God is Mysterious, Yet Amazing

By Brandon Hoang Long Dang

As I reflect on my vocation journey thus far, it is difficult to say that I had planned it this way. God has revealed some of His plans for me in obvious and not-so-obvious ways; there have been glimpses of His mysteriousness as well as how amazing He is. What do I mean by this?

Typically, you would hear vocation stories of priests who have thought of being a priest ever since childhood. For me, it is quite the opposite. As some of you know, I am a convert; I was not born a Catholic. Hence, the thought of priesthood was not something that I had grown up with. But, the mysterious, yet amazing thing was that I was born in a Catholic hospital, so the roots were definitely planted but took time to develop like a mustard seed over the years of my life. My ultimate goal growing up was to become the best father and husband that had ever walked this planet and of course being a very "successful" gentleman. But, I soon came to realize that this was not in God's plans for me. This is not to say that being a father and a husband are bad aspirations or hopes; these are the some of the most wonderful gifts that any man could ever experience and God could ever give, but God had revealed that He wanted something different of me; He wanted to show me a different gift. In the guise of mysteriousness, He changed my aspirations and hopes in this life. I want to do what God wants me to do and I was very at peace with it. Fulfillment comes in so many different ways. Instead of being a father to an individual family, I felt I was called to be a father to all. (No pressure…) I went from having it "made" or "all planned out" into the "unknown" but this "unknown" was the best thing that has ever happened to me; I have had some amazing experiences and it is through the grace of God that I was able to experience the Lord's Goodness in my life. Through this journey of priesthood, I have been showered with God's love from the moment I opened my heart to Him and the blessings have been so abundant.

If I had to decide a lesson I learned from the many in the past year, it would be the surrender to and trust in God. There are so many times that I

think I have it all figured out, but not so much…God is the person in control and we just follow.

"Come, follow me" are the words from Jesus that I keep very dear to my heart because my conversion experience centers on this phrase. We are all called to follow Him, sometimes in very mysterious ways, but also very amazing ways. He will show us things that you could have never even imagined. I give gratitude to God everyday for my life and what He has given me; if tomorrow He shows me a different path, I will just follow. He ultimately wants us to do His will but also be at peace with it. It is up to us to choose to follow.

I want to thank all of *you* for the support, care, and love that you have shown me these past four years on my journey to the priesthood. This affection has sustained my life and I can definitely see that it has sustained the parish of St. Nicholas as well. Please, do not ever lose the love for each other (the People of God), for the worldwide Church, and for God. Always know that you are always in my prayers and I wish you and the whole parish a wonderful congratulation on this anniversary! Many more years to come of course! I love you all and may Jesus be with all of you. Also, may Mother Mary always keep you close in her care and love to nurture you into the person we all aspire to be, Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ,
Brandon Dang