

This is my Vocation Story

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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.



“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

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.

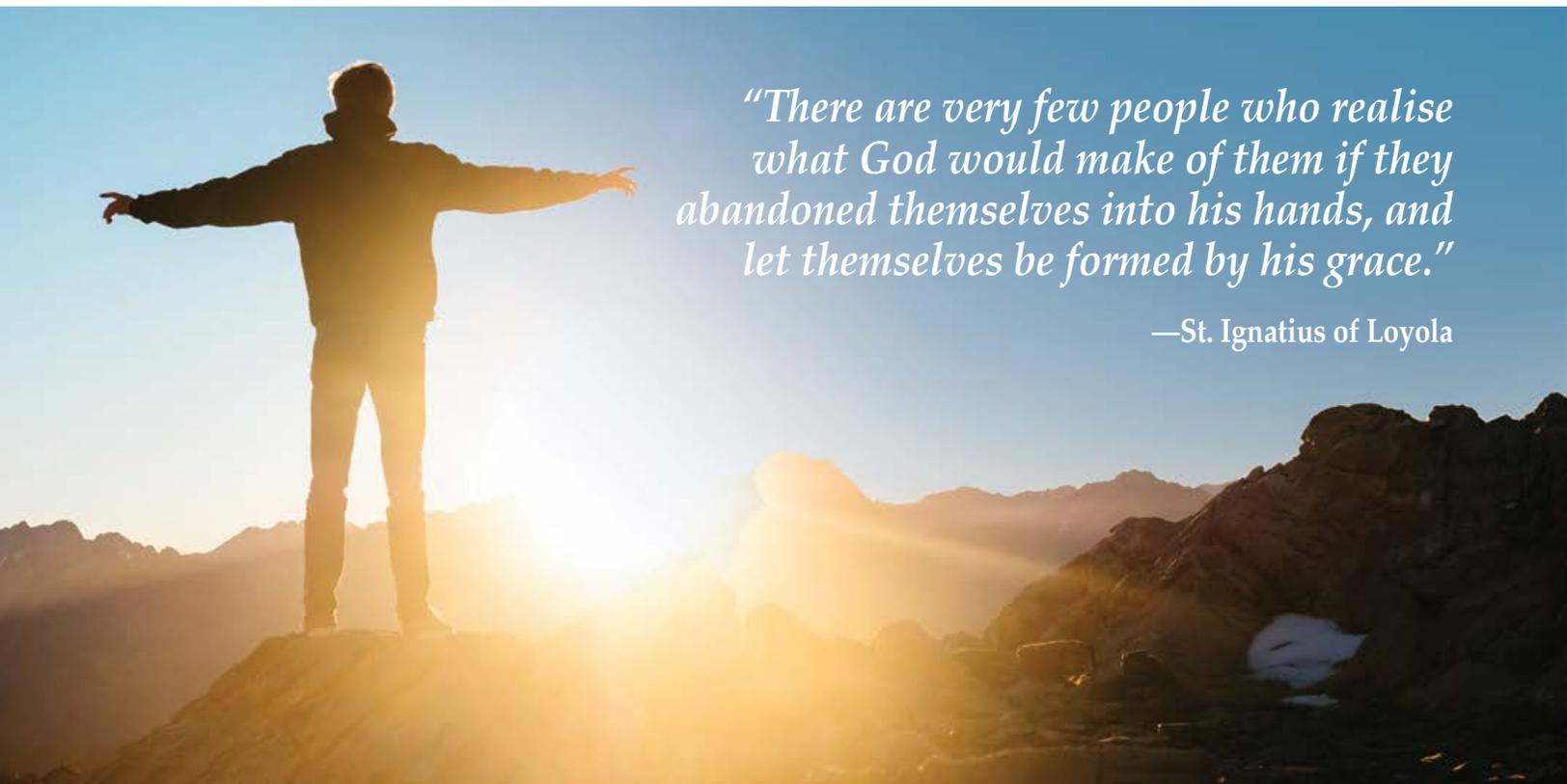
Called to Serve

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.

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.



“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

Joseph Lynch
Franciscan Friars of the Renewal

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)

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
Discalced 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?



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

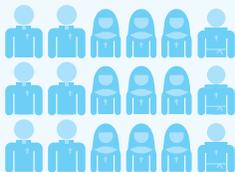
THE LABOURE SOCIETY



- 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?

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.