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This is my Vocation Story



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My name is Abraham Barahmeh. I am called to serve Christ and His Church as a priest with the Melkite Eparchy of Newton. This is my story.

In the Beginning

I was raised in the Melkite Church, one of the Eastern-Rite Catholic Churches -- in full communion with Rome, but preserving the heritage of the Byzantine liturgical and spiritual traditions. As a child, I served at the altar in both Byzantine and Roman Catholic parishes. This early exposure to the Eucharist and the depth of both liturgies made a deep and lasting impression on me.

I studied computer information systems in college. At graduation, I became an engineer for a U.S. defense contractor. This was a stable, respectable, and well-paying career, one many would consider ideal. Yet something inside me still felt unsettled. I began to discern more intentionally whether God might be asking me to leave behind the comfort of my career and pursue the priesthood.

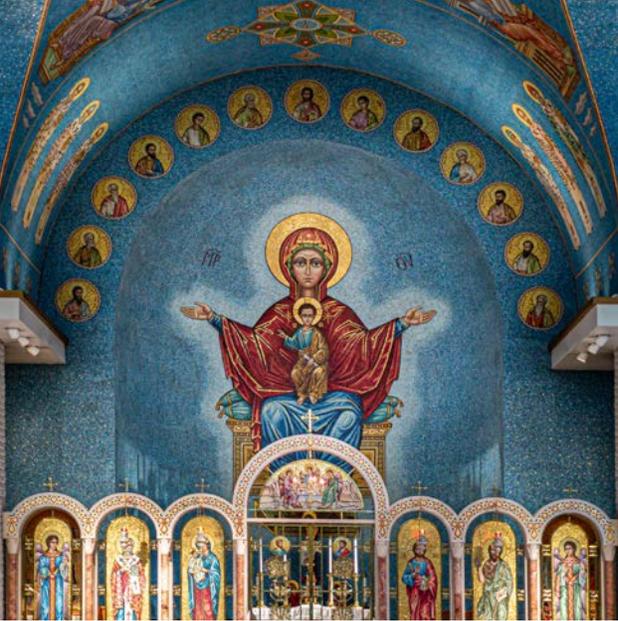
“Might God be asking me to leave behind the comfort of my career and pursue the priesthood?”

– Abraham Barahmeh

My Vocation

The decision wasn't an easy one. The thought of six years in seminary without personal security or clear financial support was intimidating. Still, I felt a constant whisper from God, reminding me that fulfillment doesn't always come through worldly success. Saying “yes” to my vocation was the hardest decision I've ever made, but I put aside fear and trusted that God would provide. He did.

Now, I am at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, in formation for the priesthood in the Eparchy of Newton, the Melkite Catholic eparchy that spans the entire United States. I'm currently a Subdeacon active in Red Door Ministry in downtown Pittsburgh, feeding and clothing the homeless. Such work allows me to serve the poor as Christ Himself did.



Called to Serve

What excites me most about the priesthood is the opportunity to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, and to build church communities that are actively engaged with the world around them. The priesthood should be a bridge, reaching outward and drawing others into the Church.

One of the most powerful ways the Melkite Church builds such bridges is through hafla: a gathering full of music, food, dancing, and community. Our parishes host these events not only as a celebration of our culture, but as a way to welcome others into the life of our Church. During a hafla, we offer church tours, explain our traditions, and give people a taste (physically and spiritually) of what the Melkite tradition is all about. It's in these moments that seeds are planted. Those who come only for food and music often walk away with a desire for God stirring their hearts.

