

This year, the Chicago Province of the Society of the Divine Word has 60 men in various stages of the formation process.

- 18 are in early stages of formation or “pre-novitiate” at DWC
- 8 men are in temporary vows and studying at DWC
- 5 are in the Novitiate program in Techny, Illinois
- 15 men are in temporary vows and studying at Divine Word Theologate in Chicago
- 9 are on location for their Cross-Cultural Training Program (CTP)
- 5 men are in perpetual vows and became deacons on Oct. 1

This academic year, five new SVD candidates joined the formation program and enrolled in classes at Divine Word College. Among them was 19-year-old Bao Nguyen, a Texas native who learned about the SVD from his uncle who discerned with the community for a period of time. Last year, Bao was studying engineering at Texas A&M, but he’s been considering the possibility of religious life for a while. He explored a few religious communities before enrolling at DWC and starting classes in August. “I think I’m off to a strong start,” he said.

As the formation program unfolds, Bao said he’s most eager to dive deeper into the ministry aspect of the program. Currently, he is serving at a ministry site in Davenport, Iowa where he helps children from the parish learn about

the Bible and also tutors them on Vietnamese grammar. While the encounters can be challenging at times, Bao said he enjoys it because he remembers having a similar experience when he was a child attending church.

For most men who enter religious life as a Divine Word Missionary Priest or Brother, the formation process takes between 8 and 13 years, depending on a variety of factors. For students like Bao, the religious formation program and

discernment process is a long and personal journey, but it begins with saying “yes” to considering God’s call.

“Being here for a few weeks, I’ve had a taste of everything now and I really enjoy it,” he said. “I find myself very comfortable. This is a place that I think I can really be happy.”



Left to right: Bao Nguyen, Benedict Khual and Peter Brungardt are received as new SVD candidates.

Formed in the Divine Word