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This is my Vocation Story

Gretchen Kleinschmit

Community:
School Sisters of Christ the King

Alma Mater:
Benedictine College

Phone:
(402) 360-3703

Email:
GretchenKleinschmit@rescuevocations.org

My name is Gretchen Kleinschmit. I am called to joyfully give our Sovereign Lord all that I am as a sister with the School Sisters of Christ the King. This is my story.

In the Beginning

I grew up in a devout Catholic family. We participated in church activities, regularly discussed the Faith at home, and were encouraged to attend daily Mass when possible. In addition, it was very important to my parents that my siblings and I all attend Catholic school. From a young age, I had a desire to live for God.

My faith life really began to grow when I was in the 8th grade. I felt an urge from Our Lady to draw closer to her, and began to make visits to a statue of Mary we had on our property. Slowly, I started to relate my heart to her, and from there, I began to hunger for something more. My dad suggested that I visit our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament at church, so soon I began to do so daily. I developed an affection for an image of Christ the King – the king of my own heart – and a desire grew within me to live for Him alone.

“...a desire grew within me to live for God alone.”

–Gretchen Kleinschmit

My Vocation

I remember the first moment I solemnly voiced my desire to become a religious sister – I was 12 years old and sitting on our living room couch. I had laid out for my dad and older sister my ideas about becoming a nun and living in a monastery hidden deep in the woods, living a simple life and giving myself entirely to God.

Despite my desire for the life of a cloistered religious, I became intrigued by the School Sisters of Christ the King (CK's), whose mailings my parents received. I began collecting the periodicals produced by the Sisters, which were full of thought-provoking reflections. During my senior year of high school, I decided to visit their community. Their joy and way of life made me feel at home. I found myself either already practicing or desiring to practice many of their devotions, yet was hesitant to fully embrace the possibility of joining them, as I thought that life as a cloistered nun was the only way I could be closest to God and live for Him alone.

I attended Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas for two years, and then took a gap semester after my second year to take more time to discern my major. With religious life still on my heart, I decided to use the time to discern that instead. I lived at a retreat house on the grounds of the School Sisters of Christ the King, participating in a program they host for young women who desire to live in community while discerning God's will for their life—not necessarily



"I want everyone to experience the joy of belonging to God!"

—Gretchen Kleinschmit

with the CKs, but with any community or vocation, deepening one's relationship with God via formation and spiritual accompaniment.

After two years of considering various religious communities, my regular spiritual director saw that I needed someone else to visit with about discernment. I went on a silent retreat during Holy Week, and the Lord helped me sort through my fears and see that I need not be afraid of being far from Him if I did not enter a cloistered community. Jesus reinforced within me that He desires that I be close to Him. I learned that I just needed to take a next step. I was able to embrace God's invitation to discern with the School Sisters of Christ the King, and soon after, I asked to enter with them.

