

Aspirant

A publication of The Laboure Society

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Twins Pursue Vocation to Religious Lives

There are numerous theories about how and why people respond to the call to a religious vocation. A strong family faith as a child is one of the most common themes with many who choose the life of a monk, priest or nun.

The Steve and Amy Prickel family, of Mores, Indiana, has always been active in their church because it is central to their lives, says Amy. “When we go and serve, we are serving the community and Jesus,” she explains. “We wanted to pass on to our kids the concept that it’s not about us, it’s so much more.”

“We’ve always tried to be involved, and to do whatever we can to help them,” adds Steve. “We are a family of faith. We try to put faith into works also. We believe that with God’s help we can accomplish whatever we need to do.”

The parents of four are seeing faith bloom in their oldest children, twins Jennifer and Andrew. Both have decided to pursue a vocation to religious life. Jennifer is entering the Sisters of Reparation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, located in Steubenville, OH.

Andrew wants to be a parish priest and belong to an order. He is still discerning which order, by visiting and spending time with different orders. “I have a strong call to work with families and the poor,” he says. While he is discerning, he is working at a parish to earn money to repay his college debt.

“We know what’s in the hearts of our children. It hasn’t evolved overnight; it’s taken 22 years,” Amy says. She likens a vocation to a seed that Jesus places in your heart as a child. “Now it’s coming to a full bloom and our children have to harvest what He’s planted. They’ll never find true happiness unless they do that,” she says.

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She was aware of the Sisters of Reparation because of a service project she had participated in at the university. “I was drawn to the charism of Reparation but was really afraid and avoided the Sisters – probably because I was really called to them,” she says. During her junior year, she started seriously discerning, visiting

seven or eight orders and keeping in contact with her spiritual director. “I kept comparing other orders to the Sisters of Reparation. I finally realized that I felt this was the order that God was calling me to,” she says.



Twins Andrew and Jennifer Prickel of Mores, Indiana, both plan to enter the religious life.

When Jennifer considers that both she and her brother are feeling led to live a religious life, she says, “Our vocation stories are linked in that God is definitely in control. His plans are so much greater than our plans. I don’t think we would ever have considered that we would both be called to religious life.”

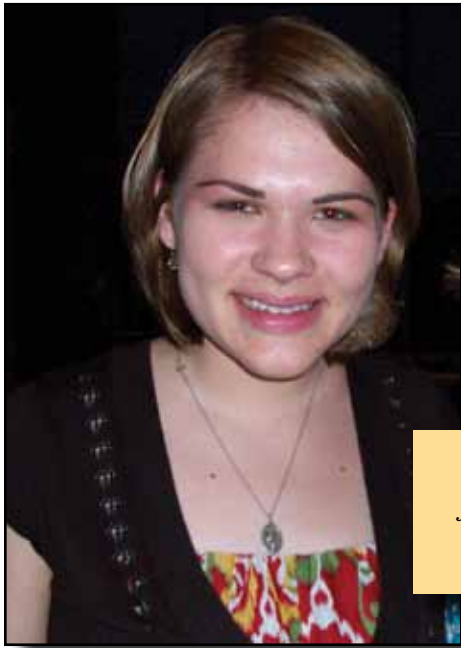
“We’re very happy with their decisions,” says Steve. He notes that they’re only 22-years-old. “Only by the grace of God will they become a sister and a priest. We want them to know it’s a long road filled with challenges, but many rewards.”

The Prickels have two other children, a son who is a sophomore at Purdue and a daughter in high school. “There are lots of decisions that a child goes into the world and makes, based on what they learn at home,” says Amy. “The Catholic Church stands for certain moral values. It has a decisive doctrine for us to live by. Kids are looking for that, for decisive answers so they can make good sound judgments themselves.”

At the end of the day, we just want our children to be happy, Amy says. She adds, “They know that as long as they do God’s will, they’re going to find true happiness.”

Jennifer Prickel's Vocation Story

Understanding the "Beauty of Sacrifice for the Love of Christ and His People"



*Behold I am the Handmaid of the Lord,
be it done unto me according to thy word.*
—Luke 1:38

My vocation story began when I was very young. Before I entered kindergarten I informed my parents that I wanted to be a ballerina/skater/nun. The last one on this list surprised them, but for whatever reason, religious life fascinated me. When I was around six years old I remember going to the park with my aunt and seeing a religious. I walked up to her and said "I am going to be one of you some day". She laughed and we chatted for a few moments, but after this my interest in religious life faltered. I did not seriously think about religious life again until about two years ago, when I was a sophomore at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, studying abroad in Gaming, Austria.

