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LABOUR

# This is my Vocation Story

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*My name is Michael Horka. I am called to attend simply and directly to spiritual and other basic human needs as a friar with the Capuchin Franciscans of the Province of St. Joseph. This is my story.*

## In the Beginning

I was born into a practicing Catholic family in suburban Detroit where I regularly attended Mass, was an altar server, and occasionally participated in church youth activities. I was also interested in recycling and protecting God's creation as a youth. My aunt was a Dominican nun and my mother worked as a parish administrator.

In my early 20s, an evangelical co-worker helped awaken an adult faith in me, through a deepened relationship with Jesus in prayer. I finished my undergraduate degree in marketing and interned at a nonprofit that worked with the poor. This experience stirred in me a powerful sense that God is intimately close to those experiencing poverty.

My first job was serving at a parish to better connect the existing community and reach beyond the parish walls. Additional responsibilities also grew in pastoral ministry. In time, I found myself looking for change, and worked in sales and marketing for a few companies. I then pursued a Ph.D. in American Studies. Yet I felt something lacking in my life. Like so many Catholics, I was frustrated by the scandals the Church faced, and the polarized political environment that festered among the faithful. My relationship with the Church felt strained.

*"The various challenges that I had endured in life I now saw as resilience and wisdom, rather than resignation or resentment. I grew in the desire to give myself completely to God."*

—Michael Horka

## My Vocation

Pope Francis's visit to Washington, D.C., which occurred while I was a graduate student there, helped rekindle my faith. The smiling Francis, his welcoming spirit, and his clarion call to renew our commitment to the poor and the environment awakened something in me. The publication of *Laudato Si* greatly influenced my studies and academic work.



*“I felt a sense of peace while discerning a call to the Capuchin Franciscans. The order’s priorities are things about which I care deeply: community, prayer, the environment, and serving the poor.”*

—Michael Horka

Feeling a growing connection with God, I undertook the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola. During a year of daily prayer, reflection, and spiritual direction, I was being transformed. My harder edges were softening. I was feeling called to something more. As a professor, now in Ohio, I found myself daydreaming about giving homilies instead of lectures, and saw teaching and my relationships with students as akin to ministry. The various challenges that I had endured in life I now saw as resilience and wisdom, rather than resignation or resentment. I grew in the desire to give myself completely to God.

## Called to Serve

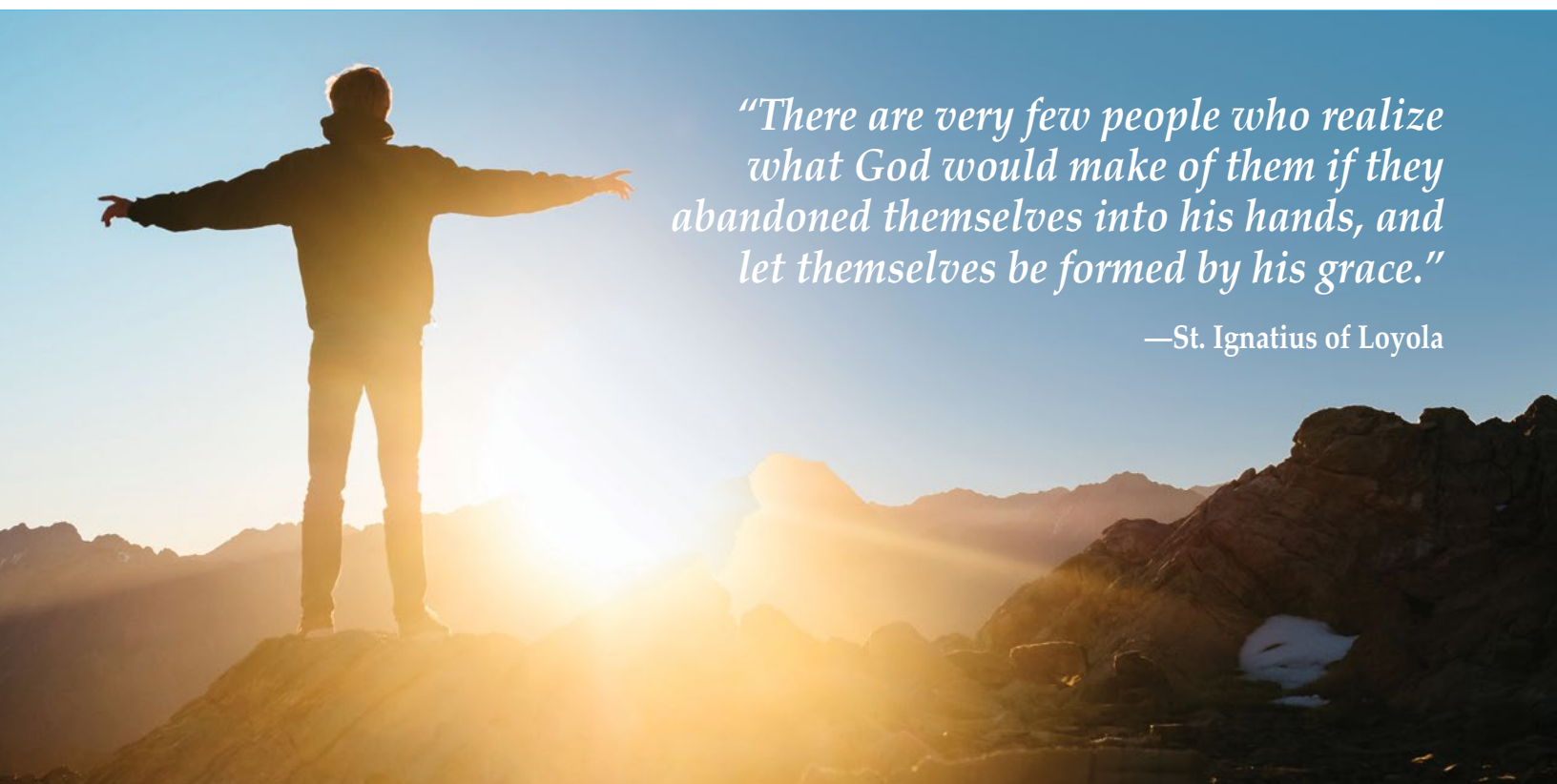
In 2022, I began to feel a strong call and a persistent excitement to pursue ministry, so much so that I could not sleep. This was unusual for me because I can always sleep. I felt a sense of peace while discerning a call to the Capuchin Franciscans. The order’s priorities are things about which I care deeply: community, prayer, the environment, and serving the poor.

I feel that all my life’s experiences have led me to this order and this vocation. Direct aid to the poor is at the core of my passions. God has given me the desire to help people facing issues of environmental injustice and food insecurity. Walking with people on their spiritual journeys, whether as a priest or brother, as a pastor or spiritual director, would be a great honor.

## 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: [MichaelHorka@rescuevocations.org](mailto:MichaelHorka@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 30<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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?

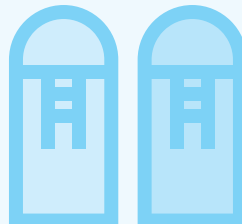
400+



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



Labouré Staff raise separate funding for overhead and general operation expenses

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

\$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.