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LABOUR

This is my Vocation Story

Stephen Ferrazzano

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Diocese of Winona-Rochester

Alma Mater:
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My name is Stephen Ferrazzano. I am called to serve Christ and His Church as a priest with the Diocese of Winona-Rochester. This is my story.

In the Beginning

In my early years, I experienced loneliness and did not have much of a faith. After some conversion experiences in my family, we began attending protestant services more regularly. The small amount of Christian faith I carried into adolescence soon grew lukewarm, and as a teen, I was focused on the world and sought only my own happiness. Church wasn't a priority for me and I convinced myself that God didn't care. This ultimately brought me only more anxiety and pain, as I pushed God further and further into the background.

Yet a spark of God's love remained in my heart, and by the end of high school, I decided to tend to the spark and study theology. I thought I might become a protestant minister with a wife and children of my own someday.

“...by the end of high school, I decided to study theology.”

– Stephen Ferrazzano

My Vocation

As I began my studies, I was initially more hostile towards the Catholic Church, but God wasn't finished with me. He blessed me with a love of history, and as I studied theology and history side-by-side, I realized that the Catholic Church is true. Some solid theology classes helped me learn more about this truth.

I was drawn to ancient hermits and beautiful Catholic liturgies, and entered RCIA (the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults – classes in the Catholic Faith) and converted at the age of 19. Immediately, I began to consider the priesthood.

Further spiritual development was needed, though, so I finished my studies and entered the workforce. Soon, my vocation director prompted me to apply to the seminary. At seminary, with God's grace, I began to be formed into a different man. Trust in God grew within me and broke through the hard shell around my heart.



Called to Serve

God has rescued me and I want to share God's love and mercy with all people, showing them through my own experience that God never gives up on His children. As I think about the priesthood, I look forward to hearing confessions, granting absolution, and helping people start anew with God's grace. The sacraments are truly life-giving. Just as I have received new life from them, I want to help others experience the sacraments in this same way.

God truly has a sense of humor, as He brought an anti-Catholic not only to conversion, but then to repentance and now to the seminary! I'm living proof of His humor, His mercy, and His love. I hope to help people as a priest by bringing them back to God to experience new life in Christ.

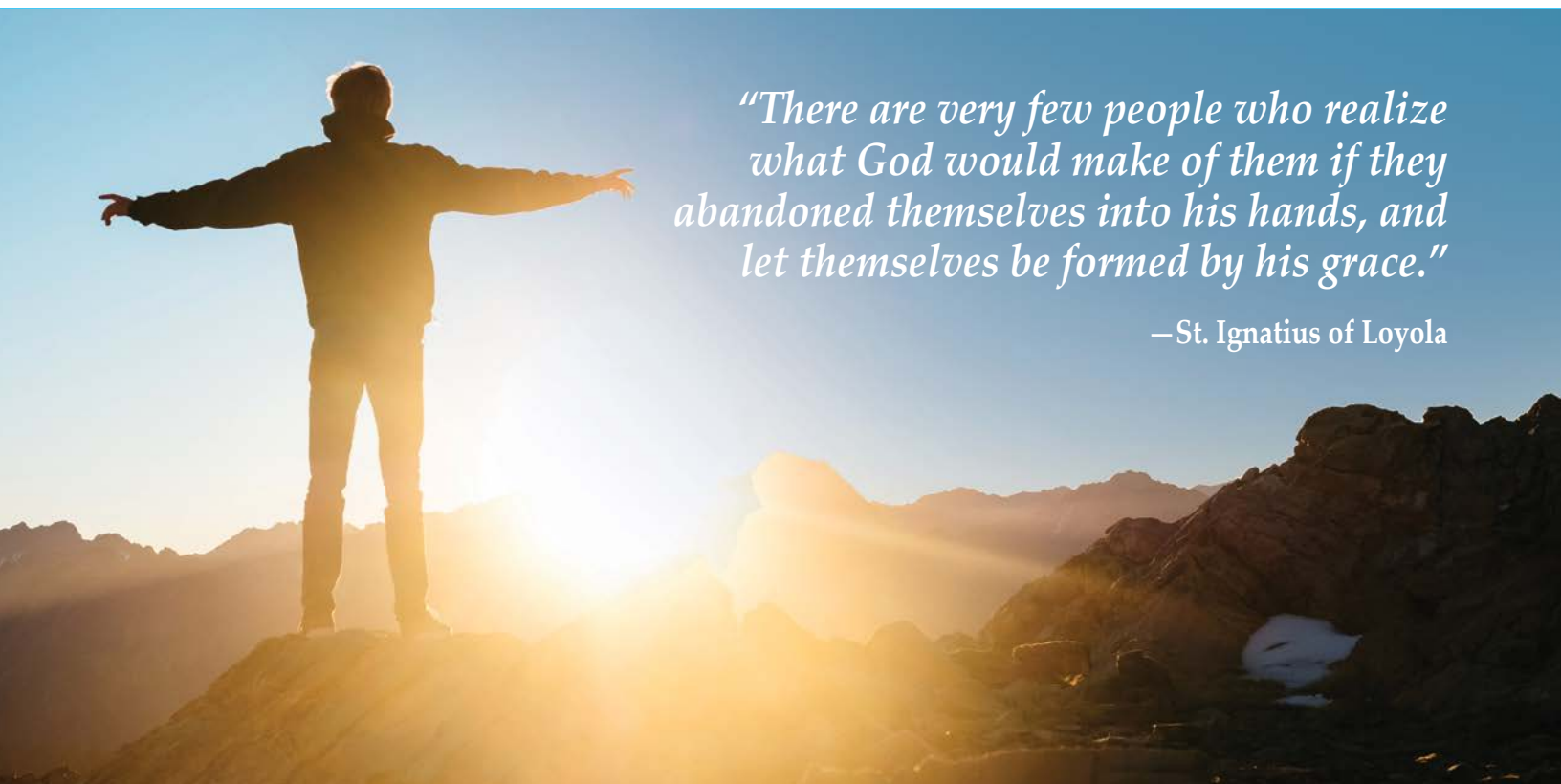
*"God has rescued me and
I want to share God's
love and mercy with all
people."*

