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This is my Vocation Story

John Solheid

Community:
Congregation of St. Basil

Alma Mater: St. John's School of Theology and Seminary; M.A.
University of St. Michael's College; Ph.D.

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My name is John Solheid. I am called to serve the Church through education and priestly ministry as a priest with the Congregation of St. Basil. This is my story.

In the Beginning

I grew up in Minnesota, the son of devout Catholics. I was a rebellious child, though, acting up in order to avoid going to Mass on Sundays. I did receive First Communion and Confirmation, but they were mere "rites of passage" to me. In my late teens, I played baseball, and started going to Mass before games in the hopes that doing so would help me to perform better. While that wasn't the purest of motives, it got me back to Mass, and the Lord kept working with me.

Once in college, I fell in love with medieval history. Writing a paper for class, I relied heavily on Thomas Aquinas' writings. Then, I read the book *Confessions* by St. Augustine. It changed my life. Soon, I was frequenting confession and attending Mass regularly, moving to a deeper faith.

My Vocation

I decided to pursue graduate studies at Saint John's School of Theology in Collegeville. Studying with the Benedictines, I began discerning a religious vocation, though I was uncertain about having a "calling." I never heard a voice calling out to me. Then, a priest explained it: which would I regret later in life if I chose not to pursue – Marriage, or Holy Orders? I struggled with this question, and it led me to a very challenging period in my life. I left theology school and worked in the mental health field for five years, eventually deciding to study psychology.

Yet, God had not given up on me. Looking back, I marvel at the variety of experiences that stirred my faith and gently "called" me to Him: reading Thomas Hardy's novel *Jude the Obscure* (about a boy who wants to be a priest, but life gets in his way); an encounter on a quiet, snowy night with a group of deer, which touched me with

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—John Solheid



“Looking back, I marvel at the variety of experiences through which God kindled my faith and gently “called” me to Him.”

—John Solheid

a deep awareness of God’s presence and beauty; a conversation with a Maryknoll priest, who encouraged me to ask St. John’s if they would let me resume my studies. I did -- and they did. The time away, and the experiences I had had, let me return with a completely different mindset. Soon, I had a Master’s Degree in Theology.

Called to Serve

At this point, I was firmly committed to the priesthood. I looked into some religious orders that have monastic ties, but in the end, I didn’t think the monastic life was right for me. Then, I was accepted into the doctoral program in theology at St. Michael’s College in Toronto, where I became familiar with the Basilian Fathers.

