



LABOURÉ®

Will you join my Vocation Journey?

| Community: Diocese of St. Petersburg

| Alma Mater: Florida State University

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My name is Tyler Gates. I am discerning a call to serve Christ and His Church as a priest with the Diocese of St. Petersburg. This is my story.

In the Beginning

Born and raised Catholic, I went to Mass on Sundays, prayed before meals, altar served, and attended religious education and youth group—yet being a priest was the furthest thing from my mind. Our pastor would frequently ask the altar servers, "Do you know what the best job in the world is?" Of course, we were expected to respond, "Being a priest!" I remember thinking, "How could someone without a wife or children possibly be that joyful?"

Then, while serving at Mass during my junior year of high school, I heard the Lord speak to me: "Tyler, that could be you." I had my own plans for life, though.

The Call

In college, my relationship with God was not a high priority for me. During the spring semester of my sophomore year, I was praying before Mass when I felt the Lord speak to my heart: "You have to choose one or the other." I realized that I was living a double life, partying on weekends and showing up to evening Mass on Sunday. I began going to Mass and Confession more regularly, and seeking the Lord's guidance.

After graduation, while working in a hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic, I asked the Lord, "What do you want for my life?" As before, the Lord placed the priesthood on my heart. In August 2020, I met with a spiritual director and the vocations director, and we determined that the Lord was calling me to discern the priesthood. The following year, I entered seminary.

*"I asked the Lord,
'What do you want
for my life?'"*

—Tyler

An Invitation

As I follow God's calling to the priesthood, I seek others to accompany me on this journey. May we meet so that I can share more? Until then, please keep me and my classmates in prayer, and feel free to reach out to me at Tyler.Gates@rescuevocations.org.