

# This is my Vocation Story



KRISTA FERRELL

**How it Began** I grew up in a Catholic Italian-American household with three younger siblings. My father was in the Army which meant we constantly moved, creating memories and experiencing life along the way. Constantly moving makes pinpointing my 'hometown' a difficult task as I was born in Utah, graduated high school in California, and live in North Dakota.

**My Faith** My faith life really started when I moved to California and joined a high school youth group. Active participation in church activities flowed from that into my college years through an off campus Catholic club. These different ministries were at first satisfying, but other secular school activities soon took priority. My focus diminished from regular participation in the Sacraments to no longer even attending Mass. I spent years away from the Church. It was not until my mom was diagnosed with cancer that things began to change. I felt overburdened by school, work, and being her primary care-giver. I knew that I needed strength and support that I could not get from myself or friends. God gently reminded me of His love, faithfulness, and compassion and my faith began to return. During this time I attended a weekend retreat that was more of a reawakening than just a time of reflection. God taught me about the gift of spiritual discipline. A gift that I needed to develop a relationship with Him. With that, I started to recognize God's hand in my daily life.

---

*"At Mass I heard God ask me to draw closer to Him and to be open to religious life."*  
—Krista Ferrell

---

**My Vocation** At Mass I heard God ask me to draw closer to Him and to be open to religious life. God's timing was curious as I was graduating with a long sought degree. I decided to test God's request and see if the feelings would go away. It didn't! During a parish mission, a religious sister spoke with me and encouraged me to speak with my pastor about my vocational call. When I met with him, he thought I might have a calling. To make sure it was genuine he suggested I continue my career path and wait to see if God would ask again. That summer I had an out of state internship with arranged housing. The arranged housing was at a Benedictine Catholic college! The first weekend, I went to Mass and a sister came up to me and guided me to a seat near the Sisters' section and later invited me to brunch. A friendship developed leading me to share my story with her. She admitted then she felt moved by God that first Sunday to help lead me to religious life. I became a bit anxious but I knew I could no longer deny or put off my calling. I began attending daily Mass and morning or evening prayers when I could. I experienced and fell in love with the Benedictine rhythm of life. I talked to the sisters about their vocational journeys which gave me much to think about and relationships to share my journey with.

<b>Age:</b>	44
<b>Home:</b>	North Dakota
<b>Community:</b>	Annunciation Monastery
<b>Degree:</b>	History
<b>Alma Mater:</b>	University of Mary Hardin-Baylor
<b>Occupation:</b>	Scanning and Mail Clerk

# Called to serve The Summer Class of 2016



When I returned home, I still had a lot of questions and anxieties. With discernment and guidance, God helped me to realize I needed to stop dwelling on questions and take a leap of faith. I needed to say yes to God's call. I took the leap and I felt a peace I had never before experienced in my life! The Holy Spirit guided my search leading to a visit with Annunciation Monastery in Bismarck, North Dakota. There I found a community I could call home and a desire to explore life with them.

*Called to Serve* Since that first visit, I have become an Affiliate with the monastery. I have had the privilege of studying the Benedictine Rule, praying with the community, and participating in different ministries with the Sisters. They are amazing women at the monastery and they have a tremendous impact on the local community. An example of the monastery's charism of evangelization is a program called "Ministry on the Margins." This ministry shares the Gospel message of Christ's love to those leaving the correctional system and rejoining society by providing needed meals during this transition. The gratefulness I see in the eyes of the men and women served

---

*"I hope to join the Sisters  
in their selfless giving and I am  
eager to start the path God  
has laid out for me."*

*—Krista Ferrell*

---

warms my heart. Most of them live in their cars and the food that they are provided is the only food they might receive all week. I hope to join the Sisters in their selfless giving and I am eager to start the path God has laid out for me. As an Affiliate I now spend one weekend a month at the monastery. After each visit it is harder to go "home" because I have to leave home to get there. I am excited to become a Sister at Annunciation Monastery, but like 42% of those discerning the priesthood or religious life, my student loans prevent me from entering into religious formation.

*Prayer & Invitation* Please pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We need many more men and women to take a leap of faith and answer God's call. For those of us who are longing to answer God's call but are blocked by student loans, please consider supporting my classmates and me as we work to remove this final obstacle to our vocations.

If you would like more information, or have any questions, please contact me at [krista@laboureaspirant.org](mailto:krista@laboureaspirant.org).

—Krista Ferrell

## 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*



▶ *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 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.