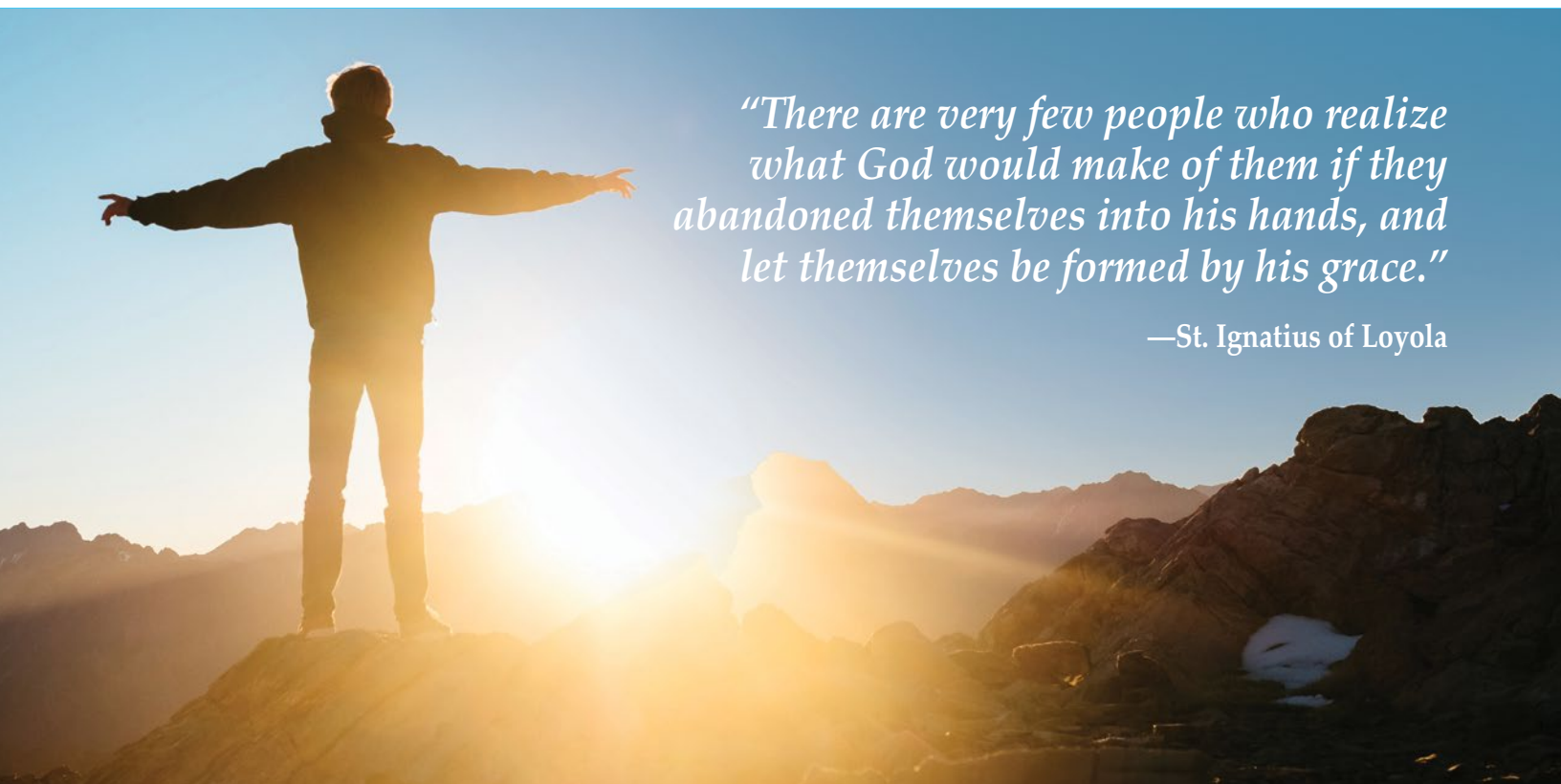
The Basilians are a smaller order, devoted entirely to teaching and academics, but who also live in common and pray together, which gives them a good work-life-prayer balance. They touch all the things that bring me joy: teaching, spirituality, and witness to youth on campus.

I desire to be a priest so that I can preach and teach the glories of our Catholic faith, the rich history and theology which so many do not understand. I want to help God’s people carry their burdens, and offer healing through the sacrament of confession.

Prayer & Invitation

Please pray for me and for my fellow Labouré classmates on our vocation journeys.

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

This means that I am a fundraiser for a class of aspiring priests, sisters and brothers. A recent study confirmed that nearly one out of every two 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 nation.



