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This is my Vocation Story

Clayton Wise

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My name is Clayton Wise. I am called to serve Christ and His Church as a priest with the Archdiocese of Seattle. This is my story.

In the Beginning

I grew up in a small, rural town in northwestern Washington State and was blessed to be part of a close, loving community. I was baptized Catholic and loved the faith community at our small mission church. However, after my dad died, it was difficult for my family to attend Mass regularly. Despite this challenge, I still had a keen interest in the faith, an interest that was intensified upon discovering and attempting to read a Bible that had been left to me by my dad.

In response to this interest, and the questions I raised, my mom decided to send me to church with my paternal grandparents. They went to a Presbyterian church and it was in that church that my faith in the Lord began to blossom. At this new church, I was a sponge. I learned to read the bible, love scripture, and to make friends with everyone. I grew in my faith as much as I could in that church, which I attended up until the age of 17.

*"...in the walls of
quarantine, doubts began
to grow and fester."*

—Clayton Wise

Then my faith began to waiver. Brought about by the stresses of becoming an adult, searching for colleges, and, most of all, the COVID-19 pandemic, in the walls of quarantine, doubts began to grow and fester.

At the same time that my faith was beginning to waiver, a friend of mine was becoming Catholic. Through our discussions, and despite my attempts to save him from "the errors of Catholicism," I was drawn back to the Catholic Church. After some debate and study, I became convinced of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. I returned to the parish where I had been baptized, and made my first confession in a decade. Following the absolution, our parish priest said joyfully, "I'm glad you came. Welcome home!"

My Vocation

I dove headfirst into the Faith after that confession. In college, I found my love for liturgy and good catechesis. I became increasingly involved in the parish and served in a variety of ways, despite the fact that the church was four miles away and I often needed to either walk or bike in the cold Washington rain.



*"He was calling me to be
a priest and to live my
faith in a deeper way."*

—Clayton Wise

When I was younger, in the protestant world, I had dreamed of being a preacher and giving fiery sermons from the pulpit. After returning to the Church, I initially feared the commitments involved with being a Catholic priest. Yet I knew within that I could not simply dismiss the possibility of the priesthood.

I took a job as an administrative assistant in a local parish and it was here that I learned what service really meant. There was a fire in our parish office and I spent months sorting burnt and wet marriage documents in a cramped closet. Even in such less than ideal circumstances, I found that I was happy to be serving the parish. One day, I found an envelope addressed to the former pastor. On learning that he was the current vocation director for our diocese, I was compelled to reach out to him and begin a conversation about discerning the priesthood.

