Faces of DWC

Our students come from many countries, but the diversity of DWC goes beyond geography. Each brings a unique story, vocation and hope for the future as they prepare for lives of service. Meet a few Faces of DWC.





Bro. Hanh Nguyen, OCist

Undergraduate Program | Religious Brother

Vietnam

Where I've been...

Bro. Hanh studied at a maritime college and spent 10 years working as an officer on a cargo ship before entering religious formation to become a Cistercian monk. He has a God-given gift for sculpting stone, which he uses to beautify the grounds of his monastery.

Where I'm going...

Bro. Hanh plans to further his education by earning a master's degree in philosophy before returning to his monastery in Vietnam. There, he hopes to help his brothers learn English and philosophy and adapt to a changing world.



Nhat Duc Minh Nguyen

Pre-Theology Certificate Program | SVD Candidate

Vietnam

Where I've been...

Nhat moved to California at age 24 and earned a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. He then spent two years working as an aeronautics test engineer before enrolling at Divine Word College and beginning formation with the Society of the Divine Word.

Where I'm going...

"Regardless of what I do, I want to help the people around me," he said. "If God calls me to commit to one person or to a family, I will do that to the best of my ability. If God sees that I am capable of serving the Church in religious life, then I will do it with all my heart."



Philip Porowe

Intensive English Language Institute | Diocesan Seminarian

Papua New Guinea

Where I've been...

Philip knew he wanted to become a priest from the time he was a young altar server. After high school, he entered seminary, where he spent five years before coming to Divine Word College to learn English and pursue a bachelor's degree in philosophy.

Where I'm going...

Philip hopes to return home and be ordained as a diocesan priest. Eventually, he would like to teach philosophy in a seminary, where he sees a great need for philosophy teachers. That need is part of what brought him to the United States to pursue his own studies.

Sr. Hope Albersia, SSpS

Intensive English Language Institute | SSpS Sister

Indonesia

Where I've been...

After professing Perpetual Vows in 2018, Sr. Albersia spent seven years in Brazil working with poor and Indigenous communities in the Amazon. Her ministry included working with children and young expectant mothers, serving elderly people and supporting parish catechesis. She also worked as a video editor on projects for the diocese and her congregation.

Where I'm going...

Sr. Albersia's congregation sent her to Divine Word College to learn English. After completing her studies, she plans to return to the Amazon, where she hopes to teach basic English to indigenous and rural children who have limited educational opportunities. She also hopes to communicate more effectively with members of her congregation around the world during their monthly video meetings, where they use English to plan communication strategies and projects to share the mission and work of the SSpS.



Frt. Joanico Sarmento, SVD

Undergraduate Program | SVD Member in First Vows

Timor-Leste

Where I've been...

When he was in middle school, Frt. Joanico moved from his family's home in rural Timor-Leste to a town where the SVD operated a junior high school. As he came to know the congregation, he felt called to religious life and entered formation. He completed his novitiate in the Philippines and professed First Vows in 2025.

Where I'm going...

After earning his undergraduate degree at DWC, Frt. Joanico plans to continue his education at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. After that, he hopes to serve in religious formation, inspired by his novice master's words that formation is the heart of the congregation and the heart of the Church. Without it, they can't survive. He is open to serving wherever the SVD needs him, but he also sees a particular need in his home country for young seminarians to encounter the example of a local priest who understands their culture and language.



Sr. Francine Mave Indekanza, OLVSM

Intensive English Language Institute | Religious Sister

Democratic Republic of Congo

Where I've been...

Sr. Francine knew from childhood that she wanted to become a religious sister. After completing school, she entered religious formation with a missionary congregation in West Africa. She then spent three years teaching at a primary school, where she was the sole teacher for 80 six-year-olds and accompanied them throughout their early education.

Where I'm going...

As part of her religious vocation, Sr. Francine welcomed the opportunity to come to the United States to learn English. She plans to continue her education in DWC's undergraduate program, knowing her new language skills will be useful to her missionary congregation. "I hope to serve all the people in the world, because I am sent for them," she said.