

# This is my Vocation Story

**Hector Ramirez**

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Archdiocese of Philadelphia

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*My name is Hector Ramirez. I am called to serve Christ and humanity as a priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. This is my story.*

## In the Beginning

I was raised in Southern California, the oldest of five children in a faith-filled Catholic family. My parents encouraged us to pray and seek God's will in all things. In fact, I can't remember a time when faith was not a part of our daily lives, from prayers before meals to the family rosary (especially during car rides).

## My Faith

During my teenage years I was very involved in parish life - serving Mass and volunteering to teach confirmation and catechism classes. As soon as I could drive I began attending daily Mass. These experiences made a lasting impact on me, transforming my faith into an anchor that grounded me in good times and bad.

## My Vocation

Since early childhood I've felt called to the priesthood. At the age of three, when asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, my quick response was that "I want to be a father - not the kind that has children, but the kind that says Mass." Our parish priest further encouraged me when I was 5 years old by calling me his "little priest."

As I grew older, I considered various careers like any young adult would and really felt drawn to music, but the priesthood and its call for discernment was always in the background. I knew it was something I needed to consider and pray about. When I began college as a music education major, there was an intention to "try out" seminary in the future. I just never defined when the future was.

When I transferred to Franciscan University during my undergraduate studies I joined the Priestly Discernment Program and began to publicly and intentionally discern a vocational call to the priesthood.

While a member of the priestly discernment program, I was actively being formed in accord with the Priestly Formation standards of the USCCB. Being engaged in such a great academic program helped me prepare for the future formation any diocese would demand while providing the opportunities to meet and learn about numerous religious communities around the country and the world.



After this great college experience I still ultimately pursued a career in education. Life's circumstances intervened and I began to teach Spanish and music in the archdiocesan high schools of Philadelphia. Though I have been incredibly blessed by this work I have continued to hear that still small voice inviting me deeper.

The Lord's persistence in calling me cannot be denied and I have applied and been accepted to pursue the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

## Called to Serve

As a priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, I hope to serve as a parish priest. When I first came to the Archdiocese, I served in various apostolates, including a nursing home and two parishes — one that had numerous Hispanics within its congregation. In these apostolates, I had the opportunity to shadow and work with priests in their ministries to the sick and elderly, to the young, and to the average Catholic, amidst their many faith journeys. Witnessing and sharing in the ministry of these priests was a true joy.

I pray that through my vocation I can bring people closer to Christ. Unworthy as I am I hope to bring Christ to all I encounter. I hope to be present in their greatest joys, and in their deepest sorrows, accompanying them and providing for them through the Sacraments.

*"I had the opportunity to shadow and work with priests in their ministries to the sick and elderly... witnessing and sharing in the ministry of these priests was a true joy."*

—Hector Ramirez

## Prayer & Invitation

In your generosity, I ask for your prayers. Pray that, if it is God's will, I may be able to mitigate my student loan debt, enter formation, and be ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Pray that my classmates and I may be humble in opening ourselves to the Lord that He may work in our lives and prepare us to be better Christian men and woman discerning religious life. If you would like to learn more about my classmates and me, or the Labouré Society and its work, please reach out to me at [hector@rescuevocations.org](mailto:hector@rescuevocations.org).

*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)

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

**Thomas Conroy**  
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

**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)

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

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

**Juan Pablo Chavez**  
Archdiocese of  
Los Angeles

**Tommy Gies**  
Priestly Fraternity  
of Saint Peter

**Elizabeth Luna**  
Missionaries  
Guadalupanas of  
the Holy Spirit

## 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](http://www.RescueVocations.org)*

**LABOURÉ**<sup>SM</sup>  
HELP RESCUE VOCATIONS™

# Why is Labouré Needed?



10,000  
Individuals discerning a priestly or religious vocation in the US annually\*



42%  
Are blocked from pursuing this call due to education loans\*



\$60,000  
The average amount our vocational aspirants in Labouré owe in educational loans

## How does the Mission Work?



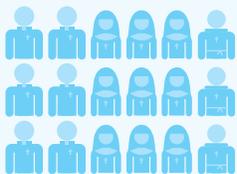
- Are discerning a vocation and have been accepted into a diocese or religious institute
- Are blocked from entering or continuing vocational formation due to student loans
- Are trained by Labouré in Catholic-based fundraising and are provided with practical tools, personal mentoring, and accountability
- 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



- 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.