

# This is my Vocation Story



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*I am called to serve Christ and humanity as a Benedictine Monk with the Brothers of St. Bernard Abbey. This is my story.*

## In the Beginning

I grew up in Gadsden, Alabama. We were a family of Southern Baptists, but we didn't attend church regularly until I was a teenager. During my sophomore year in high school I got involved with a youth group and started taking my faith more seriously. At that point I hadn't had many encounters with Catholics — I'm not even sure if I considered Catholicism Christian!

## My Faith

While pursuing a degree in Music Education at Jacksonville State University, I tried to remain engaged with my faith. For a while I participated in Baptist student ministries, but with a full course load and being disconnected from the people who once held me accountable, I eventually drifted into secular life.

Sometimes my thoughts turned to God, and other times I questioned whether He actually existed. After changing my major to History in Secondary Education, I took a course in ancient history and medieval thought. Learning about the early church had a great impact on me. I read as many books as I could about martyrs, saints, and popes, and the more I read the more I was drawn to the Catholic Church. I decided to attend Mass for the first time, and was instantly struck by the beauty of the ritual. At the moment of the elevation of the Eucharistic Host, I had an indescribable feeling. It was as if God were telling me, "this is where you belong."

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## My Vocation

Soon, I asked a priest to become my spiritual director, and after I was welcomed into the Catholic Church, he encouraged me to consider discerning a vocation to the priesthood. After some serious prayer and reflection, I had the sense God had other plans for me. Then, a monk from St. Bernard Abbey came to my parish. After a brief discussion he suggested I might have a religious vocation — something I knew very little about.



*“Through the hardships of the monastic life, a monk can offer his sufferings up for the good of the world and the conversion of sinners. This is what I seek and look forward to.”*

—Devin Ray

## Called to Serve

Later that year, the monk invited me to participate in a retreat. I accepted the offer, and felt immediately at home while spending time at the abbey. Silence, prayer, work, and community time were balanced throughout the day, cultivating a spiritually charged environment. When it was time to leave, I felt dread at returning to the noisy world. I understood then I was being called to religious life; I also realized student loan debt was blocking the path to my vocation, and for months I did nothing but pray for God to make a way.

Finally, I was inspired to take the first step. I realized that if God was calling me to the monastery, He would provide. The next day I contacted my vocations director at the abbey and began the application process; I have since been informally accepted, contingent on the resolution of my student loan debt.

The monks of St. Bernard Abbey lead a rich monastic life. Their charism of praying daily for humanity and the conversion of sinners is part of a 1,700-year tradition (without it, I firmly believe the world would be a very different place). In addition to prayer, many of the monks serve as teachers and priests: they provide a quality education for students of diverse economic backgrounds through their prep school, and help out at many nearby parishes.

As a monk, I look forward to praying with my brothers for God’s people, serving the community in whatever capacity I can, educating our youth, and perhaps eventually studying for the priesthood.

## Prayer & Invitation

Please pray that my fellow Labouré classmates and I can resolve the student loan debt blocking our path to religious life. With your help, our class will soon reach its goal of serving Christ and humanity. Please reach out with any questions you might have at: [Devin@rescuevocations.org](mailto:Devin@rescuevocations.org).

