

# DONATE

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# This is my Vocation Story



Antonio La Barbera

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*My name is Antonio La Barbera. I am called to serve Christ and His Church as a priest with the Diocese of Lubbock. This is my story.*

## In the Beginning

I grew up in a devout family, spending the first years of my life in Italy. My mother consecrated me to the Sacred Heart of Jesus before I was born, with the intention that I would become a priest. As a young child, my playtime was filled with bringing flowers to Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. Anthony and any other of the saints that my grandparents had images and statues of in their home. I also loved hearing the Church bells as they announced the beginning of Mass.

## My Vocation

When my family moved to the United States, I continued to be interested in my Catholic faith throughout high school. As a senior in high school, I was an altar server at a local parish. I attended daily Mass before going to school, and I prayed the Rosary daily. At that time, I met with the vocation director for my home diocese, but I was advised to go out and mature a little before trying to discern a vocation to the priesthood. It took many years for me to be open to the priesthood again, but God kept pursuing me relentlessly.

In college, I left the Catholic Church because I came to believe that the teachings of the Church were not supported by the scriptures. I promised that I would never return. I joined a protestant church and was heavily involved there for many years. I became a leader in that church and helped to lead the communion services. This was a foreshadowing of my future vocation. One day, as I lifted the bread and wine during a communion service, I heard in my heart: "I want you to do this for me for real. I want you to do this in my Church." I was confused because I thought I was already part of the true church.

*“Although I didn’t know it at the time, I was inadvertently discovering the scriptural foundations of Catholic doctrine.”*

—Antonio La Barbera



Throughout the years with this protestant church, I studied the scriptures and began to question that church's teachings. Although I didn't know it at the time, I was inadvertently discovering the scriptural foundations of Catholic doctrine. This led me to leave the church I was a part of and eventually find my way back to the Catholic Church. God led me to good people who explained Catholic teachings that I had found difficult.

After returning to the Catholic Church, I became involved in the life of my parish. I began spiritual direction with the parish priest. He saw my thirst for knowledge and suggested I take classes at the local seminary as a lay student. Being at the Seminary stirred up that call to the priesthood that had been there since childhood. I was convicted of my calling once again and decided to actively follow what God wanted of me and seek His blessing.

## Called to Serve

Now that I am actively discerning a priestly vocation, I can hardly imagine myself doing anything else with the life God has given to me. I want to make sure that the people of God have access to the Sacraments of the One True Church, and are able to learn of the great mercy and love of God that is available to them.

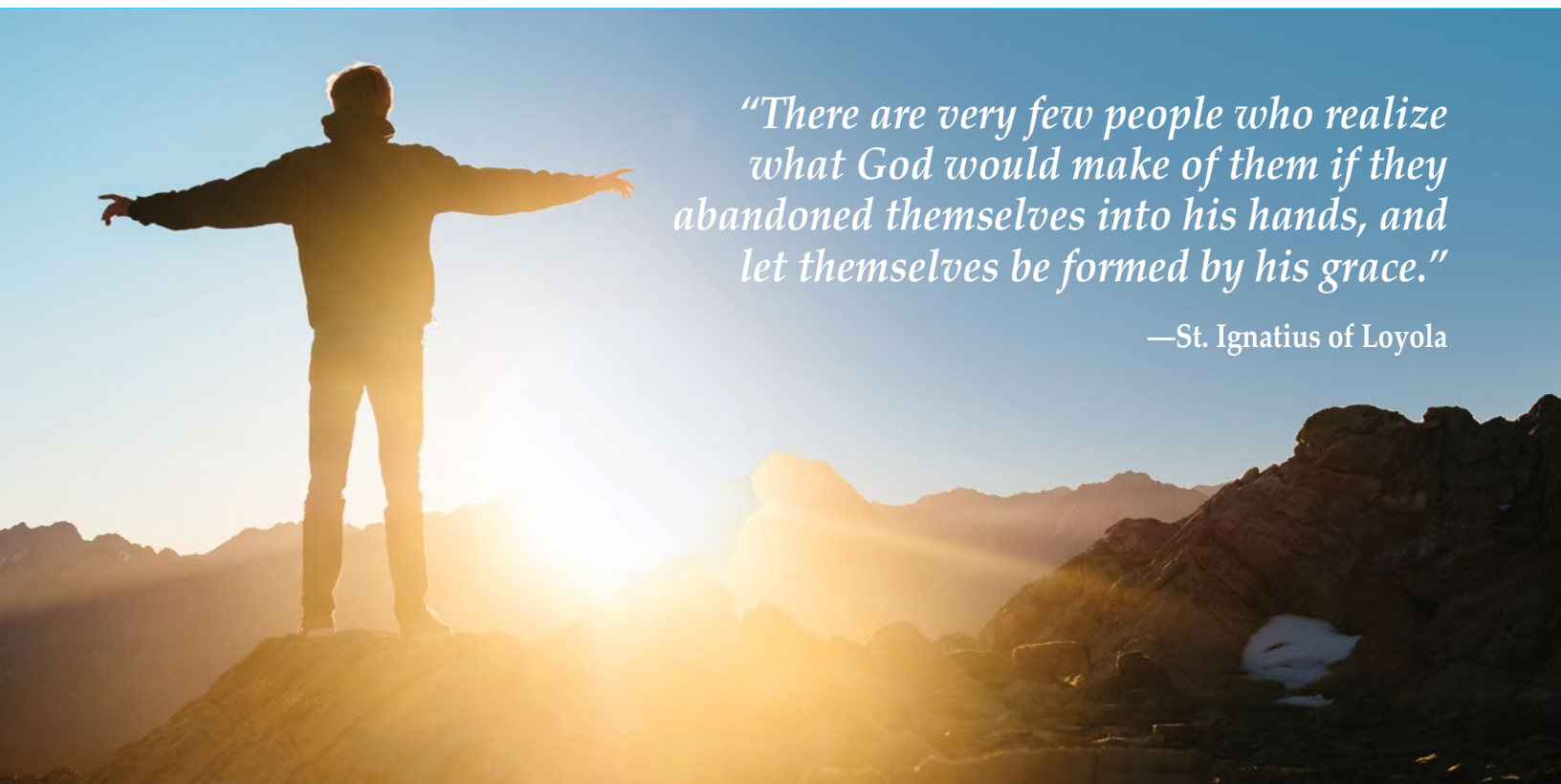
## Prayer & Invitation

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

Feel free to reach out with any questions you might have at: [Antonio@rescuevocations.org](mailto:Antonio@rescuevocations.org).

*"I want to make sure that the people of God have access to the Sacraments of the One True Church, and are able to learn of the great mercy and love of God that is available to them."*

—Antonio La Barbera



*"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?

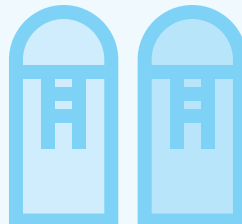
400+



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



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.