



Joseph Solomon
Pre-Theology 2
Pontifical College Josephinum
St. Isidore, Bloomingtondale
Birthday: July 13

My name is Joseph Solomon and I am excited to be entering my second year of Pre-Theology this fall at the Pontifical College Josephinum.

I was born on July 13, 1992 to my loving parents, Jose and Jennifer. I have a younger brother, Jason, who is working as an actuary at Nationwide Insurance. I am thankful to have been supported by devout Catholic family members who have been encouraging in this part of my life, especially my grandmother who has been very prayerful throughout my discernment process.

Since childhood, my primary sport has been Taekwondo, a Korean martial art, where I am a 3rd degree black belt and a head instructor of Chang Brothers Taekwondo Academy in Hanover Park. I spent most of my free time teaching students, young and old, how to be confident, disciplined martial artists who can defend themselves when necessary.

I attended DePaul University and embraced the Vincentian values of care of the poor and needy. In 2014, I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in health sciences with minors in biology and psychology with hopes that I would work as a physician assistant or physical therapist.

While volunteering in the emergency department of Central DuPage Hospital, I noticed that I was only working for myself and not others or for the greater glory of God. After reading St. Augustine's *Confessions*, I realized that, in his words, "*Our hearts are restless until it rests in you.*" I was restless because I did not put Christ at the center of my life. I looked back to my childhood and knew that I needed to act on the tug on my heart to follow this call to serve Christ and his church more intimately.

I became more involved at my home parish of St. Isidore and after seeing the joyful examples of my parish priest, Fr. Clive Otieno and my spiritual director, Fr. Mario Quejadas from St. Walter, I took the first step towards formally discerning a call to priesthood with Fr. Burke Masters, who encouraged me to find a part-time job before entering seminary. I began working at Walgreens, where I was a pharmacy technician and shift lead manager. One of the major turning points of my discernment was after I made a Cursillo weekend, which finally inspired me to start and submit my application to seminary.

This Summer, I was blessed to serve as a Totus Tuus teacher around the Diocese of Joliet, teaching the youth about the Catholic faith, especially the Luminous Mysteries and the Apostle's Creed. My team and I had an unforgettable experience of meeting new kids and families each week, which gave us deeper discernment for God's plan in our lives.

I would like to thank the Serra Club and all the unnamed prayer warriors who are always praying for vocations in our diocese because without your prayers, I would not have had the confidence to answer God's call to take this leap forward.

May God continue to bless us always!