When I arrived in Gaming, the first place I went was our adoration chapel. As I sat before the Blessed Sacrament I asked God to bless my time in Austria and all of my travels. As the weeks went by I found

myself visiting the adoration chapel more and more frequently; I came to yearn for the peace which I found there. One day when I was before the Blessed Sacrament I remember a change taking place, a change in my desires. I was a hopeless romantic and I had in my mind a plan to get married and to have a beautiful family, but as I sat in that Chapel I realized that I did not want this anymore. I wanted to love God alone; my heart would never be satisfied with a human love. This upset me a great deal and

I have come to realize that God's plan for my life is far better than the plans I had made for myself ...

all throughout the semester I pushed the realization of a religious vocation down below the surface, yet again and again I felt the Lord calling me to be His bride.

As I traveled all throughout Europe, the Lord was revealing to me the plans He had for my life. When I was in Dublin and I saw the materialism of the people around me, I had an intense desire to make reparation for souls. As I traveled to San Giovanni Rotondo, kneeling before Padre Pio's tomb I began to understand the beauty of sacrifice for the love of Christ and His people. While I was in Poland praying at the chapel attached to St. Faustina's convent, I fell in love with Divine Mercy. Even though I did not realize it at the time, God was teaching me that His plans are superior to mine. When I returned to the United States the Lord showed me that the final aspect of my mission was teaching. I taught in a catechetical program called Totus Tuus. All throughout the summer I struggled with my vocation but I called upon the Lord to change my heart so that I might delight in His will.

This past year, my heart was changed. I began to realize that my voca-

tion is a pure gift, a calling to contemplate the face of Christ, and to sacrifice beside him. I visited the Sisters of Reparation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and I knew this was where God was calling me to be a saint. My travels in Europe came back to me when I came to understand this order's charism which emphasizes reparation through Eucharistic Adoration, divine mercy, and catechesis in schools.

I have come to realize that God's plan for my life is far better than the plans I had made for myself and that in order to find true fulfillment I must echo the words of our Lady: "Behold I am the Handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word."

Before I can join the Sisters of Reparation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I must eliminate educational debt. To this end, please consider making a tax deductible donation to The Laboure Society and pray for me as the sisters and I promise to pray for you, forever.

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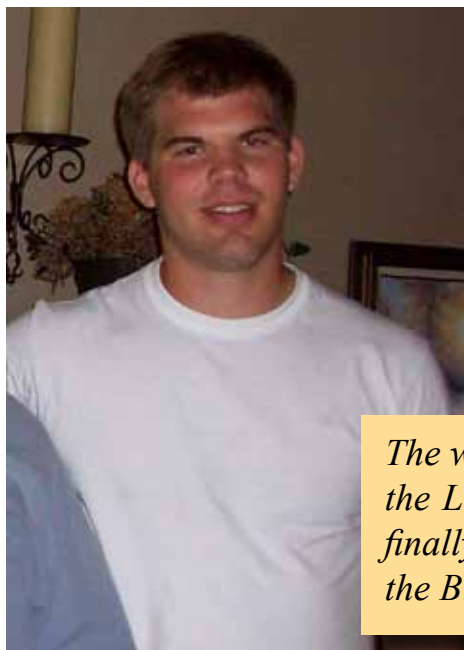
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The Laboure Society exists to provide financial assistance to individuals who must eliminate debt in order to pursue their vocation to priesthood or religious life in the Catholic Church.

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Andrew Prickel's Vocation Story**“I Desire Nothing Else But to ... Work for the Salvation of Souls”**

The whole time I was running away from the Lord he kept pursuing my heart and finally won it over by introducing me to the Blessed Virgin Mary...

I am finishing up my senior year at Franciscan University with a degree in Theology, with the intention of entering a religious order next year. I feel very humbled by the fact the Lord has called me to do this great task of leading his flock and am reminded of Scripture when it says, “you did not choose me, but I chose you that you should go and bear fruit” (Jn 15:16). I must confess that the Lord has truly worked a miracle in my life to get me to this point to be able to say “yes” to him because I feel the least of all those who could come to serve him. With his grace though, I now finally feel ready to take the next step in pursuing the will of God more seriously.

I have felt a tugging on my heart for the priesthood ever since the end of my freshman year of college but elected to ignore it due to my own selfish ambitions. I figured that I had better things to do in my life like become a teacher, raise a family, and coach football, but the Lord would not leave me alone as much as I tried to run from it. **One thing I have learned about a vocation from the Lord is that it never goes away.** As much as I tried

to run from it, it always caught up to me. The whole time I was running away from the Lord he kept pursuing my heart and finally won it over by introducing me to the Blessed Virgin Mary. . **She is the love of my life and I find myself waking up everyday to fight for her against all the snares of the evil one.**

I quickly found myself being led to Jesus through her tender and motherly guidance. I know she is calling me in a special way to be her knight as a priest and feel that the only way I can succeed in becoming a priest would be through her intercession. She has set my heart afire with love and zeal for her Son and given me a deep sense of peace about my deci-

sion to pursue this. **I desire nothing else but to become a great saint and to work for the salvation of all souls no matter how much suffering is involved. I have found the pearl of great price and am willing to give up everything to get it.** In my pursuits I draw all of my strength from God and as the great saint St. Kolbe used to say, “I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me through the Immaculate.”

