

# This is my Vocation Story

**Juan Pablo Chavez**

Community:  
Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Alma Mater:  
University of California, Riverside

Phone:  
(323) 901-6204

Email:  
juanpablo@laboureaspirant.org

*My name is Juan Pablo Chavez. I am called to serve Christ and humanity as a priest of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. This is my story.*

## In the Beginning

I grew up in East Los Angeles, one of three children in a devout Catholic family. As my dad worked two shifts, my mom took care of my brothers and me. We went to church every Sunday and my brothers and I assisted at Mass as altar servers. My mom instilled a strong sense of faith, teaching us to read the Bible and pray the rosary.

## My Faith

As a child, my faith life consisted of attending Mass regularly and praying the rosary. This started to change after high school. I faced many challenges in college – being away from home, having more freedom, and facing the attendant temptations my newfound freedom offered.

Once, a friend asked me whether I went to Mass because my parents made me go or because I wanted to go. For the first time I was forced to consider that question, and soon decided to stop attending Mass. Overall I would describe myself as a cheerful person, but when I stopped attending Mass my mood began to change. I'd been drifting for about a month when I heard a soft whisper saying, "Come back to me." I felt comforted, as though someone were trying to save me.

As I began to attend Mass and confession regularly again, I heard and saw more clearly what was going on inside me, and around me. I decided to speak with the priest about what had just happened and mentioned to him my previous experiences. He advised I take some time to ask God what His intentions were for my life.

## My Vocation

Although I had entertained the idea of a becoming a priest as a child, I later set my sights on becoming a doctor, but when a friend mentioned he might have a vocation the thought of priesthood once again entered my thinking. Images of crosses began to appear in my dreams. and when I shared sketches of the crosses with a priest he reaffirmed I might have a calling to the priesthood. He advised me to continue to pray and to enter into conversation with God. During a retreat, I felt called in a deeper way.



I began reading more spiritual books, recognizing that as I continued to grow in faith the Lord blessed me with greater self awareness. I was falling deeply in love with God; and attending adoration more often led to great experiences in God's presence.

## Called to Serve

I look forward to pursuing the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles as soon as I'm free of student loan debt. I pray I am able to live my priestly life in humble service of others. I am thankful that God is forming and shaping me to respond to whatever His will has in store for me.

## Prayer & Invitation

I have a great journey ahead of me as I work hard to resolve my student loans. I ask all of you to please keep my fellow aspirants and me in prayer, so that we may all continue to walk in the steps of Christ and immerse ourselves ever deeper in God's love. Please feel free to contact me for more information at: [juanpablo@laboureaspirant.org](mailto:juanpablo@laboureaspirant.org).

*"I pray I am able to live my priestly life in humble service of others. I am thankful that God is forming and shaping me to respond to whatever His will has in store for me."*

—Juan Pablo Chavez

*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

**Tommy Gies**  
Priestly Fraternity  
of Saint Peter

**Juan Pablo Chavez**  
Archdiocese of  
Los Angeles

**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?

### 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.