

# This is my Vocation Story



CAITLIN CROMLEY

**How it Began** I'm Caitlin Cromley and by Divine Providence I was born into a Catholic family. I grew up in rural central Pennsylvania in a valley that rests surrounded by the rolling Appalachian Mountains. My home parish is nestled in the mountains overlooking this valley and the entirety of my life has been lived in this contemplative place, radiating the goodness and beauty of God. My earliest experience of prayer happened at the age of four. I prayed for a baby brother and my prayer was answered. Overjoyed I slept on the floor by my brother's crib for three nights. From that experience I felt in my heart God hears and answers our prayers.

<b>Home:</b>	Pennsylvania
<b>Community:</b>	The Capuchin Sisters of Nazareth
<b>Degree:</b>	Biology
<b>Alma Mater:</b>	Misericordia University
<b>Graduate Degree:</b>	Doctorate in Physical Therapy
<b>Alma Mater:</b>	Misericordia University
<b>Occupation:</b>	Staff Physical Therapist

**My Faith** My early religious formation and education took place in my CCD classes and during Sunday Mass at my home parish. I received the sacraments and attended CCD through my high school graduation. While attending public school, I continued to practice my faith, although my focus began to gradually shift toward academic and athletic achievement. My faith and my prayer life remained present, but was lukewarm.

After high school I began to think more about my life's meaning. Thoughts of becoming a religious sister began surfacing on my heart. A new community of religious women, The Capuchin Sisters of Nazareth, came to my home parish. Several of the sisters spoke to my CCD class about vocations and told their own vocation stories. I remember being enthralled by their joy, peace, and serene presence and thought

---

*"Several of the sisters spoke to my CCD class about vocations... I remember being enthralled by their joy, peace, and serene presence..."*  
—Caitlin Cromley

---

if I did become a sister, I wanted to become a sister in this community. I had signed up to go on a discernment retreat with them, but when the time came, I changed my mind. Around this time I had also gone to confession with my parish priest, who said to me, "You would make a great sister, you should pray about it," but instead of praying about my vocation all I did was cry. I was not yet ready to give up my plans for God's will.

**My Vocation** In the fall before my final year of physical therapy school, I was invited to spend a Holy Hour with the Capuchin Sisters of Nazareth. I remember distinctly thinking with confidence, "I could live here." Once again thoughts of becoming a religious sister burned inside of my heart and this experience was another preparation for the moment when I fully realized God was calling me to the religious life. My real awakening occurred on the feast of St. John of the Cross at a retreat. Following the Holy Mass, I was prayed over for the first time.

# Called to serve The Winter Class of 2017



I felt the peace and presence of the Holy Spirit and Jesus asking me to be His bride. During this experience my thoughts flew to the Capuchin Sisters of Nazareth and the possibility of a religious vocation. After the drive home, I called the Sisters at my home parish and I asked them if I could come to a Holy Hour that day. They said, "Yes!" and also advised me to begin a daily holy hour of prayer. From then on, I prayed a Holy Hour daily. I finally gave up my plans, and I asked, "Jesus, what do you want me to do with my life?" Before that day I had never purposefully prayed about my vocation.

*Called to Serve* Through prayer I received the grace of clarity, peace, and the knowledge I am here on this earth to commit my life to prayer for the salvation of souls. I attended a discernment retreat with the Sisters and was invited to spend one week with them in their postulancy house. This beautiful time resulted in the Sisters asking if I would like to become a candidate with their community; with God's grace I said "Yes." While I was with the Sisters experiencing the life and their charisms of prayer, poverty, and preaching, I felt a deep inner peace and joy, beyond understanding. I felt like I was finally at home.

---

*"Through prayer I received the grace of clarity, peace, and the knowledge I am here on this earth to commit my life to prayer for the salvation of souls."*

*—Caitlin Cromley*

---

In my future vocation, I will strive to live a life of prayer, poverty, and preaching in service of the church and all my brothers and sisters. However, I am unable to begin formation as a postulant in the community until my total student debt is mitigated. The sisters and I are very excited about my entrance to the community once my student debt is paid in full. By God's grace I was introduced to the gift of the Labouré Society by the vocations director of my diocese to help remove this final obstacle.

*Prayer & Invitation* At this time I invite you to join with me in praying for all souls, especially for souls discerning their vocation. Let us call upon our infinitely loving Father, to grant each person the grace and courage to be open to answering the call. I humbly ask that you may keep me and all of my Labouré classmates in your prayers as we will keep you in ours. If you would like to learn more about our class efforts, please contact me at [caitlin@laboureaspirant.org](mailto:caitlin@laboureaspirant.org). May God bless you and keep you!

—Caitlin Cromley

## Why I'm writing

*I am not only an aspirant to religious life; I am also a fundraiser for these vocations.* A recent study confirmed that nearly 1 out of 2 aspirants have student loans and thus most communities and dioceses cannot accept them. 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 student loan amount of \$60,000 before June 30 for a Catholic non-profit that helps aspirants like me — The Labouré Society.* Through Labouré, my fellow aspirants and I work together as a class raising donations from \$10 – \$10,000 to deliver each of us into formation. 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 sharing our stories, remembering us in prayer, and financially investing in our future.

*At the end of our class, Labouré will issue awards based on individual effort and the funds available to Labouré.* 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. Plus, every aspirant in Labouré has been accepted by their diocese or community and is required to work and liquidate their assets as able to make their own maximum loan payments.

*At the beginning of our class, we met and participated in an intensive 3-day training on the ethics 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.

*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

*Winter 2017 Class of Aspirants to the Priesthood and Religious Life*



▶ Our vocations story videos are online at: [www.LaboureSociety.org](http://www.LaboureSociety.org)

# About The Labouré Society

## Why are we 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)

## What have we accomplished?

- Operating since 2003
- Listed in the Official Catholic Directory
- Over 250 assisted into formation to the priesthood or religious life
- A network of thousands of praying bishops, priests, religious, families, and singles
- Over \$5 million awarded to aspirants for loan mitigation
- Labouré program support from bishops, superiors, and vocation directors nationwide

## How do we do it?

### *Our Aspirants:*

- Discern a vocation & are accepted into a diocese or religious institute\*
  - Are blocked from entering or continuing vocational formation due to student loans
  - Apply to Labouré & meet intake requirements
  - Are trained in ethical fundraising – empowered with practical tools, personal mentoring, & accountability
  - Share their vocation stories and participate in building a culture of vocations and evangelization
  - Raise funds for Labouré to benefit many vocations
  - Are awarded monthly payments towards their education loans
  - Receive final award payout after 3 years & 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 the loan amount (loan consolidation, asset review, financial counseling, employment, etc.) prior to acceptance into the program
- Trains each aspirant in biblically based philanthropy
- Forms a semi-annual 'class' of aspirants
- 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

**LABOURÉ**  
BRIDGE TO MIRACLES

1365 CORPORATE CENTER CURVE • SUITE 104 • EAGAN, MN 55121 • LABOURESOCIETY.ORG • 651-452-1160



*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 reallocated toward current or future aspirants.*