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This is my Vocation Story

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My name is Ezra Mwaura. I am called to serve Christ and His Church as a priest with the Diocese of Kansas City - St. Joseph. This is my story.

In the Beginning

I was born in Kinangop, Kenya to a devout Catholic family and into a tight-knit community. In Kenya, the saying “it takes a village to raise a child” is lived out literally. Though I was a rambunctious and mischievous child, those years were filled with joy.

When I was seven years old, my family and I received our Green Cards and immigrated to Kansas City, Missouri. We were hosted by lapsed Catholic relatives and began to attend a local non-denominational church, where my parents enjoyed worshipping in their mother tongue alongside fellow Kenyans. I joined the worship band and loved the enthusiastic atmosphere. I was devastated when my parents decided to return to the Catholic Church during my junior year of high school, as I felt I was being taken from my friends.

Upon joining the youth group at our new parish, though, I discovered a community of Catholics with vibrant, joyful, real relationships with Jesus. The turning point for me was the year following my Confirmation, when I attended a Steubenville youth conference and encountered the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist on a deep, personal level for the first time.

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—Ezra Mwaura

My Vocation

After the Steubenville conference, my new Catholic friends and I formed a Benedictine Brothers group, focused on spiritual support and discernment. This group laid the foundation for me to begin understanding the importance of spiritual brotherhood. I was accepted to Cornell University at age 16, and there I found an alluring world of distractions and secular pleasures.

Despite my efforts to fill the emptiness within myself, I was left feeling broken and alone. Eventually, my soul



"I long to serve God's people through the Sacraments, especially through the Eucharist and Reconciliation."

— Ezra Mwaura

broke under the weight of my sins. I went back to Confession, began attending daily Mass, and deepened my prayer life. I prayed that God would do whatever He willed with my life. When He responded with a call to the priesthood, I resisted. I thought, "Lord, anything but that!"

Yet God's calling didn't go away, and though I pursued a career and even considered marriage, I felt restless and lost. My heart was torn between worldly success and a deeper call from God.

Called to Serve

When I finally decided to commit fully to answering God's call, I knew that I wanted to serve as a diocesan priest in the Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph, as that was where I first encountered authentic, vibrant Catholicism.

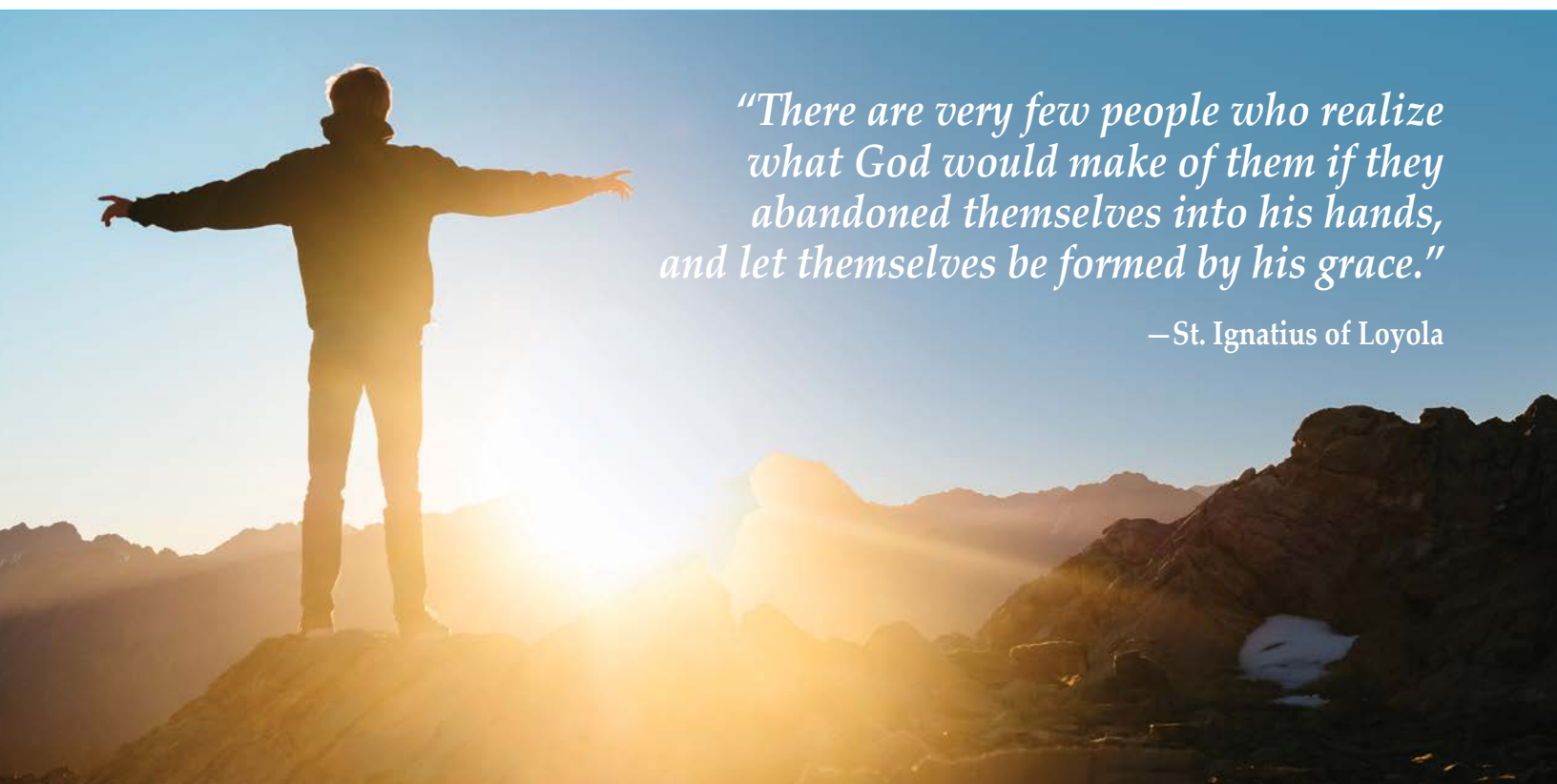
I long to serve God's people through the Sacraments, especially through the Eucharist and Reconciliation. I want to be an *Alter Christus*, Another Christ, to show people the mercy, love, and joy that God has so abundantly poured into my life.

This is my journey: one of falling away and being brought back, of hearing His voice and learning to say yes. I entrust the next steps of my journey to His providence, confident that He who has begun this good work in me will bring it to completion.

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: Ezra@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

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.



My goal is to raise \$60,000 during this current class of The Labouré Society, a Catholic non-profit that helps aspirants like me to answer God's call.

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.

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. **HELP RESCUE VOCATIONS®**

LABOURÉ®

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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

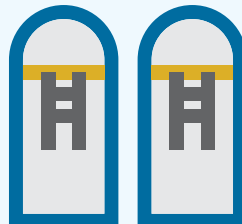
What Has Labouré Accomplished?

350+ 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

\$14+ MILLION



Raised by 430 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.