

# This is my Vocation Story



ALEXANDER FAGAN

**Age:** 24  
**Home:** Connecticut  
**Community:** Order of Friars Minor Capuchin  
**Degree:** Criminal Justice  
**Alma Mater:** University of New Haven  
**Occupation:** Security Console Operator

***In the Beginning*** By the grace of God, I was born into a Catholic family and have had the faith present in my life since birth. My faith and my family are the two rocks that have created the strong foundation on which everything else in my life is built upon. I have been going to the same church every week for my entire life.

***My Faith*** Throughout my childhood and adolescence, I was merely going through the motions with my faith. I attended weekly Mass, said nightly bedtime prayers, received all my sacraments, and went to a Catholic grammar school. However, there wasn't much depth to my faith. Growing up, I would go through phases of having lofty dreams and goals for myself that seemed to take priority over my faith. The seed of my Catholic faith was planted in fertile soil, but I wasn't giving it the water it needed to grow. It was during my college years that practicing my faith began to feel less like a chore and more like a desire. With this came the realization that the plans I had for my future weren't closely matching up with my faith and therefore, it was time to start making adjustments. In response I joined my parish's monthly faith-building discipleship gatherings. It allowed parishioners to talk about their faith with each other as well as engage in various spiritual exercises such as meditation, lectio divina (sacred reading), and the examen (examination of conscience). To supplement these fruitful gatherings, I began to participate in a unique monthly social outreach ministry also offered by my parish, which helps

---

*"My faith and my family are the two rocks that have created the strong foundation on which everything else in my life is built upon."  
—Alexander Fagan*

---

people in need. After all if I hadn't broken out of my comfort zone to follow Jesus more closely, I would have never experienced these beautiful, faith-enriching activities. This is when I first began to truly live my faith, take ownership of it, and experience an amazing joy.

***My Vocation*** Despite the lack of effort I put into my faith for most of my life, I would occasionally have distinctive moments that hinted at a future call to religious life. For instance, when I was a little boy, I remember pretending I was a priest "consecrating" the Eucharist at my grandparents' kitchen table. I also can recall having an instinctual attraction to the crucifix. In fact, my most cherished childhood gift, which I received when I was four years old, was a crucifix from my grandfather. Even throughout my teenage years, I would sometimes have thoughts of priestly and religious life. Unfortunately, when these thoughts surfaced, I quickly suppressed them and went on with my life. Looking back I can identify these moments as times when God was knocking quietly on the door of my heart. Sadly, the only problem was that I was ignoring Him.

# Called to serve

## The Summer Class of 2016



Fast-forward to a few years ago when at one of my parish discipleship gatherings, my pastor recommended I read a book about Mother Teresa. I began reading the book and it was life changing. Mother Teresa became a beautiful inspiration to me of what being a disciple of Jesus looked like concretely. I started praying to God more often and asked Him to tell me what it was He wanted me to do with my life, since at the time, I was uncertain of the career path I wanted to pursue. My prayers would soon be answered! While on the train to work one morning, I was looking out the window to take a short break from reading. Suddenly, without warning, I had this intense calling to serve God in religious life which swept into the core of my being. I believe it was at that moment that the small flame inside me turned into a roaring fire. With this experience came the strength to finally open the door to God.

**Called to Serve** In response to this overwhelming experience, I quickly started looking into religious orders that had similarities to Mother Teresa's way of life and her love towards the poor. I soon came across the Capuchin Franciscans, an offshoot branch of the original order founded by St. Francis of Assisi. The simple, austere life that St. Francis led was profoundly moving and appealing to me. While learning about his life, it didn't take long for me to closely relate to him and realize that I had some identifiable Franciscan characteristics

---

*"Suddenly, without warning, I had this intense calling to serve God in religious life, and it swept into the core of my being."*  
—Alexander Fagan

---

in me. St. Francis lived the Gospel quite literally without any reserve or excuse. He was a true instrument of God and a vivid reminder to me that living as a disciple of Christ is not an easy task. Because I connected so well to St. Francis, and was deeply touched by him, I chose to discern with the Capuchins. These friars live a simple and balanced life of contemplative prayer and active ministry. They have a deep love for each other as well as for the poor, the marginalized, and the outcasts of society. Because of this, their charism emphasizes the need to go outside the walls of their friaries and bring the Gospel into the world.

Ever since I first contacted their vocation director, I strongly believe that this is the direction in which God is calling me. I have been accepted into the Capuchin order; however, my student loan debt is the only obstacle in the way of me moving forward in their formation process. Overall, my thirst to answer God's call has remained unquenched throughout my discernment and I cannot thank or love Him enough for it. My faith, which was once only a part of my life, is now my whole life. I first heard about The Labouré Society while talking to the Capuchin vocation director last year. I mentioned the obstacle of my student loans and he suggested I look into the blessing that is The Labouré Society. At first, I was hesitant to take the first step and begin the process, but now, with trust in God, I have dove in headfirst.

**Prayer & Invitation** As I pray to God to continue to strengthen you to live out your faith in your own vocation, I humbly ask you to pray for me, as well as all individuals who may have a call to religious life. If you would like more information feel free to contact me at [alexander@laboureaspirant.org](mailto:alexander@laboureaspirant.org). Thank you and God Bless!

—Alexander Fagan

## 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 one out of two 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.

*As a class of 16, we're working to raise \$960,000 before December 31 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 three-day training session 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

*Summer 2016 Class of Aspirants to the Priesthood and Religious Life*



# About The Labouré Society

## Why are we needed?

- There are an estimated 10,000 individuals discerning a vocation to the priesthood or religious life 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 240 assisted into formation to the priesthood or religious life
- A network of thousands of praying bishops, priests, religious, families, and singles
- Over \$4.3 million awarded. 100% of gifts go toward aspirants; 90% goes to the current class for loan mitigation and 10% is a tithe to the next aspirant class to subsidize their training expenses

## How do we do it?

### *Our Aspirants*

- Discern a vocation and are accepted into a diocese or religious community
- Are blocked from entering or continuing vocational formation due to student loans
- Apply to Labouré and meet intake requirements
- Are trained in ethical fundraising – empowered with practical tools, personal mentoring, and 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 toward their education loans
- Receive final award payout after three years and enter freely into a lifetime of service as a priest, sister, or brother

### *The Labouré Society*

- Works with each aspirant to ensure all personal means are utilized 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 multiple classes of aspirants annually
- Mentors each aspirant to build a unified team; each individual works toward the collective goal
- Provides ongoing accountability to ensure proper preparation and completion of personal fundraising plans
- Equips each aspirant with an online fundraising platform for real-time donation processing, reporting, assessment of goals and class interaction, marketing and communications
- Facilitates ongoing communication and updates between aspirants and donors after formation entrance
- Manages aspirant award payments while they are in formation
- Completes award payout after 3 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.*