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This is my Vocation Story

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My name is Ryan Graham. I am called to find God in all things as a priest with the Society of Jesus. This is my story.

In the Beginning

Though I did not grow up in a practicing Catholic household, I did have some exposure to the faith through my grandparents. I had a challenging relationship with my parents and as a young adult was estranged from my mom. Months before her death, my mom began attending Mass with my grandmother. I decided to join them, and to work on our relationship, which was completely transformed through this time together. When my mom died, her parish paid the expenses for a Catholic burial. That act of generosity touched my heart.

God really got my attention later when I was stranded overnight in a train station in Los Angeles after being robbed. I bargained with God, promising that I would attend Mass if He got me through the night. I did get through the night, but uncomfortably, which in my mind meant that God had not met His end of the deal. So, I dismissed the idea of going to Mass.

Yet a question lingered: why did I make the deal at all? I knew that God was not transactional. Still, I had felt compelled to reach out to God. Within, I knew that impulse to bargain with God deserved exploration.

“My vocation does not consume energy; my vocation creates energy. The secular world is fixated on taking, but I choose to give.”

—Ryan Graham

My Vocation

I approached a colleague with some of my faith questions. He directed me to his parish, where I wound up joining an RCIA class. I began to see the unmistakable fingerprints of the Holy Spirit throughout my life. God had provided reconciliation with my mom, had cared for her burial, and had protected me when I called out in fear.

While I attended church, I still didn't really prioritize my faith. Instead, I focused on worldly concerns. At one point, I came across Jesus' words at the Last Supper: “No servant is greater than his master.” I realized that if I made myself a servant to something insignificant — orienting my life to the attainment of any particular thing — that thing would rule me. If I put God first, orienting my life to God's will, I would be limited only by the limitless.



“Our Lord will save us subtly, accomplishing his perfect work through our imperfect vessels.”

—Ryan Graham

Living with this realization, my life began to improve immeasurably. The more I relied on God, the less I relied on other things for happiness. I found true fulfillment in my relationship with God.

On All Saints’ Day in 2021, I spent a day in prayerful meditation. I could see clearly how the Lord was transforming me into a loving and forgiving person. In surrendering myself to God, I had found peace. I desired to spread God’s peace, and was drawn to begin discerning a call to the priesthood.

Called to Serve

I was led to the Society of Jesus. From the very first event I attended, I felt at home. I am drawn to the Jesuits’ intellectual and spiritual tradition, as well as to their commitment to mission - being sent into the world to save souls.

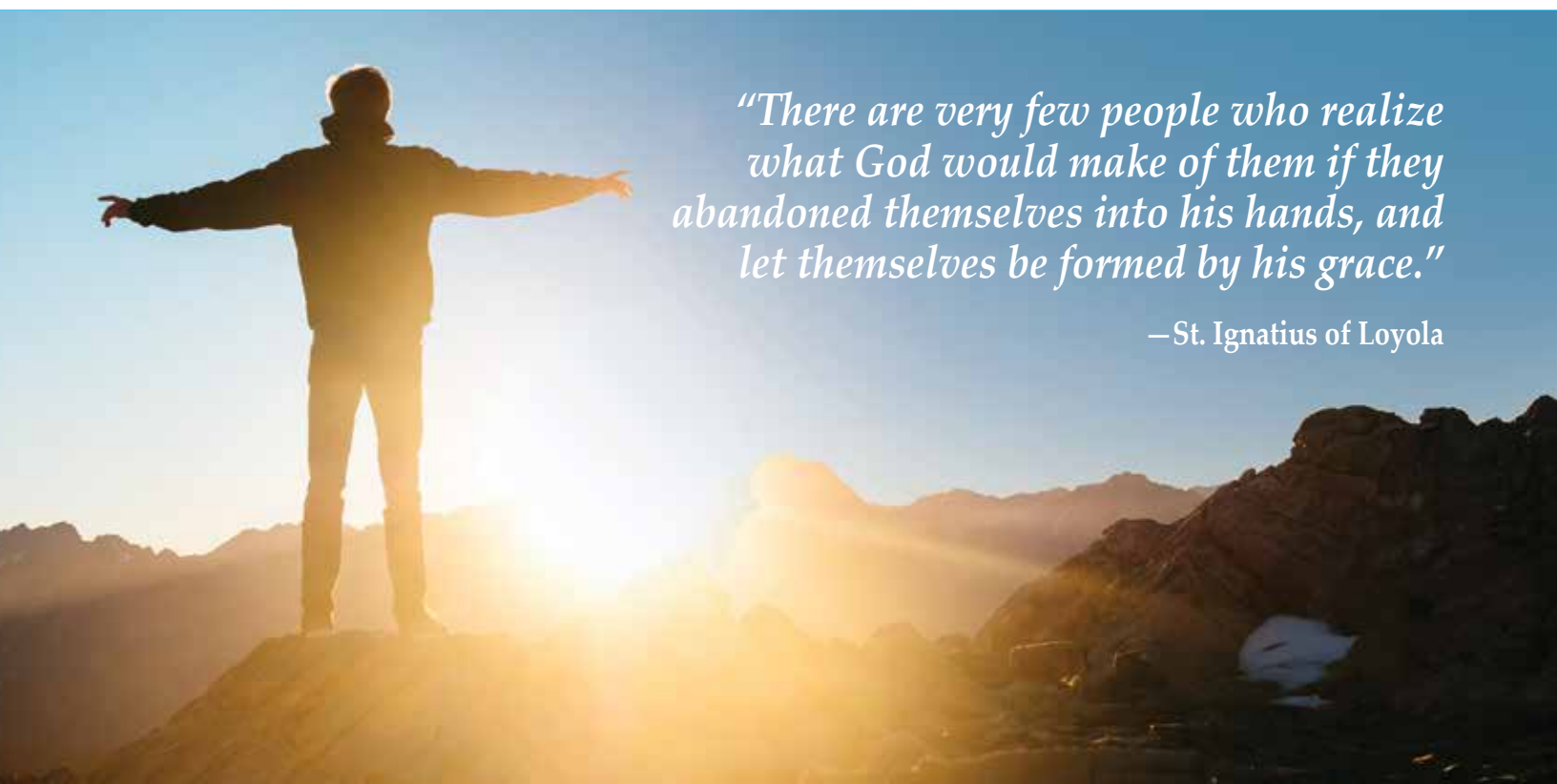
As I continue to discern with them, I have had key moments of confirmation. The first was the deep sense of peace I experienced on the candidate’s weekend. Later, on a five-day silent retreat, I was encouraged to take a walk with Jesus and have a conversation with him. During this walk, I was able to see through nature’s splendor the hand of a loving God who was calling me.

