

This is my Vocation Story



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My name is Richard McAlister. I am called to serve Christ and humanity as a priest of the Diocese of Harrisburg. This is my story.

In the Beginning

I was raised in a traditional American family. My father was a hard working machinist and my mother stayed at home caring for my siblings and me. Together, my parents instilled in us the virtue of hard work.

While my parents were infrequent church-goers, we kept a Christian home. I attended weekly services with my grandparents, who were members of the United Methodist Church, and we were all greatly influenced by my great-grandmother and her sister, Verna, who held to the conservative Anabaptist faith.

As a child I attended Awana's, a weekly children's Bible study held at the local Mennonite church. It was about this time the thought of becoming a minister first entered my mind.

My Faith

Unlike many of my high school friends, I was less interested in pursuing higher education than marrying and raising a conservative Mennonite family. In fact, the Mennonite faith was such a part of my life at that time I earned the nickname "Amish Priest," a title I disliked, partly because of its association with the "heathen" Catholic clergy.

As a senior, my agricultural education teacher lamented the fact I had no plans for college and said he felt I would make a good agriculture teacher. I replied that if he could get me accepted to Penn State I would go. The very next day he put me in contact with an admissions person at Penn State, and I was accepted!

I initially chose Agricultural Science as my major, but soon switched to Religious Studies. One day, a professor who happened to be Catholic asked why I wasn't attending a Jesuit school. Given my upbringing, I was appalled by the idea.

After a brief sabbatical from college, I decided to complete my education over the strong objections of the elders at my Mennonite church. In fact, shortly after returning to school, I was excommunicated from the Mennonites.

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—Richard McAlister



My Vocation

Being separated from my childhood faith was devastating. Up to that point, I'd never gone a week without attending church. Every Sunday morning I felt sick with longing for my place to worship. That winter, through prayer and reflection, I felt inspired to visit the local Catholic cathedral.

At the time, I was unaware God was leading me toward Catholicism, but since visiting the cathedral, I've had no interest in any other faith.

The Cathedral Parish of St. Patrick was the antithesis of what I'd been used to. The Roman Catholic Mass was warm, and expressed a sense of true worship I had never experienced before. From the very first Sunday, I felt the Lord was calling me home to the Church I'd been searching for.

Certainly, there were a few theological and doctrinal hurdles I had to overcome, but I knew from the beginning the Catholic Church offered unassailable truth. The priests were welcoming and friendly, and offered me private RCIA instruction. While discovering my new faith, I hungered for the true Body of Christ within the Eucharist and thirsted for the true Blood of Christ in the chalice.

On October 5, 2016, I joined the Catholic Church and, through continued prayer, I began discerning a call to the priesthood. The more deeply involved I became with our Lord and the Catholic Church, the clearer it became that I had a vocation.

Called to Serve

The following January I applied to become a diocesan seminarian of the Harrisburg Diocese, and in August of 2018 I entered Mount Saint Mary's Seminary. Today, I continue my formation to join the holy priesthood.

