

This is my Vocation Story



Gabri MacInnes

In the Beginning My name is Gabri MacInnes. I grew up in Minnesota, but my family recently moved to Florida. I am the youngest of three daughters and I grew up in a Catholic family. We went to Mass every Sunday and my mom taught us everything she knew about the faith. I attended a private Catholic school from kindergarten through eighth grade and attended a public high school. I then went to a Catholic college.

My Faith I was very fortunate my mom was strong in her faith because she played an important role in deepening my faith and helping me make it my own. When I was eleven, she got me involved with a youth group run by consecrated women. Growing up I went to Mass and said night prayers, but I did not have a personal relationship with Christ. I did not claim my faith as my own until the leaders of the youth group invited me to become a member of an associated group that committed itself to friendship with Christ. Each member received a card with different commitments, such as saying morning and night prayers, praying the rosary, and going to confession. I decided to join and as I started to develop a personal relationship with Christ, I began to see my faith differently. I was surrounded by girls my age who all wanted to grow closer to Christ and this helped me to claim the faith as my own. I no longer went to Mass on Sunday just because it was what good Catholics were supposed to do. I went because I wanted to spend time with God. Church was now the place where I could praise God and hear His word through scripture. It was where I got to joyfully receive Him in the Eucharist. God became my good friend and I spoke with Him every day. I found myself desiring to grow closer and closer to Christ and enjoying His presence.

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My Vocation In college God called me into an even deeper relationship with Him that led to an important invitation. One day I was praying in the chapel before I went on a retreat with some sisters. I had been feeling pulled towards religious life, but I was afraid and didn't know if I should really pursue it. As I read the Bible, Luke 5:4-6 caught my eye: “[Jesus] said to Simon, ‘Put out into deep water and

lower your nets for a catch.’ Simon said in reply, ‘Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.’ When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing.” This passage really struck me. I felt God calling me to “put out my nets” into the unknown and trust that He will be with me, providing for me and guiding me, just as He did for Simon.

When I arrived at the retreat, I was startled to find out that the theme for it was the calling of Simon where Jesus calls him to cast his nets into the deep. I immediately thought, God, you're really trying to tell me something, aren't you? As I prayed with this passage during the retreat I began to realize what God was trying to tell me. I believed He was inviting me to draw closer to Him and to take steps towards religious life. He was not going to grab my hand and force me to do anything though. He did not forcibly cast out

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Called to serve

The Summer Class of 2018



Simon's nets; Simon chose to do it. He was merely inviting me. It was incredible that God would decide to trust me with this choice. I had always prayed that God would just take my hand and pull me where He wanted me to go, but when I realized how gentle and patient He was, I felt a strong desire to say yes and become united with Him in religious life. It was then that I asked God for the courage and trust to "lower my nets" and step forward onto the path towards religious life.

Called to Serve Through a lot of prayer, I have said "yes" to entering religious life with the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Their charism is to spread the kingdom of God's love through service to families. They do this through a variety of ministries because they feel called to serve in any way that will spread the kingdom, especially where it concerns the family. Some of their ministries are in healthcare institutions, parish ministry, prison ministry, social ministry, and retreat ministry. No matter what ministry I am asked to serve in, I will be striving to bring God's love to others through my service.

As I got to know the Sisters, I was struck when I learned that the foundress desired to dedicate her congregation to the Holy Family because each person of the Holy Family witnessed to the love of God through fulfilling His divine will. What struck me even more was that The Holy Family did this through the ordinary circumstances of daily life. Through the simplicity of their lives, they carried out God's will and witnessed to His love. The foundress desired her congregation to use the Holy Family as a model of how to carry out their charism of love. From my experience

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with the sisters, I knew they strived to imitate the Holy Family and it inspired me. I was so drawn to the Holy Family and the charism because it suited my way of being. I find delight in the simple things of life and have always desired to bring God's love to others within ordinary circumstances. I greatly desire to spread the kingdom of God in imitation of the beautiful and simple way of the Holy Family.

I am happy to say that I have been accepted into the community.

Although I greatly desire to live out this charism, I know I have a lot to learn from the sisters before I can live it out well. I look forward to learning and growing throughout my formation so that I can serve others and bring God's love to them to the best of my ability. Both my community and I are very excited that I will be entering, however, I have a very difficult obstacle to overcome. I have student loans. For me to be able to fully enter the community I need to be debt free. It would take years for me to work and pay off these loans, thereby postponing my ability to live out my vocation. It pains me to have this obstacle in the way of pursuing my vocation. This is a barrier I cannot get through alone.

