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This is my Vocation Story



Richard Gaunt

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Order of Friars Minor (Franciscan Friars)

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My name is Richard Gaunt. The Franciscan Friars are inviting me to serve Christ and His Church. This is my story.

In the Beginning

I did not grow up Catholic, but had a positive experience growing up in the United Methodist Church. When I was little there was a sense of comfort in addressing Jesus. However, my childhood prayer eventually faded and turned into many unanswered questions. By the time I was 17 or so, I wasn't sure what I believed anymore, and in college, I would have checked the "none" box under religious affiliation.

My Faith

While I wasn't formally religious in college, religion was constantly on my mind. I enthusiastically participated in religious studies classes, and devoured books on various religions, spiritualities, and meditation. Buddhist thought and spirituality were especially interesting to me and I even took a class to learn more about their philosophy. My sophomore year, I experienced my first serious exposure to Catholicism after a professor suggested that I read a book by the Trappist monk Thomas Merton. This sparked a deeper interest in Christianity and I started researching more about it.

In 2018 I spent a year in Ecuador. My last night there I visited a church named La Iglesia de San Francisco where I started to feel an overwhelming sense of vulnerability after sitting in on the Mass that was being celebrated in the Church. Strangely, I sensed that I was right where I need to be, yet, after a few minutes, I stood up and practically ran out. After that experience, I returned home to Delaware and began to develop a prayer life. Through this time, I would ask God, *if the Gospel is true, how can I live it?*

"Suddenly, it seemed obvious that the beatitudes were meant to be lived, that it really is that simple!"

—Richard Gaunt

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“Part of the Franciscan call, to me, is being vulnerable enough to notice and attend to God’s presence in every person, especially in the poor.”

—Richard Gaunt

My Vocation

God began to answer that question in summer 2019, when I visited and worked at an intentional community called *St. Francis Farm*. Here it seemed obvious that the sermon on the mount was meant to be lived. I wondered how I could find the same integrity in my own life.

I went on with my plan to attend graduate school, and moved to Austin, Texas. There I was confirmed in the Catholic Church and became involved in the faith community. In 2020 I knew I needed to leave school, because the pull I felt toward some sort of religious community life was too strong to ignore.

