

Hello,

June 5, 2024

I hope you and your family are doing well! My apologies for the delay in responding to you, it's been quite a busy spring for me as I have many events and plans lined up for the summer. Since it's been so long since I've given you an update, I have a few things to share in terms of my vocation and plans for the summer. I truly appreciate all the prayers and support that you have given me and I'm so grateful that I am able to share my journey with you and the community.

I have a lot of great news to share! First off, Last month on May 11<sup>th</sup>, I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. This marks a pivotal moment, signaling the halfway point of my seminary journey. I am eagerly looking forward to the next academic year, which will usher in a new phase of theological studies, where things get more interesting. I began seminary in the fall of 2021 and it's still crazy to me that I've completed three years already. I've been studying at Mount Angel seminary in Oregon focusing on philosophy (which was not easy at all for me) but now I'm excited to continue at Mount Angel for the next 4 years studying theology, which is what I've been looking forward to since I entered the program. It won't be any easier, but it will definitely be more interesting and more useful to priestly ministry. The Graduation Mass and Commencement Ceremony was beautiful, and it was a wonderful turn out. I was very grateful and honored that my family and friends from my home parish took time out of their Saturday to attend my graduation. I had the largest group in terms of attendance, about 55 or so people, which was great! There was a wonderful reception after the ceremony followed by a campus tour given my me. It was about 90 degrees that day, but we made it through, and everyone had a wonderful time. This year graduation was very special because it marks 135 years as a seminary but also, we were blessed to have the Papal Nuncio to the United States, Cardinal Christophe Pierre from Rome celebrate Mass and the Commencement Ceremony with us. If you're interested, the full Graduation Mass and Ceremony can be found on the Mount Angel Abbey YouTube channel. If you are able to, I would also encourage you to visit and I would be more than happy to show you around and give you a tour of the seminary, which is also home to the Benedictines.

Second exciting news about the archdiocese is that we now have two newly ordained priest! The Ordination Mass at St. James Cathedral on Saturday was absolutely amazing, and it had the largest attendance since Covid. There were people standing all the way to the door, which was great! I can't say the same for the parking situation down in Seattle though. The other good news is that we also have a good number of young men discerning the priesthood this year. About seven or so are in the process of applying and interviewing so we may have at least 4 new seminarians this year. Please continue to pray more vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

This summer, I'm currently serving at St. Mary Magdalene Parish in Everett with Fr. Olsen who is a great pastor. It's a wonderful community here and I truly get to experience what a large and busy parish is like. I also get the opportunity to practice my communication and language skills because of the big Hispanic and Vietnamese community here. I'm hoping that by the time of ordination, I will be trilingual and feel confident enough to be able to celebrate the sacraments and be involved in the community as much as possible. Since I was born here, English isn't a problem, I know Vietnamese already and I'm continuing to improve it, but now I realized the great need for priest to be able to minister in Spanish as well, which the Archbishop has reiterated many times to us. I have found it to be difficult ministering to people effectively not understanding their language and culture so I'm challenging myself to study hard this coming school year especially because I will be sent to Mexico next summer for a full Spanish immersion. I'm a little nervous but this is great motivation for me to study and I know that this is an important part of my vocation, which is to serve the people of God.

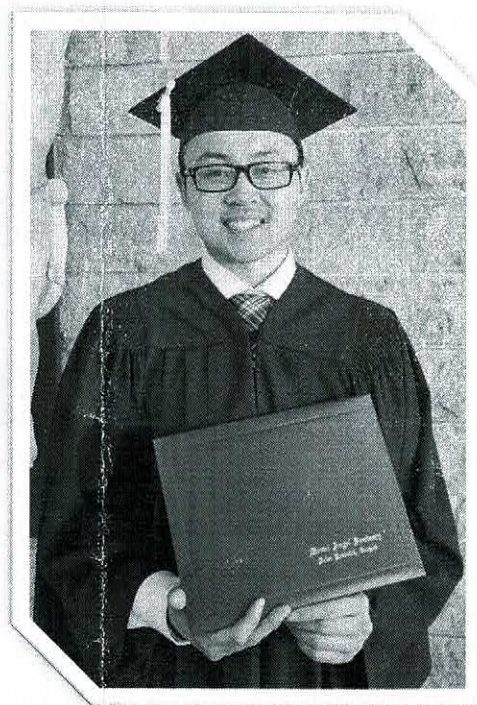
As I mentioned before, this summer will be very busy. In 10 days, I will be traveling with my family to visit Vietnam and will be there for about a month. It has been about 11 years since my last visit, and I am eager to reunite with relatives, especially with my grandparents who retired and moved back to Vietnam a few years ago, as well as to visit my soon to be 100-year-old great-grandmother. We're going to have a huge celebration for her and for the family because this will also be the first time in 20 years that all my mom siblings and their family get to be together. We'll be spending most of our time with my mom side of the family which is very large. She has three siblings here in the U.S and three in Vietnam which you can imagine how crowded our family parties will be, but I'm not complaining. I'm very excited and I know I'm going to have a wonderful time with family, enjoying all the food, sight-seeing and everything being so cheap to buy. We're a little nervous though because of the long 19-hour flight and multiple connecting flights, especially seeing all the recent plane incidents, but we trust and pray that everything will go well, which it will.

After the Vietnam trip, I have a day off before I'm off again on another flight. This time to Indianapolis to attend the Eucharistic Revival Congress with my brother seminarians and others from the Archdiocese. This event also is making history because it is the first National Eucharistic Congress in 83 Years. I'm looking forward to attending the talks given by many wonderful Catholic speakers such as Bishop Robert Barron, Scott Hahn, Sister Miriam, Fr. Mike Schmitz, Jonathan Roumie and so on...

Following the conference in Indiana, I will attend our Annual Seminarian Retreat. This is the time where we get to know one another and meet the new seminarians. I'll also be petitioning for candidacy this summer. As I prepare for candidacy, I reflect on the formal steps leading to the Catholic priesthood: Candidacy, Lector, Acolyte, Deacon, and finally Priest. Candidacy allows me to wear clerics, which is a symbol of the transition from mainly discerning to preparing for priesthood. Reception of Candidacy marks my transition from discernment to preparation. As a Candidate for Holy Orders, I demonstrate signs of a priestly vocation, expressing a willingness to be ordained in due time. Upon receiving candidacy, I commit to faithfully fulfill my duties and priestly preparation until ordination. A notable change is the attire I'll be wearing on a daily basis at the seminary, which is clerical shirts. I'm very excited to start wearing clerical shirts because for me this is like a huge "upgrade" from wearing a shirt and tie which I have been doing the last three years in college seminary. Following the retreat, I'm headed back to Mount Angel about three weeks before the semester begins to attend ISP (Intensive Spirituality Program) in preparation for Theology (Configuration stage). Please pray for me and for all the seminarians on this retreat and for the coming school year, that it may be a time of great discernment and many graces received.

Thank you once again for your prayers and support!

Wishing you and your family continued blessings and joy.  
Have a wonderful summer!



With gratitude and prayers,  
† David Do †