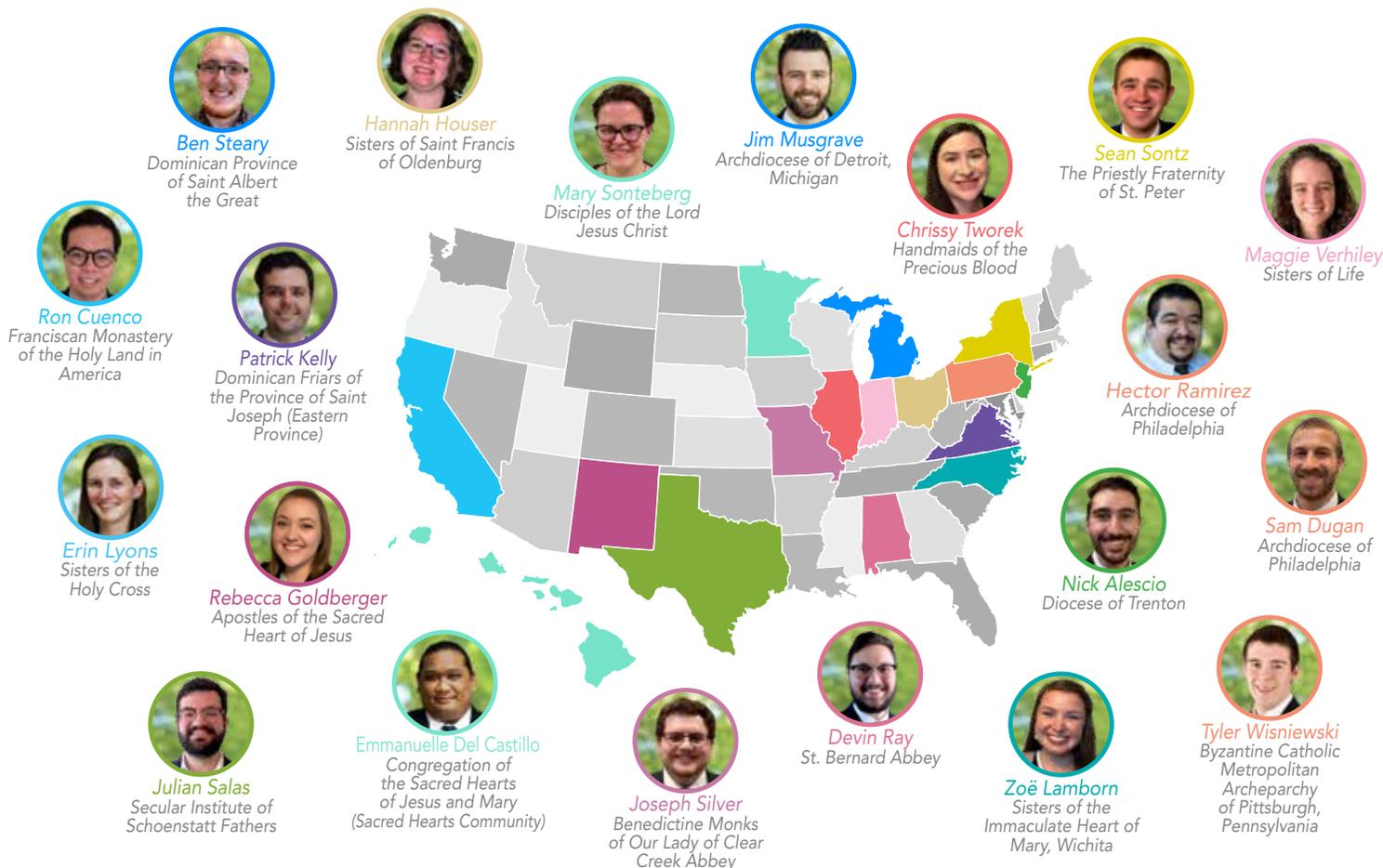


*“There are very few people who realize what God would make of them if they abandoned themselves into his hands, and let themselves be formed by his grace.”*

—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.



## 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?



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

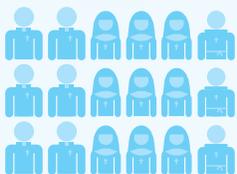
- Are discerning a vocation and have been accepted into a diocese or religious institute
- Are blocked from entering or continuing vocational formation due to student loans
- Are trained by Labouré in Catholic-based fundraising and are provided with practical tools, personal mentoring, and accountability
- Share their vocation stories with thousands of Catholic donors, thereby building a culture of vocations and evangelization
- Collectively raise funds as a class of 20-25 aspirants and receive awards from those funds to be applied toward their debt

### THE LABOURE SOCIETY

- Works with aspirants to help them 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?

370+



Assisted in their journey to answer God's call

\$10 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.