Prayer & Invitation I invite you to join me in praying for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, especially for those who cannot continue forward in their vocation due to student loans. I am not alone with this burden. I invite you to specifically pray for me and my Labouré classmates as we pursue our vocations. I greatly appreciate your prayers. If you would like to learn more, such as how to help save vocations which are postponed due to student loans, please feel free to contact me at gabri@laboureaspirant.org.

-Gabri MacInnes

Why I'm Writing

I am not only an aspirant to religious life; I am also a fundraiser for a class of aspirants pursuing the priesthood or religious life. A recent study confirmed that nearly 1 out of 2 aspirants have student loans debt which prevents them from entering their seminaries and religious communities. It is the only thing that prevents many – including me – from entering formation to become a priest, sister or brother.

I am seeking to raise the average aspirant student loan amount of \$60,000 before December 31st for The Labouré Society, a Catholic non-profit that helps aspirants like me. Every aspirant has been accepted by their diocese or community and is required to work and liquidate their assets as to be able to make their 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.

At the beginning of our class, we met and participated in an intensive 3-day training on the ethics, practice, and spirituality of fundraising. We are learning practical skills that will help us now and in our future vocations. We have also developed as a team to learn from and support each other. You can see our picture below.

At the end of our class, Labouré will issue awards to each aspirant based on individual effort and the total funds raised. They will administer the awards while we are in formation over a three year period (you can learn more about the program on the back of this letter). If we leave formation for any reason, we will resume our own payments.

Will you join our vocational journeys? Please partner with us and be part of our vocation team so we can answer God's call together!

LABOURÉ

Summer 2018 Class of Aspirants to the Priesthood and Religious Life



Our vocations story videos are online at: www.RescueVocations.org

About The Labouré Society

Why is our Rescue Mission needed?

- There are an estimated 10,000 individuals discerning a priestly or religious vocation in the US annually
 - 42% are blocked from pursuing this call due to education loans*
 - The average vocational 'aspirant' in Labouré owes \$60,000 in education loans
 - Most religious communities cannot assume this debt
 - Most dioceses will allow some debt but have a limited threshold for acceptance
- * (NRVC, Vision Study, 2010)

How does our Rescue Mission work?

Our Aspirants:

- Discern a vocation and are accepted into a diocese or religious institute*
 - Are blocked from entering or continuing vocational formation due to student loans
 - Apply to Labouré and meet intake requirements
 - Are trained in Catholic based fundraising and provided practical tools, personal mentoring, & accountability
 - Share their vocation stories with hundreds of donors thereby building a culture of vocations and evangelization
 - Raise funds for Labouré collectively as a class of multiple aspirants
 - Receive monetary awards from the funds raised by the class
 - Have minimum monthly award payments made to their student loan agencies over 36 months of active formation.
 - Receive final award payout after 3 years and enter freely into a lifetime of service as a priest, sister, or brother
- *(The Institute must be listed in the Official Catholic Directory)

The Labouré Society

- Works with aspirants to utilize all personal means to mitigate their loan amount (loan consolidation, asset review, financial counseling, employment, etc.) prior to acceptance into the program
- Trains each aspirant in Catholic based philanthropy
- Forms a semi-annual 'class' of aspirants that raises funds collectively for all members of the class
- Mentors each aspirant to build a unified team; each individual works toward the collective goal
- Provides ongoing accountability to ensure proper preparation & completion of personal fundraising plans
- Equips each aspirant with an online fundraising platform for donation processing, reporting, marketing and communications, assessment of goals, and class interaction
- Facilitates ongoing aspirant/donor communication and updates after aspirant enters formation
- Manages aspirant award payments while they are in formation
- Completes award payout after three years active formation

What has the Labouré Rescue Mission accomplished?

- Operating since 2003
- Listed in the Official Catholic Directory
- 280+ assisted into formation to the priesthood or religious life
- A network of thousands of praying bishops, priests, religious, families, and singles
- Over \$6 million awarded to aspirants for loan mitigation
- Labouré program support from bishops, superiors, and vocation directors nationwide

LABOURÉ
HELP RESCUE VOCATIONS

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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. 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 needs.