

This is my Vocation Story

Phillip Baker

Community:
Dominican Friars of the Province of Saint Joseph (Eastern Province)

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My name is Phillip Baker. I am called to serve Christ and humanity as a member of the Order of Friars Preachers. This is my story.

In the Beginning

I'm originally from Nashville, Tennessee, and grew up in a warm, loving Catholic family that valued faith and education. From as early as I can remember, my parents were extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and my siblings and I were altar servers. My parents sacrificed a lot to make sure I could attend Catholic school, and it was there I cultivated an interest in philosophy and theology. I was also interested in theater, regularly performing in school and community plays (which eventually led to an acting major in college).

My Faith

My faith has always been important to me and, thanks to the merits of a Catholic education, I learned a lot about the Church (but it's also fair to say I never truly developed a close relationship with God). During my sophomore year at Syracuse my newfound freedom, combined with the many distractions of college life, led me down an unproductive path. I spent far too much time partying and engaging in self-destructive behavior.

But God wasn't through with me. With the help of good Catholic friends, I was able to turn things around. These friends encouraged me to attend a retreat with the Catholic Student Association (CSA), which was exactly what I needed. While on retreat I was able to come to grips with my deep feelings of unworthiness, and recognize God's absolute, unconditional love for me. I also discovered that the Catholic faith is not merely a philosophy, but an encounter with a person – the Divine person. I left my first retreat committed to making my relationship with God my number one priority.

“...the Catholic faith is not merely a philosophy, but an encounter with a person – the Divine person.”

—Phillip Baker

My Vocation

Growing up, I was regularly asked if I'd considered becoming a priest, but I never gave it much thought until shortly before that CSA retreat. Still, even after the retreat, I really wanted to complete my acting training.



“...I now hope to offer myself to Him in service to His people as a Catholic priest.”

—Phillip Baker

I wrestled with the decision for some time, until one day Christ’s words to Peter in the Gospel of John called out to me: “feed my sheep.” Despite Peter’s rejection of Christ, he was given one more chance... and it felt like He was giving me a second chance as well!

Shortly thereafter, I realized acting was not the path I was intended to take. Fortified by God’s love, and the great good He has done for me, I now hope to offer myself to Him in service to His people as a Catholic priest.

Called to Serve

After this, with the help of a spiritual director, I was led to the Order of Friars Preachers (the Dominican Order). Time spent with the friars has been joyful, inspiring, and instructive. I’ve learned much about my strengths and desires, and how God wishes to work through me. I’m particularly attracted to the Dominican charism, which involves preaching for the salvation of souls while living in a community centered on spiritual study and prayer. My goal is to enter formation as a friar preacher as soon as my education debt can be resolved.

Prayer & Invitation

Please pray that my fellow Labouré classmates and I can resolve the student loan debt blocking our path to religious life. As you know, the Church desperately needs new priests, sisters, and brothers. With your help, our class will soon reach its goal of serving Christ and humanity.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions you might have at: phillip@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



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



Michael Howard
Institute of Christ the
King Sovereign Priest



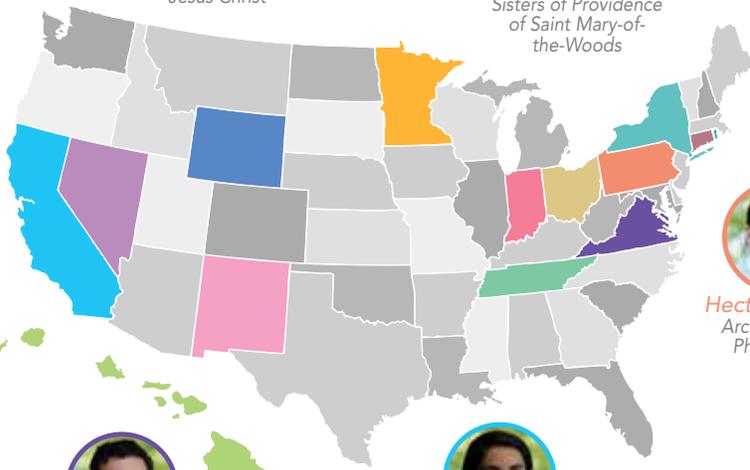
Sean Tobin
Dominican Friars of
the Province of Saint
Joseph (Eastern
Province)



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



Buchi Akpati
Disclaled Carmelites
Monastery of the Little
Flower of Jesus



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



Austin Roy
Order of Carthusians



Hector Ramirez
Archdiocese of
Philadelphia



Matthew Nordquist
Franciscan Friars of
the Holy Spirit



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



Jean Clumson-Eklu
Congregation of
Saint John



Juan Pablo Chavez
Archdiocese of
Los Angeles



Elizabeth Luna
Missionaries
Guadalupanas 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

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?



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.