



A VOCATION STRENGTHENED BY *COMMUNITY*

When Truong Nguyen became sick while living in an SVD community in Vietnam, he stayed quietly in his room, not expecting much attention. But after lunch, his fellow SVD candidates began to notice his absence. One by one, they came to check on him — bringing milk, cake, and simple gestures of care.

“That moment taught me a lot,” Truong recalls. “I saw the beauty of community life.” It was more than kindness; it was a confirmation. Life as a Divine Word Missionary, he realized, is meant to be lived in community — praying, working, and supporting one another.

That sense of belonging has been central to Truong’s formation journey, but his desire to pursue religious life began much earlier. Raised in a small Catholic village in central Vietnam, Truong grew up in a family and community shaped by faith. As a child, he attended Mass with his mother and grandmother, and he still prays the simple bedtime prayer his mother taught him.

At age 13, while serving as an altar server, Truong first imagined himself as a priest. That sense of calling stayed with him through high school, where he made his intention visible in a quiet but deliberate way — choosing to dress simply in black and white,

reflecting the life he hoped for. His classmates noticed, affectionately calling him *Thầy*, a title used for seminarians in Vietnam.

When Truong encountered the Society of the Divine Word at a parish event, he was drawn to the congregation’s missionary spirit and international community. But joining the SVD required passing an English exam — an intimidating challenge for someone who could barely speak the language. Determined to follow his calling, Truong enrolled in a university English program. The first year was difficult, but he persevered, eventually graduating with confidence and earning acceptance into SVD formation in Vietnam.

After completing his initial years of formation, Truong was selected as one of two candidates chosen to continue formation in the United States. Today, he is in his second year at Divine Word College, immersed in an international community that mirrors the global mission of the SVD. He serves in liturgical ministry, prepares worship resources, and lives simply in the pre-novitiate house — always ready for the next step.

As he applies for novitiate, Truong says he feels at peace. “Community life is what attracts me most,” he shares. “We are brothers. We take care of one another.” It is a vision of religious life that has shaped him — and continues to call him forward.
