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For Immediate Release

Young Chicago woman running half-marathon to become a nun

Chicago, Ill.—Aug. 26, 2009--On Sunday, Sept. 13, 2009, Alicia Torres, 24, will run the Chicago Half Marathon as part of “The Nun Run” campaign (see www.TheNunRun.com), an effort to eliminate her outstanding student debt so that she can enter a Roman Catholic Religious community.

In the Catholic Church, men and women who enter Religious Life -- a way of living in community focused on prayer and service -- pledge to live according to the example that Jesus Christ presented in the Gospels: Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. Because vowed religious live the vow of Poverty, they do not own anything or receive a salary. Torres must eliminate her debt before she can fully participate in this way of life.

Torres works for the Archdiocese of Chicago’s Respect Life Office. A 2007 graduate of Loyola University Chicago, Torres was first attracted to Religious Life while a university student.

“Men and women in my generation are looking for meaning. We desire to make a difference in the world. Religious Life really is a supernatural way of living, serving our neighbor in need while acknowledging God is the center of life,” Torres said. “Today many men and women want to serve in this way but are hindered by their educational debt. Ironically, the cost of education that should prepare us to serve others actually hinders our ability to freely live a life of prayer and service.”

With the support of friends, Torres began “The Nun Run,” a campaign aimed at raising funds through donations and pledges for Torres and her companions who will run the Chicago Half Marathon in September. “I am so grateful for all the support--both spiritual and financial--I’ve received so far! I am constantly humbled by the generosity of others, especially my friends who will be running the half marathon with me.”

Fortunately for Torres and others in her situation, non-profit organizations like the Laboure Society exist. The Laboure Society’s (www.labouresociety.org) mission is to help men and women who desire to enter religious life or the priesthood eliminate their debt. The Society receives donations on behalf of individuals, so that donors may receive a tax-deduction for their gift. All gifts made to The Nun Run will be channeled through the Laboure Society and are fully tax-deductible. The Laboure Society makes payments to the lenders on behalf of the men and women.

“In our world today we function so often as individuals. Really, we can’t be successful without the support of others. Every person who helps me as I work toward eliminating my debt is not just assisting me in a financial need. They are enabling me to live a life of love and service. In this way, they are part of the mission of love and service I will live as a vowed religious in the Catholic Church,” Torres said.