

# This is my Vocation Story



Joseph Silver

Community:  
Benedictine Monks of Our Lady of Clear Creek Abbey

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*My name is Joseph Silver and I am called to serve Christ and His Church as a member of the Benedictine Monks of Our Lady of Clear Creek Abbey. This is my story.*

## In the Beginning

I grew up in the suburbs of St. Louis as the middle child of three boys. Childhood activities included soccer, hockey, playing music, learning about science, and volunteering.

## My Faith

I was raised Catholic, however, my family was not overly devout. In fifth grade, my pastor spoke to our catechism class about vocations. He asked if anyone had thought about becoming a priest or nun. I timidly raised my hand, looked around, and after seeing no one else was doing so, quickly pulled it back. It was too late — I'd been seen. My pastor said, "If you are called, don't worry. It's a beautiful life." At the time I wasn't sure why I'd raised my hand, but Jesus was clearly at work in my heart.

A pivotal moment occurred when I was fourteen: I was confronted with mortality after witnessing the death of my neighbor. At first I became angry at God, yet this experience allowed me to better understand redemptive suffering and helped me to abandon myself to Him.

Through my love of science and helping others I became interested in pre-med activities, and my schedule was quickly filled with studying and volunteering. I helped a young man with autism learn catechism at my parish and this led me to spiritual renewal and a greater interest in the Mass.

## My Vocation

After a good deal of research, discernment, and prayer throughout my high school years, I felt Jesus was calling me to the priesthood. After graduation I enrolled in minor seminary, which began a period of great spiritual growth

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in which I entered into the Church’s beautiful liturgical life. Being surrounded by a community of young men who desired the will of God and wanted to save souls was something drastically different from anything I’d experienced before. It was overwhelming; and yet, I had a longing for something more.

I left the seminary and discerned with a variety of religious orders, but eventually enrolled in college where I studied philosophy and Catholic studies.

## Called to Serve

During my time at college, I attended a retreat at Clear Creek Abbey where the Benedictine Monks reside; I was immediately drawn to their authentic contemplative lifestyle. Their focus on work and prayer for the sanctification of souls, and their care and love for the liturgy were what I admired most about them.

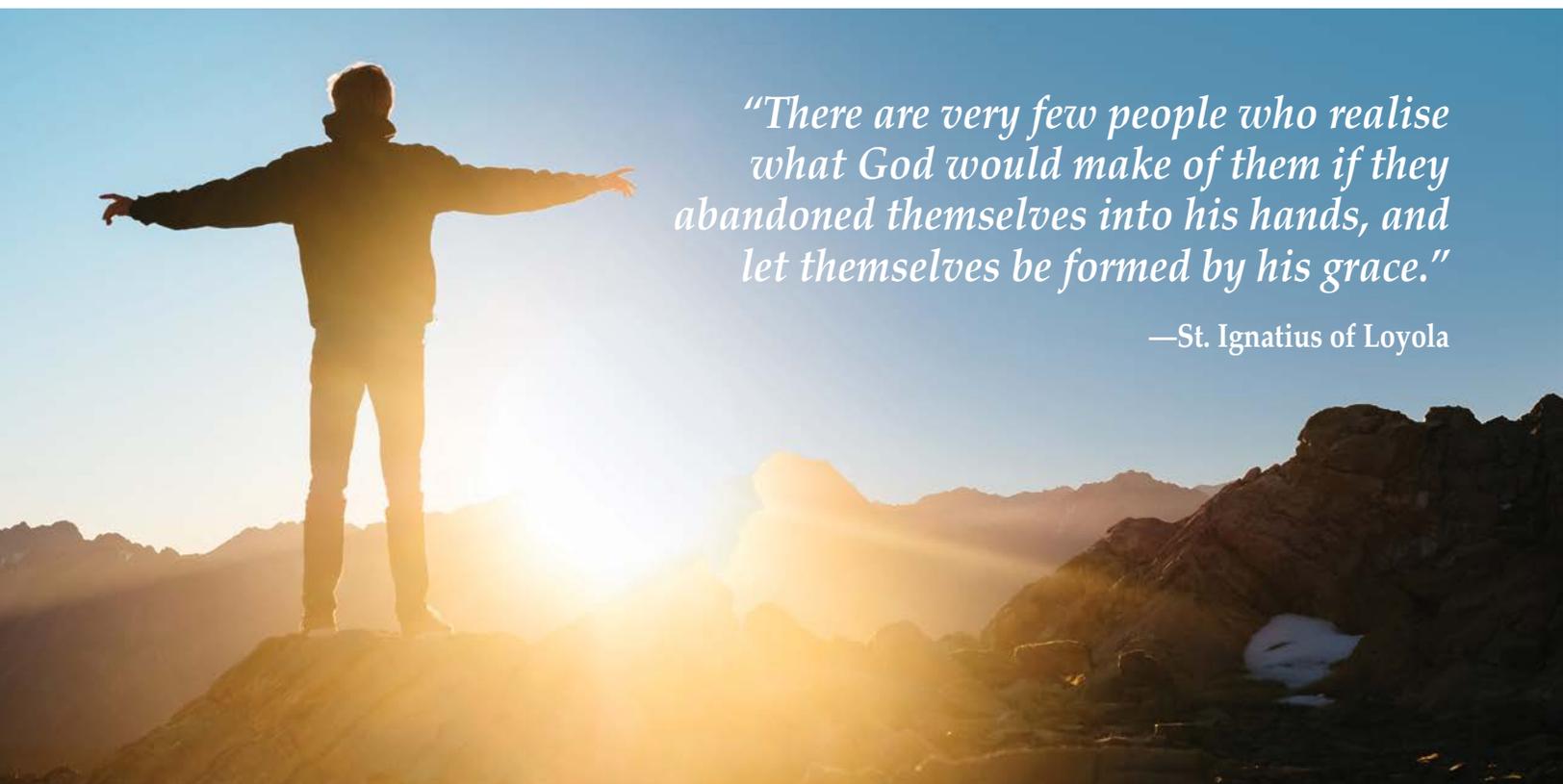
In the ensuing months I spent a good deal of time at Clear Creek Abbey, getting to know the monks and praying with the Rule of Saint Benedict. As a result of this transformative experience, I believe God is calling me to join this community.

I look forward to bringing others closer to Christ through sacrifice and prayer as a member of the Benedictine Monks of Our Lady of Clear Creek Abbey.

## 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: [JosephS@rescuevocations.org](mailto:JosephS@rescuevocations.org).



*“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

**Jean Clumson-Eklu**  
Congregation of Saint John

**Erin Lyons**  
Sisters of the Holy Cross

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

**Hector Ramirez**  
Archdiocese of Philadelphia

**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!*

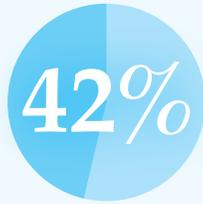
*Our vocations story videos are online at: [www.RescueVocations.org](http://www.RescueVocations.org)*

**LABOURÉ**<sup>SM</sup>  
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

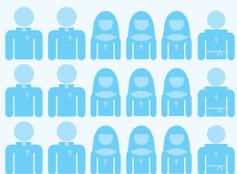
### THE LABOURE SOCIETY



- 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.