—Stephen Ferrazzano

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:
StephenFerrazzano@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.



Stephen Ferrazzano
Diocese
of Winona-Rochester



Tyler Martensen
Order of
Friars Minor
(Franciscan Friars)



Madeleine McIlheran
Discalced Carmelite
Nuns, Monastery of
the Holy Cross



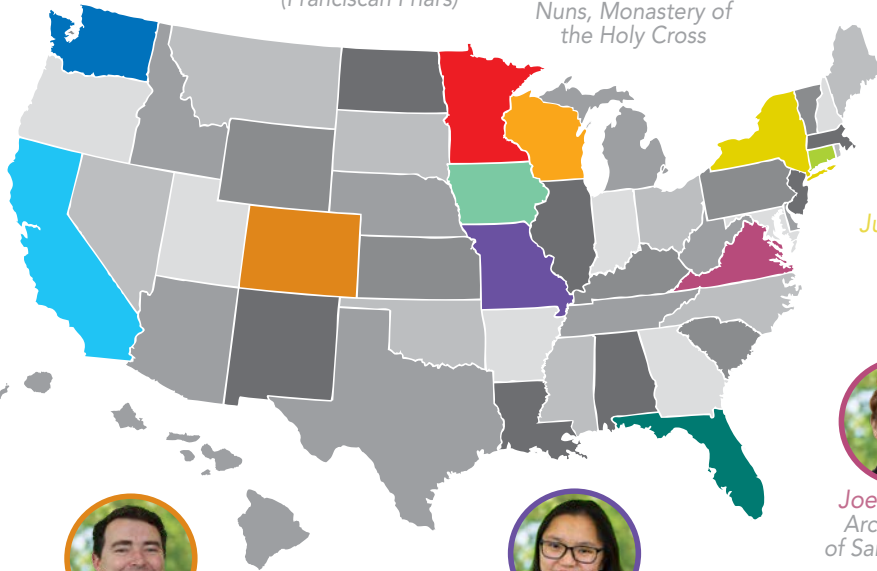
Becky Hall
Sister Servants of the
Most Sacred Heart
of Jesus



Tess Austin
Daughters of Mary
Help of Christians -
Salesian Sisters of
St. John Bosco



Clayton Wise
Archdiocese
of Seattle



Justin Hollingshead
Diocese
of Albany



Cristal Quinones
Dominican Sisters of
Our Lady of the
Rosary of Fatima



Rosemary Bravo
Sister Servants of the
Blessed Sacrament



Aislinn Torrance
Sister Servants
of the Most Sacred
Heart of Jesus



Joe McIntire
Archdiocese
of San Francisco



Steven Webster
Our Lady of the
Holy Spirit Monastery
(Trappists)



Jake Smith
Archdiocese
of Denver



Hannah Lifka
Society of Our Lady of
the Most Holy Trinity
(SOLT)

With your help, we will rebuild the Church!

My goal is to raise \$60,000 (the average student loan amount) during this current six-month class of 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 & 300+ 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?

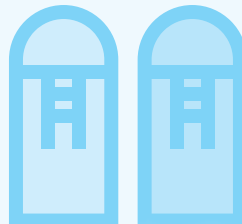
400+



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.