



Joseph Solomon
Pre Theology 1
Pontifical College Josephinum
Parish: St. Isidore, Bloomington
Birthday: July 13

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

I was born on July 13, 1992 to my loving parents Jose and Jennifer. I am the older of two sons, and my younger brother, Jason, recently started his professional career 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.

Since my 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 I embraced Vincentian values of care of the poor and needy. I graduated in 2014 with a Bachelor of Science in health sciences with minors in biology and psychology. I planned to work in a hospital before attending further education towards a career as a physician assistant or physical therapist, but while volunteering in the emergency department at Central DuPage Hospital, I struggled to find interest in the medical field because I was always left unsatisfied with my work.

I noticed that I was working only 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 heart is 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 this tug on my heart to follow this call to serve him and his church more intimately.

I became more involved at St. Isidore as a lector, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, and religious education facilitator. I took the first step towards formally discerning this call to priesthood with Fr. Burke Masters, the vocation director, who encouraged me to find a part-time job during discernment. I began working at Walgreens, where I became a photo specialist and a pharmacy technician. One of the major turning points of my discernment was after I made a Cursillo weekend, which inspired me to start the application to seminary, and four months later, I sponsored two of my good friends and served on the palanca team for the Men's 133rd Weekend.

This summer, I have been enhancing my leadership and team-building skills as a shift lead manager at Walgreens. I was reinvigorated with the fire of the Holy Spirit when I attended the 4th Annual Diocese of Joliet Catholic Men's Conference featuring Peter Herbeck and Pete Burak in June and the Just5Days Mission Trip to Davenport, IA with the youth of St. Isidore's Connect Youth Ministries in July.

I look forward to officially beginning my discernment of God's call in my life in the seminary and I would like to personally thank Frs. Jim Murphy, Matthew Nathan, Clive Otieno, Mario Quejadas, and Burke Masters for their encouragement and for being joyful, faith-filled

priests living out their God-given vocations. Finally, I would like to thank 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!