Called to Serve

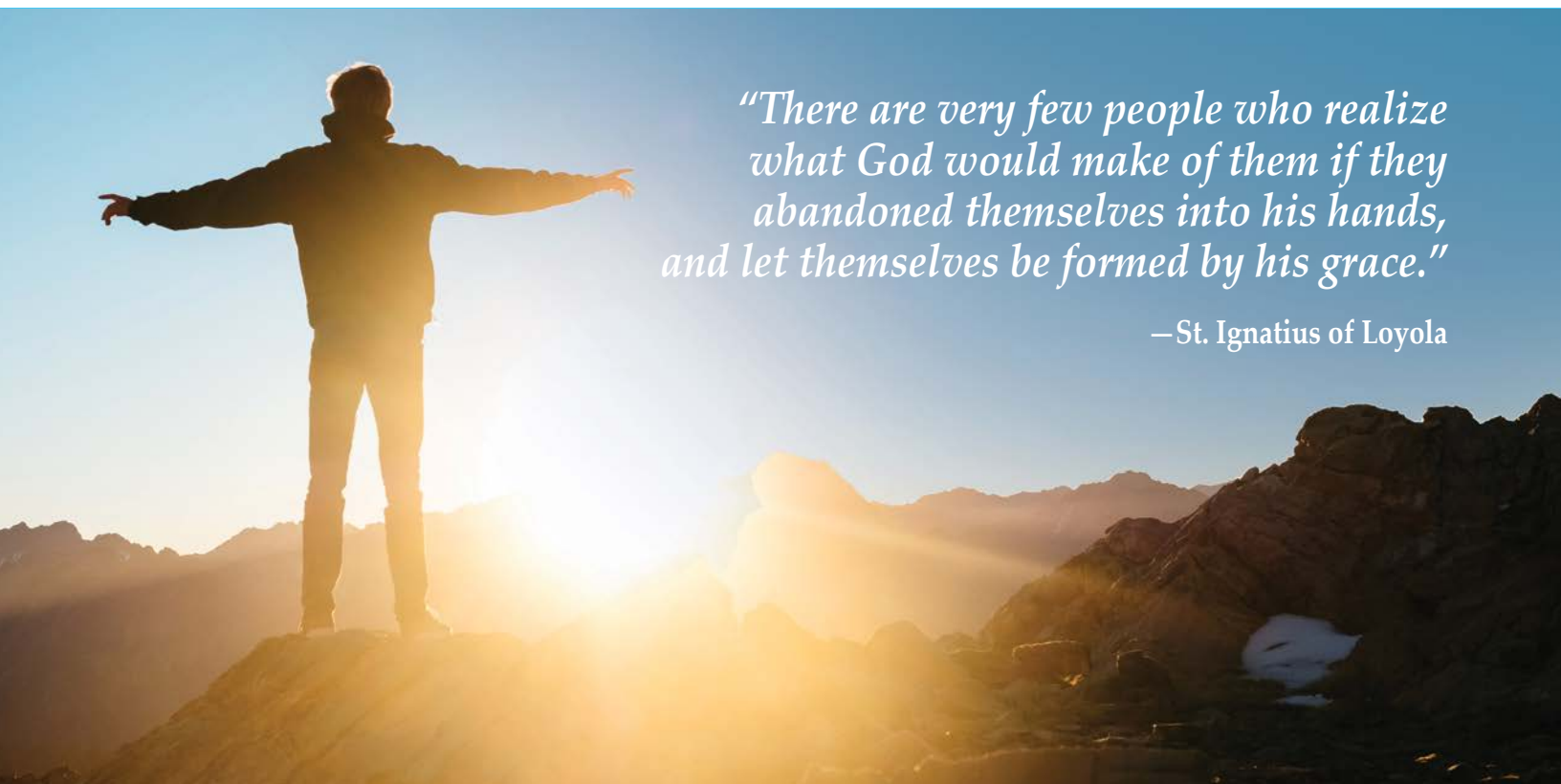
The Schools Sisters of Christ the King are a religious community in the Catholic Diocese of Lincoln whose charism is "joyful fidelity to Christ the King". Their sole apostolate is Catholic education and they do a variety of work in the diocese in the education field.

I am excited to begin my next steps and believe the charism of the CK's has been growing in my heart as I live simply to be close to the King of Heaven and Earth. Letting Christ reign over all the facets of my life, letting Him be my sole center, is all I have ever wanted. Flowing from this belonging to Him is the education apostolate. I want everyone to experience the joy of belonging to God as we all do through our baptism, and to enjoy the light of truth, beauty, and goodness found in Him! I look forward to bringing souls to this fountain of endless mercy and goodness and to extending the reign of Christ the King in the hearts of all I encounter.

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: GretchenKleinschmit@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.

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?



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



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?

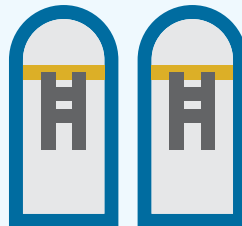
430+ INSTITUTIONS



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.