



Students with a Mission - Divine Word College's Student Senate organized a garage sale that raised money for the Dubuque County Backpack Program, which provides meals for kids in need. On top of that, students sold eggrolls to help support their own Senate budget — making the day a win for everyone.



Picnic Kickoff - The first week of classes called for celebration, even in 90-degree heat! Students packed Murphy Park in Dubuque for Divine Word College's Opening School Picnic, where games, music, and dancing kept the energy high. Nothing builds friendships faster than laughter, sunshine, and a little sweat.



Miles of Smiles - Labor Day at Divine Word College kicked off with the annual 5K run. Students laced up, laughed together, and encouraged one another across the finish line. More than just a race, it's a tradition that builds community, celebrates health, and guarantees a good time.



Tradition on Parade - Epworth's Town and Country Days parade got a boost of energy from Divine Word College students and staff this summer. About 35 participants handed out candy, waved to neighbors, and enjoyed the chance to join a small-town tradition that makes them feel right at home.

FINDING HIS VOICE



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When Bao Nguyen arrived at Divine Word College in 2023, he carried with him the quiet faith of his Texas upbringing and the encouragement of a family that had long nurtured religious vocations. Raised in Wichita Falls in a devout Catholic household, Bao learned daily prayer and parish involvement from his parents and grandparents, while several relatives had already chosen priesthood or religious life.

Bao quietly considered religious life from a young age, but the idea became real when a visiting uncle who was a priest asked if he had ever thought about following the same path. That conversation prompted Bao to reflect more deeply and discuss his calling with his parents, who assured him they would support him if God was calling.

Later, a different uncle who studied at DWC invited Bao to a profession of vows ceremony in Techny, Illinois. There, he met vocation directors and other Divine Word Missionary priests and brothers, whose energy and commitment to serving others left a lasting impression.

As Bao neared the end of his high school years, he was torn between entering religious formation or pursuing an undergraduate program. He researched religious congregations and explored diocesan formation programs. Fascinated by engineering and inspired by his father's work, Bao ultimately enrolled at Texas A&M, where he joined the Corps of Cadets. While classmates focused on studies and military training, Bao gravitated toward parish activities. Gradually, he realized his heart was in ministry and applied to Divine Word College.

Life at DWC was an adjustment at first. Quiet and reserved by nature, Bao found the community welcoming and supportive. Encouraged by his peers and mentors, he began to take on new responsibilities — helping with chapel ministries, managing the on-campus café, and joining student leadership. Now in his third year, he is serving as Student Senate President, a role that challenges him to step up, lead, and serve with confidence.

"I think the best way for me to learn and grow is to step outside my comfort zone and do something that I normally wouldn't do," he said.

Bao draws inspiration from the many Divine Word Missionaries he has met — in classrooms, parishes, retreat centers, and even abroad. Their example has shown him that missionary life goes beyond parish work — it's about accompanying people in their everyday joys and struggles.

Bao's journey is still unfolding, but Divine Word College is giving him the formation, community, and experiences he needs to trust God's call and follow it boldly.