

LEAVING FAMILY TO ANSWER THE CALL

Five years ago, I was moving away from my hometown for the first time to study at the University of California in Berkeley.

By: Joseph Simbre

I remember how when my family dropped me off in my new college dorm, the van was blocking the traffic. However, we were too busy crying, hugging and saying our goodbyes to move out of the way. As difficult as it was for me to leave my family, it was a necessary step for me to grow. But it was hard to be without them, and I felt alone for a long time as it was difficult to find people who I felt at home with.

God has a way of meeting us during some of our most difficult times, especially through His faithful people. One Sunday morning in college, I was approached after Mass by a student named Ting who greeted me and invited me to a small group bible sharing. Although I was hesitant at first, I decided to go. Ting eventually brought the group some beat-up bibles to discuss a short passage. Although I had a busy academic schedule, I found myself going week after week. It was not long before we all grew to be brothers. We prayed together, played together, and led other student ministries together. I felt that Christ was there in our friendship and I felt full of life. I realized then that this was something special, and I wanted this for the rest of my life. At the time, I thought that the closest thing to what I was experiencing

with my brothers at college was religious life. And so, I spoke to my uncle, Fr. Nico Sengson, SVD and got connected to my vocation director Fr. Adam MacDonald, SVD. With their encouragement and help,

many years later I found myself here at DWC discerning a vocation to religious life.

I remember how hard it was when I told my family that I wanted to leave California and attend DWC in Iowa. I knew that this was God's call because when I took this decision to prayer, I felt at peace. But while my heart feels at peace with the decision, it also pains my heart to be away from my

family members who have been my whole life. I'm giving up homecooked dishes and time with my brother and sister. I worry now because the more I continue down this path, the more I won't be able to be there for my family. Sometimes, it is hard to trust in God, but I have to leave my family in His hands and trust that He will take care of them. It is hard for me, too, because I miss being with my family so much. However, God blessed me with a loving community at DWC. I pray that God will bless my family and take care of them and that I will continue to have faith in God as I follow His call here at DWC.



Joseph Simbre at DWC's Lunar New Year celebration