Through the Jesuits, I hope to answer this call of love, serving the greater Church and the Lord by bringing God into the world. I will surrender myself to whatever mission the Society assigns when the Lord so desires.

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: Ryan@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. Many discerners are blocked from entering seminary and religious communities due to student loan debt. It is the only thing that prevents them from formation to become a priest, sister or brother. My classmates are discerning all over the nation.



Christian Rickert
Dominican Friars
(Province of St. Albert the Great)



John Solheid
Congregation
of St. Basil



Tyler Martensen
Order of
Friars Minor
(Franciscan Friars)



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



Antonio La Barbera
Diocese
of Lubbock



Brian Hurley
Order of
St. Basil the Great
(Ukrainian Rite)



Jake Smith
Archdiocese
of Denver



Katie Power
Discalced Carmelites
of St. Therese
of Lisieux



Michael Zafuto
Diocese of Memphis



Josué Limon
Diocese of Tucson



Matt Selzer
Diocese
of Pittsburgh



Ryan Graham
Society of Jesus
(U.S. West Province)



Noah Marangoni
Diocese
of Erie



Brandon Yurcisin
Archdiocese
of Philadelphia



David Georgeanni
Diocese
of Trenton



Aislinn Torrance
Sister Servants
of the Most Sacred
Heart of Jesus



Juanita Rios
Benedictine Sisters
of Transfiguration
Hermitage



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



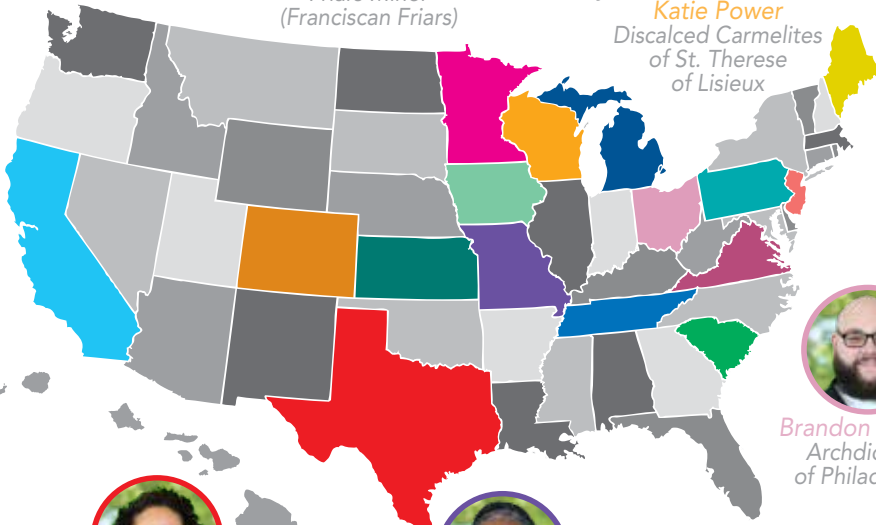
Matthew Brewer
Diocese of Memphis



Marie Arnold
Servants of the Lord
and the
Virgin of Matará



Joe McIntire
Archdiocese of San
Francisco



With your help, we will rebuild the Church!

My goal is to raise \$60,000 (the average student loan amount) before December 31st 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.rescuevocations.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 and/or formation expenses

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 educational 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?

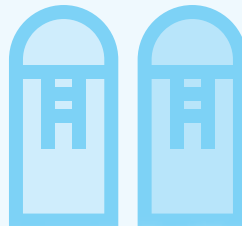
400+



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.

\$13 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.