Lizzie Kenkel
Marian Sisters
of the Diocese
of Lincoln



John Solheid
Congregation
of St. Basil



**Alexandra
Buchmayer**
Passionist Nuns
of St. Joseph
Monastery



Katie Power
Discalced Carmelites
of St. Therese
of Lisieux



Michael Horka
Capuchin Franciscans
of the Province
of St. Joseph



Antonio La Barbera
Diocese
of Lubbock



Amanda Tennyson
Discalced Carmelites
of Our Mother of Mercy
and St. Joseph



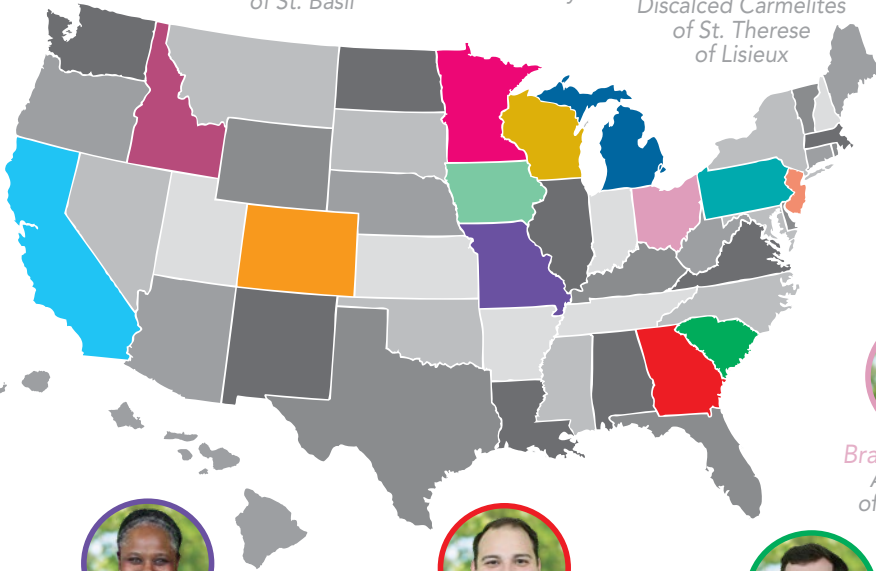
Noah Marangoni
Diocese
of Erie



Kiana Nava
Benedictines of Mary,
Queen of Apostles



David Georgeanni
Diocese
of Trenton



Brandon Yurcisin
Archdiocese
of Philadelphia



Jake Smith
Archdiocese
of Denver



Latonja Taylor
Poor Clares of
Clarisse Monastero S. Maria Del
Paradiso in S. Leonardo



Tony Ramirez
Norbertine Fathers
of Saint Michael's
Abbey



Dan Rochester
Institute of Christ the
King Sovereign Priest



Marie Arnold
Servants of the Lord
and the
Virgin of Matará

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 via The Labouré Society, a Catholic non-profit that helps aspirants like me to answer God's call.

Every aspirant is in serious discernment with a diocese or community and is required to work to liquidate his/her assets in order to make his/her 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 that we can answer God's call together!

Our class video, once available, may be viewed online at www.rescue vocations.org. **LABOURÉ®** HELP RESCUE VOCATIONS®

Why is Labouré Needed?



The average amount of educational loans blocking aspirants in Labouré from answering God's call*



Many religious communities cannot afford to assume their aspirants' loan debts



Most dioceses will allow some debt but have a limited threshold for acceptance



Supported by 80+ bishops & 250+ religious institutions to help deliver their aspirants debt-free

How does the Mission Work?

OUR ASPIRANTS

Are discerning a vocation and have been selected 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, 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 upon joining the program

Trains each aspirant in Catholic-based philanthropy

Mentors each aspirant to build a unified class; each individual works toward the collective goal

Accompanies each aspirant through ongoing accountability and guidance to ensure successful completion of individual and class fundraising plans

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?

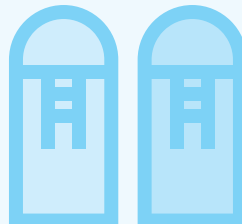
400+



Assisted into formation for the priesthood or religious life

SEPARATE FUNDING SOURCES

100% of aspirant-raised funds go to the direct benefit of aspirants in the program



One organization - two separate silos of funds. Labouré supports vocations at no cost to the aspirant or their institution.

Labouré Staff raise separate funding for overhead and general operation expenses

\$12 MILLION



Raised by Labouré aspirants since 2003

*According to 2022 Forbes Magazine, the national average education loan debt can be as high as \$40k. For aspirants in the Labouré program the average debt is \$60k-80k. 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.