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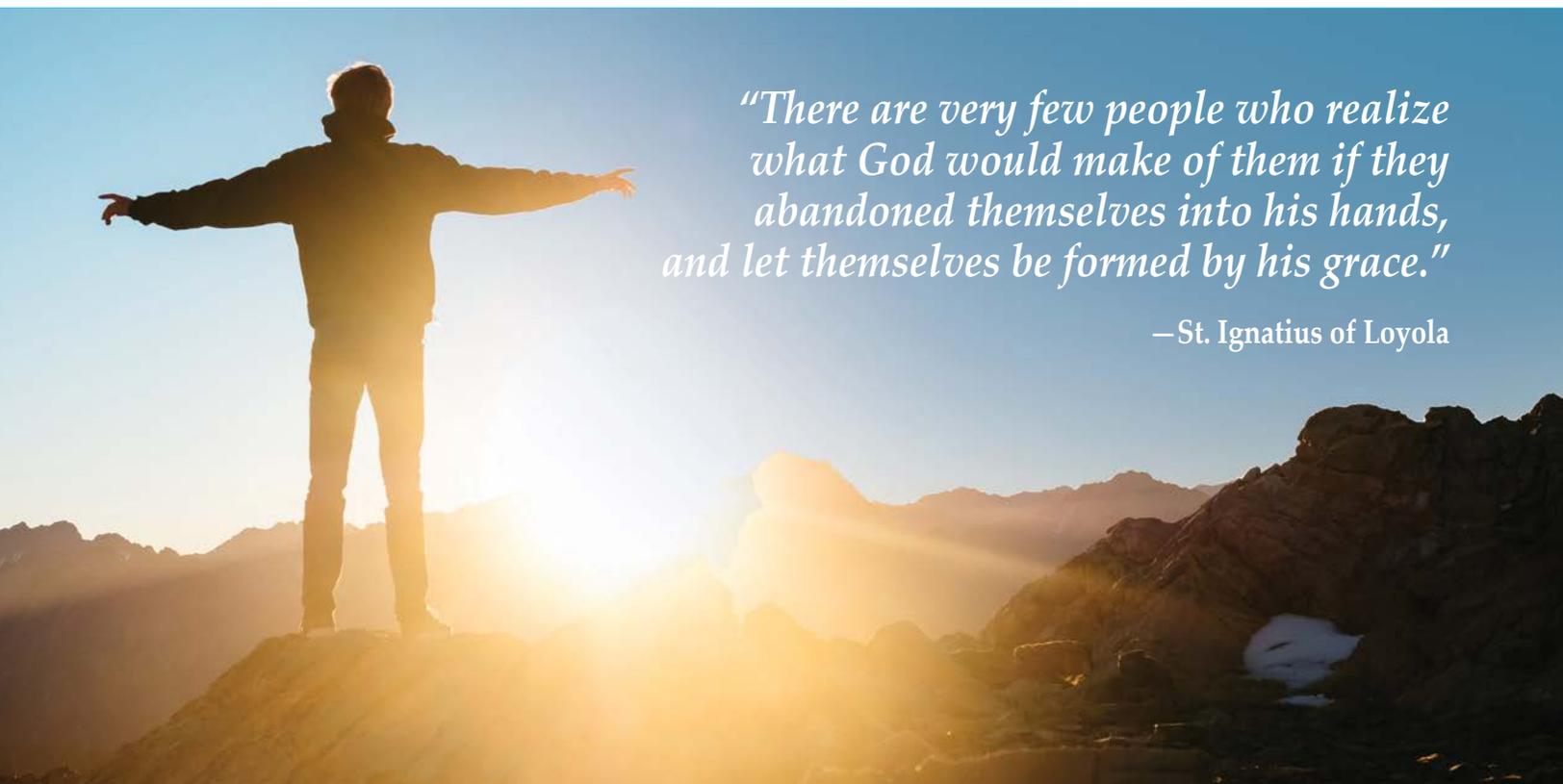
— Abraham Barahmeh

In a world increasingly isolated and divided, the Church must be a place of welcome and genuine love, where people experience God not only through words and doctrine, but also community and celebration. Our world needs priests who are both rooted in tradition and active in mission, who can proclaim the timeless truth of the Gospel in a way that meets people where they are. Whether it's through chanting the Liturgy, offering the Eucharist, leading parish councils, or hosting hafla, I want to serve the Church as a bridge between tradition and modern life... between God and His people.

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: Abraham@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 pursuing seminary / religious formation due to student loan debt - and that's not the only obstacle. Many of our religious institutions struggle to pay for candidates' seminary / formation. My classmates are discerning all over the nation.

Danny Sanchez Garcia
Diocese of Yakima

Tim Zappa
Diocese of Winona-Rochester

Grant Sharstrom
Diocese of Duluth

Charlie Barnick
Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

Brother Jacob Mazur-Batistoni
Dominican Friars of the Province of Saint Albert the Great

Isaac Heard
Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest

Basia Cdnno Rozbicka
Monastic Family of Bethlehem of the Assumption of the Virgin and of Saint Bruno

Gavin Haut
Diocese of Fargo

Matt Gibson
Archdiocese of Chicago

Abraham Barahmeh
Melkite Eparchy of Newton

William Coupe
Melkite Eparchy of Newton

Gretchen Kleinschmit
School Sisters of Christ the King

Alexis Jodon
Children of Mary

Nick Krivacs
Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Chad Durante
Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Harrison Otto
Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Alex Broussard
Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Victoria Villanueva
Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians / Salesian Sisters of Saint John Bosco

Brother Alonso Salas
Dominican Friars of the Province of Saint Martin de Porres

Deacon Mark Le Roy
Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Adam Marquart
Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

Jacob Naccash
Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

With your help, we will rebuild the Church!

My goal is to raise \$40,000 during this current 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 / eparchy 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 debt blocking aspirants in Labouré from answering God's call*



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



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



Rising formation costs often limit missionary activities and care of aging priests and religious.

How does the Mission Work?

OUR ASPIRANTS

Are discerning a vocation and have been selected into a diocese / eparchy 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?

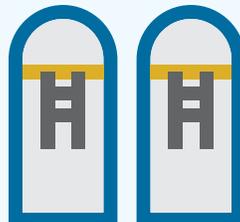
430+ INSTITUTIONS



Supported by 350+ religious institutions & 80+ bishops to help deliver their aspirants debt-free

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 425 Labouré aspirants assisted into formation for the priesthood or religious life 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 \$80k-100k. 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 program needs.