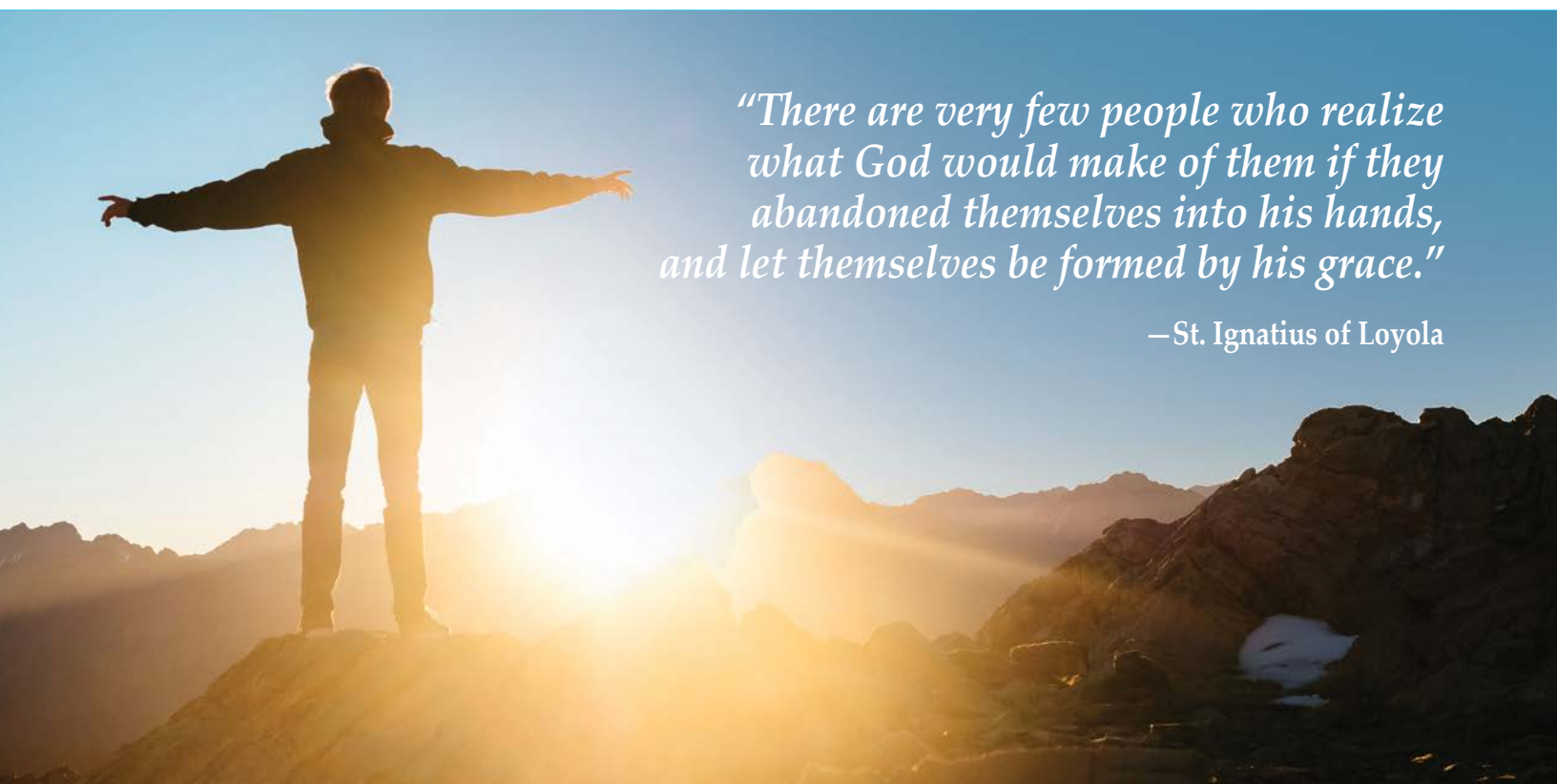
Called to Serve

After three years of discernment, I began to see how God was letting me know what he wanted me to do with my life. He was calling me to be a priest and to live my faith in a deeper way. Working in the day-to-day life of a parish enabled me to fall in love with the people and the liturgy. I found my joy serving God's people through ministry. My greatest joy would be to offer them the Mass and to share Christ's love for them throughout the peaks and valleys of life.

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:
Clayton@rescuevocations.org.

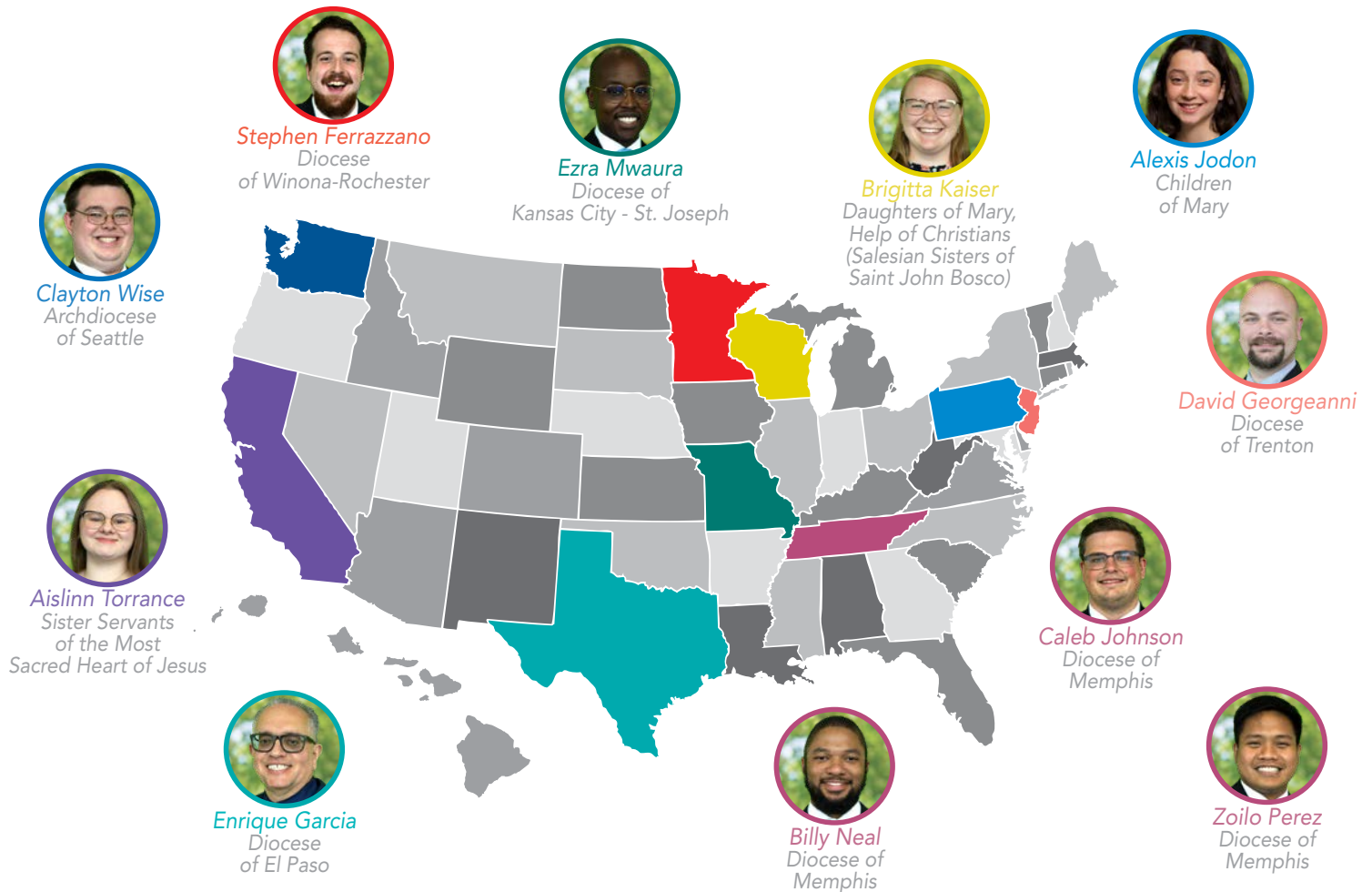


*"There are very few people who realize
what God would make of them if they
abandoned themselves into his hands,
and let themselves be formed by his grace."*

—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 \$60,000 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 education debt.

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?

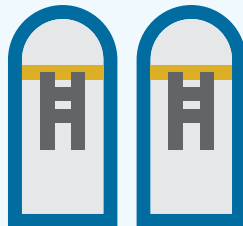
350+ INSTITUTIONS



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



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.

\$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.