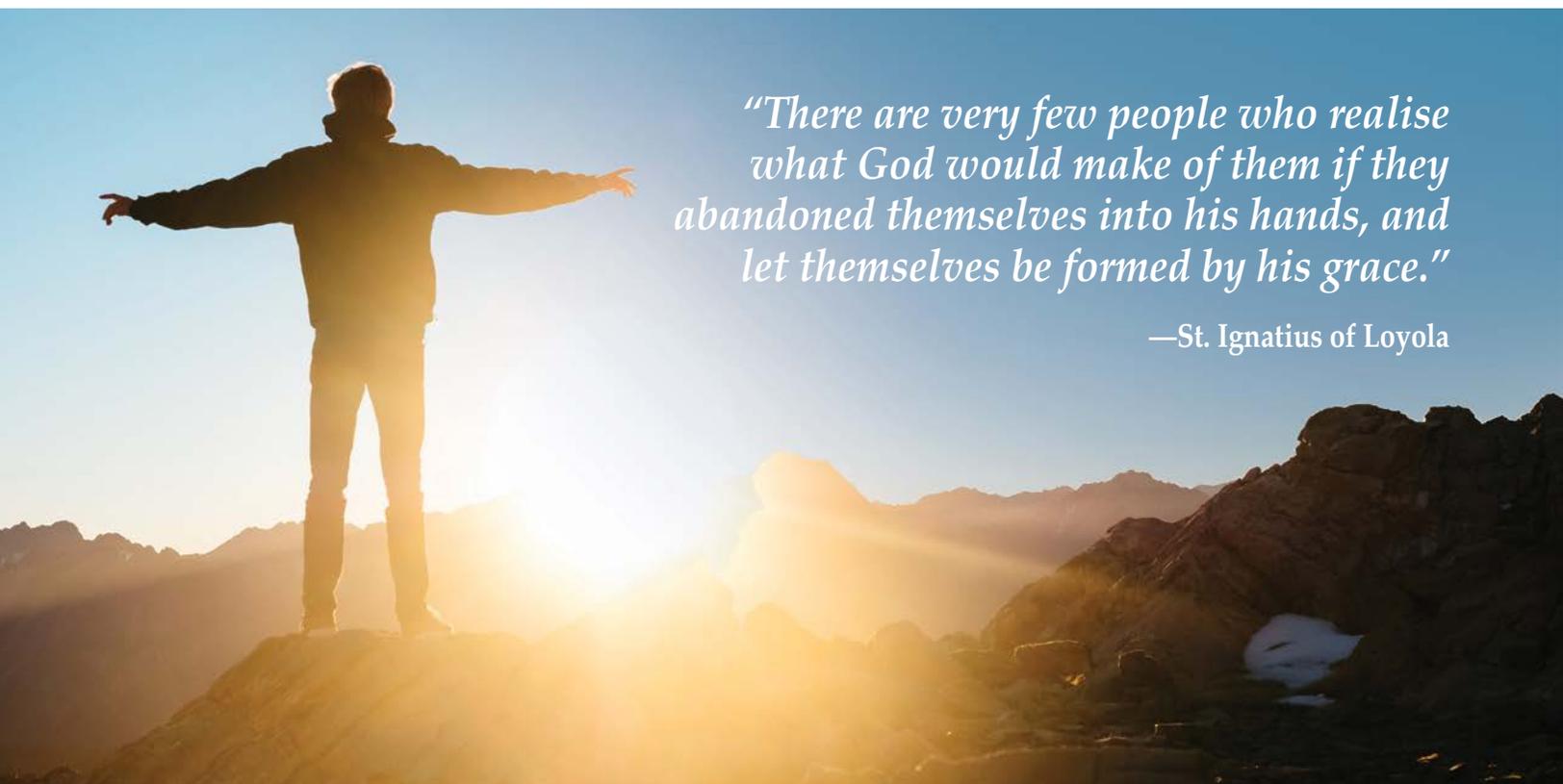
Prayer & Invitation

Please pray that my fellow classmates and I can resolve the student loan debt blocking our path to religious life. As you know, the Church desperately needs 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: Richard@rescuevocations.org.

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“There are very few people who realise what God would make of them if they abandoned themselves into his hands, and let themselves be formed by his grace.”

—St. Ignatius of Loyola

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 from entering formation to become a priest, sister or brother. My classmates are discerning all over the country.

Ron Cuenco
Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land

Hannah Houser
Sisters of Saint Francis, Oldenburg

Jim Musgrave
Archdiocese of Detroit, Michigan

Peyton Kerkman
Marian Sisters of the Diocese of Lincoln, NE

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

Richard McAlister
Diocese of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Patrick Kelly
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)

Joseph Lynch
Franciscan Friars of the Renewal

Erin Lyons
Sisters of the Holy Cross

Elizabeth Luna
Missionaries Guadalupanas of the Holy Spirit

Hector Ramirez
Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Jean Clumson-Eklu
Congregation of Saint John

Fran Masawi
The Benedictine Sisters of St. Walburg

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

Joseph Silver
Benedictine Monks of Our Lady of Clear Creek Abbey

Sarah Huckins
Disalced Carmelite Nuns in San Diego

Victoria Clarizio
Passionist Nuns, Pittsburgh, PA

Tyler Wisniewski
Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

With your help, we will rebuild the Church!

My goal is to raise \$60,000 (the average student loan amount) before December 31st 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!

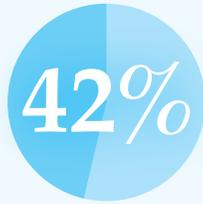
Our vocations story videos are online at: www.RescueVocations.org

LABOURÉSM
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

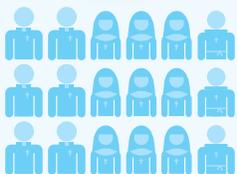
- Are discerning a vocation and have been accepted into a diocese or religious institute
- Are blocked from entering or continuing vocational formation due to student loans
- Are trained by Labouré in Catholic-based fundraising and are provided with practical tools, personal mentoring, and accountability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

325+



Assisted into formation to the priesthood or religious life

\$8.6 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.