Called to Serve

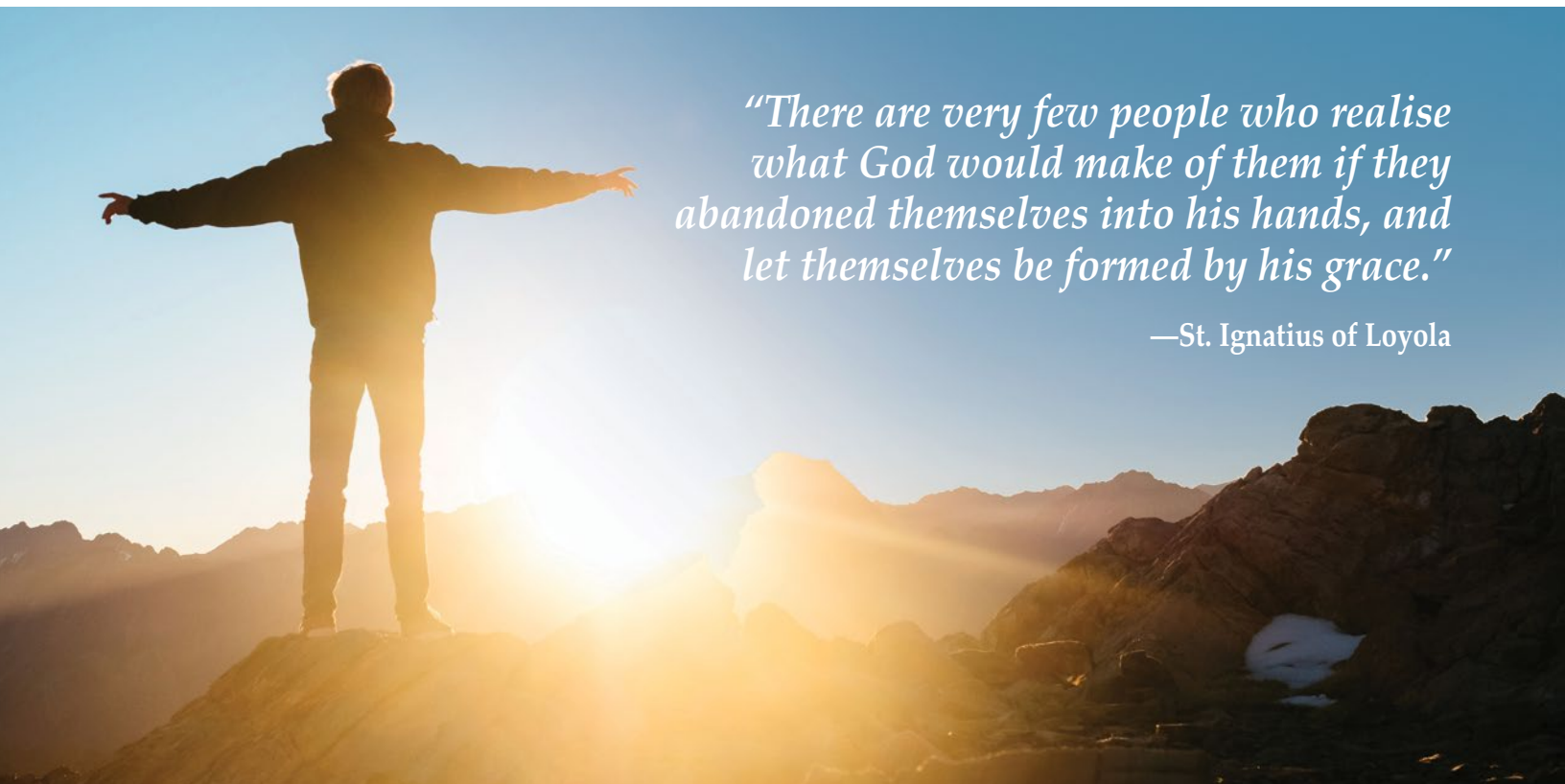
I began discerning and eventually realized I was drawn to Franciscan life because of its emphasis on simplicity, poverty, and an incarnational worldview. I then visited friars in Chicago and felt an invitation that it was my way to do real good in this world.

As a Franciscan, I will be able to minister among the poor, put the gospel in action, and join a community with others trying to model their life on St. Francis. While I have no doubt that living in community might sometimes be challenging, I also have a hunch that having Franciscan brothers to be accountable to will help form me into a more loving, more other-focused person.

Prayer & Invitation

Please pray for me and my fellow Labouré classmates as we begin the journey to formation.

Feel free to reach out with any questions you might have at: RichardG@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.

Bailey O'Hare
Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan

Latonja Taylor
Franciscan Monastery of St. Clare (Cincinnati)

Israel Kidda
Capuchin Franciscans, Province of St. Mary

Brendan Devine
Diocese of Fréjus-Toulon (France)

MacLean Andrews
Society of Jesus (Jesuits West)

Mary Sorteberg
Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ

Chrissy Tworek
Handmaids of the Precious Blood

Josh Parmet
Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Timothy Rodriguez
Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Tyler Wisniewski
Byzantine Catholic Archdiocese of Pittsburgh

Joe Coffey
Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Jacob Lozano
Canons Regular of the Immaculate Conception

Isis Leslie
Our Lady of Confidence Carmelite Monastery

Richard Gaunt
Order of Friars Minor (Franciscan Friars)

Melissa Cartwright
Sisters of Bon Secours

Luis Rodarte
Diocese of El Paso

Straton Garrard
Order of Friars Minor (Franciscan Friars)

Devin Ray
St. Bernard Abbey

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!

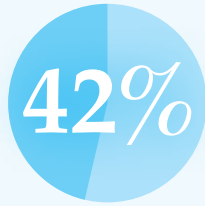
Our vocations story videos are online at: www.RescueVocations.org

LABOURÉ
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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

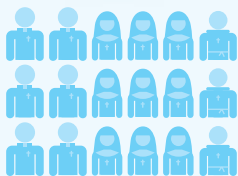
THE LABOURE SOCIETY



- 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?

370+



Assisted into formation to the priesthood or religious life

\$10 MILLION



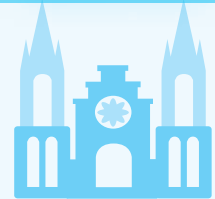
Raised by Labouré aspirants since 2003

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.