patiently waited as I grew to trust Him. Through the many periods of growth in my life, such as going to college, studying a semester in Spain, and working as an engineering intern, God was slowly tugging at my heart and leading me to the vocation of priesthood.

In the summer of 2019 I worked as a co-op engineer at NASA Glenn Research Center with a full time offer to continue after graduation. I was close to engagement, and finally had everything I'd worked for, but perpetual restlessness filled me and I couldn't figure out why. The high point of my daily life became the Eucharist and I only found peace from the silent presence of Christ in Adoration and His sacrifice at daily Mass.



“I hope to preach the Good news everywhere, engage youth by leading outdoor adventures, teach in high schools and universities, [and] celebrate the Mass...”

—Cullen Hilliker

One morning, it all became clear—God was inviting me to serve him as a priest. He had provided me with everything I could have wanted only to show me that my biggest desire was to serve Him every day for the rest of my life. Since recognizing His call, my life has been more ordered and filled with joy.

Called to Serve

The opportunity to serve Jesus with the Dominican Friars seems like it is too good to be true. Their charism, a combination of prayer, contemplation, community, study, and preaching, fits me perfectly! St. Thomas Aquinas explains that they “contemplate and share with others the fruits of contemplation.”

I dream of living the joy of a friar who possesses the truth of Jesus to share with the world. I hope to preach the Good news everywhere, engage youth by leading outdoor adventures, teach in high schools and universities, celebrate the Mass, and contemplate the mystery of God for the rest of my life.

In my time as a student engineering tutor, I have developed a great love of teaching. I’m ecstatic that I now get to devote my life to preaching and teaching about the one thing I’m most passionate about—Jesus!

Prayer & Invitation

I invite you to please pray for all vocations in the Church, and especially for my fellow Labouré classmates and me.

I gladly welcome any further discussion about my vocation story, and I also want to hear about yours. Please reach out to me at cullen@rescue vocations.org. Thank you and God bless!

Pictured below: The Winter, 2020 Class of Labouré Aspirants



I am an aspirant of Labouré

I am also a fundraiser for a class of aspiring priests, sisters and brothers. A recent study confirmed that nearly 1 of every 2 aspirants is blocked from entering seminaries and religious communities due to student loan debt. It is the only thing that prevents many – including me – from entering formation to become a priest, sister or brother. My classmates are discerning all over the country.



Conor Maher
Dominican Friars,
Province of the
Most Holy Name
of Jesus



Gretchen Erlichman
Dominican Nuns of
the Monastery of
Our Lady of Grace



Mary Louise Kohser
Disciples of the Lord
Jesus Christ



Damyan Mendoza
Institute of Christ the
King Sovereign Priest



Michael Howard
Institute of Christ the
King Sovereign Priest



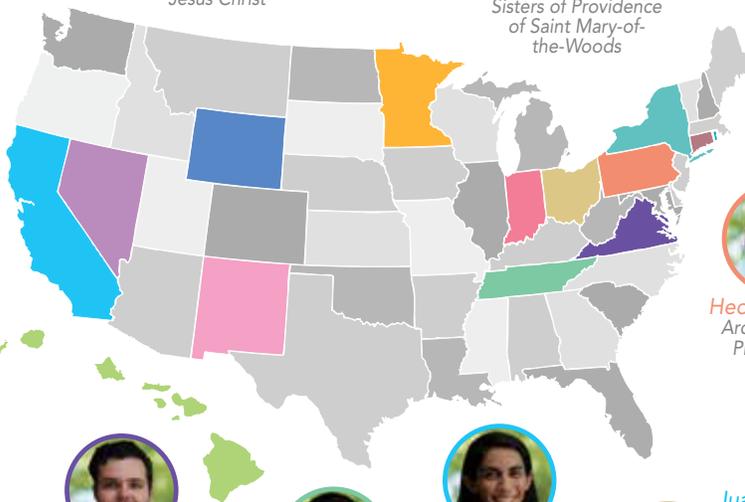
Sean Tobin
Dominican Friars of
the Province of Saint
Joseph (Eastern
Province)



Emmanuelle Del Castillo
Congregation of
the Sacred Hearts
of Jesus and Mary
(Sacred Hearts Community)



Buchi Akpati
Discalced Carmelites
Monastery of the Little
Flower of Jesus



Brittany Behrens
Sisters of Providence
of Saint Mary-of-
the-Woods



Thomas Conroy
Dominican Friars of
the Province of Saint
Joseph (Eastern
Province)



Austin Roy
Order of Carthusians



**Allyssa Hebrado
Fernandez**
Marian Sisters of the
Diocese of Lincoln



Jean Clumson-Eklu
Congregation of
Saint John



Hector Ramirez
Archdiocese of
Philadelphia



Matthew Nordquist
Franciscan Friars of
the Holy Spirit



Cullen Hilliker
Dominicans, Province of
Saint Albert the Great
(Central Province)



Erin Lyons
Sisters of the
Holy Cross



Patrick Kelly
Dominican Friars of
the Province of Saint
Joseph (Eastern
Province)



Juan Pablo Chavez
Archdiocese of
Los Angeles



Elizabeth Luna
Missionaries
Guadalupanas of
the Holy Spirit



Phillip Baker
Dominican Friars of
the Province of Saint
Joseph (Eastern
Province)



Noemy Banuelos
Carmelite Sisters
of the Most Sacred
Heart of Los
Angeles



Tommy Gies
Priestly Fraternity
of Saint Peter

With your help, we will rebuild the Church!

My goal is to raise \$60,000 (the average student loan amount) before June 30th of this year for The Labouré Society, a Catholic non-profit that helps aspirants like me to answer God's call.

Every aspirant has been accepted by a diocese or community and is required to work to liquidate their assets in order 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.

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!

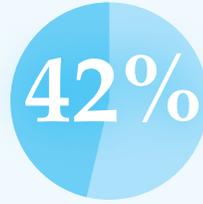
Our vocations story videos are online at: www.RescueVocations.org

LABOURÉ
HELP RESCUE VOCATIONS™

Why is Labouré Needed?



Individuals discerning a priestly or religious vocation in the US annually*



Are blocked from pursuing this call due to education loans*



The average amount our vocational aspirants in Labouré owe in educational loans

How does the Mission Work?

OUR ASPIRANTS

Are discerning a vocation and have been accepted into a diocese or religious institute

Are blocked from entering or continuing vocational formation due to student loans

Are trained by Labouré in Catholic-based fundraising and are provided with practical tools, personal mentoring, and accountability

Share their vocation stories with thousands of Catholic donors, thereby building a culture of vocations and evangelization

As a class of 20-25 aspirants raise funds collectively and receive awards from those funds to be applied to their debt

THE LABOURE SOCIETY

Works with aspirants to utilize all personal means to mitigate their loan amount prior to acceptance into the program

Trains each aspirant in Catholic-based philanthropy

Mentors each aspirant to build a unified team; each individual works toward the collective goal

Provides ongoing accountability and personal guidance to ensure proper preparation and completion of the individual fundraising plans of each aspirant

Equips each aspirant with an online fundraising platform and multi-media fundraising tools

Facilitates ongoing aspirant/donor communication and updates after aspirant enters formation

What Has Labouré Accomplished?

320+



Assisted into formation to the priesthood or religious life

\$8.1 MILLION



Raised by Labouré aspirants since 2003

PROVEN



In operation since 2003

TRUSTED



Listed in the Official Catholic Directory

*NRVC, Vision Study, 2010

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. All gifts made to Labouré are non-refundable. 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.