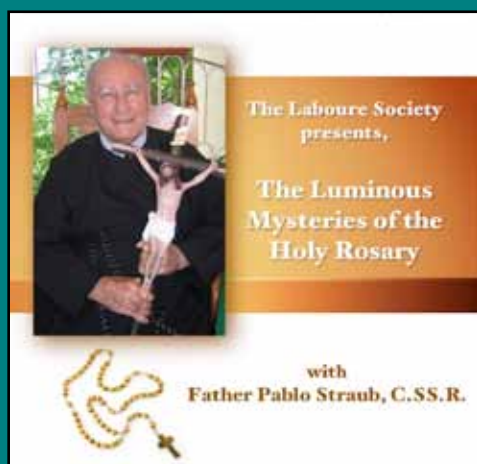
Christ who strengthens me through the Immaculate.”

I want to give myself to the Blessed Virgin and Christ completely and without reserve but the only thing holding me back from pursuing this call from the Lord is my educational debt which I have accumulated. I will not be able to enter a religious order until I have paid off all of my debt. My hope is for you to consider supporting me through the Laboure Society. If you can't support financially I would ask that you please lift me up in your prayers. They are the most important thing for me to continue this great journey. I thank you for reading this and I pray that God continues to shower you with grace and blessings. God bless you!

The Laboure Society exists to provide financial assistance to individuals who must eliminate personal debt in order to pursue their vocation to priesthood or religious life in the Catholic Church.

Please use the enclosed envelope to help.

Every gift of \$100 or more receives the CD: "The Luminous Mysteries of the Holy Rosary" as our gift to you!



Thoughts from the Executive Director

Family as the First Seminary

(Reference: Merriam-Webster)
Etymology of Seminary: Middle English, seedbed, nursery
1: an environment in which something originates and from which it is propagated.



Many years ago I was at table with the Chairwoman of the Board of Directors and a group being honored for years of service in a ministry. Somehow the table topic became 'family' with me carrying on and on about my family: my wonderful parents, grandparents, siblings, extended family, etc.

Later, as we were walking through a corridor, she came alongside me and shared how much she enjoyed hearing about my family and then said: "you see – I have no one."

I was stunned! First, I wanted to apologize, but of course that was not what she wanted; I thanked her.

Family – is there anything more important in society than family? And what a tremendous blessing it is for most of us; from which something originates and from which it is propagated.

What an inspirational account of "Family: as the first Seminary" shared elsewhere herein by the Prickel family.

The following is a Vocation Prayer by Father Pablo Straub, C.S.S.R.

"O God, we beg of you that you bless us with many priests, sisters and brothers who will love you with their whole heart and gladly spend their entire lives serving your church, making you known and loved.

Dear God, bless our families, bless our children; choose from our homes those you need for your work.

O Mary, Queen of the clergy, pray for us, pray for our priests and religious

Obtain for us many more holy priests and religious. Amen."

There is another 'family' from which something originates and from which it is propagated --- our 'faith family'!

Before the followers of Jesus Christ were called Christians, they were referred to as "People of the Way." They were known as such for how they lived in loving communities! That is a long time ago. It is about time for us to rediscover what it meant then and should mean to us today!

St. Paul told a 'faith family' in his letter to the Galatians (5:16, 22-23) and tells us: "So I say, live by the Spirit – the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

A number of years ago we changed our name from The Laboure Foundation to The Laboure Society. Society is a much better descriptor for who we are: a family, a loving community from which something originates and from which it is propagated! We are the Laity, responding in a particular way, who have delivered hundreds of individuals to the church for its priesthood and religious that because of debt, would not have otherwise been able to enter formation. Please view our website (www.labouresociety.org) for a listing of the aspirants we are currently assisting. Thank you in advance for giving the financial needs represented there your prayerful consideration.

Sisters in Independence, MO Donate to Laboure Society

The Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Eucharist of Independence, MO, have given donations for the last few years to the Laboure Society. "It is an invaluable thing to help someone do God's will," explained Sister Connie Boulch, OSF, Vicar-general of the order. "Money shouldn't be something that gets in the way."



She explains that there are many young people who are discerning their vocations a little later than right out of high school. Because of that, they often end up with college loans. Most religious orders will not consider accepting a new member if they have loan obligations to fulfill. "Since the purpose of the Laboure Society is to help pay off debt so they can do what God wants them to do, we want to help," Sister Connie said.

The Sisters of St. Francis are dedicated to adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, prayer for priests, and works of mercy. The Franciscan characteristics of contemplation, littleness, humility, poverty and fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church are central to their way of life. Prayer in common, spiritual exercises, intellectual pursuits, manual labor and recreation comprise each day.

Their daily life consists of: Common Prayer, Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, Weekly Community Holy Hour, Private Prayer, Eucharistic Adoration and Spiritual Reading.