

Brother Thomas Pham, FSC

Celebrates Final Vows

*"And, I know that
God is going to take care
of the rest!"*

When Tho (his Vietnamese name) Pham moved to the United States from Vietnam 12 years ago, he spoke virtually no English and, in his own words, was "scared to death." Fortunately, the promise of a better future far outweighed his trepidation, so together with his parents and four of his six siblings, Pham left Vietnam and settled with his family in San Jose.

"The government in Vietnam controlled everything," explains Br. Thomas. "My parents wanted a better future for their children and that meant moving to America."

Upon arriving in San Jose, he quickly got involved in working at the La Salle Vietnam House/De La Salle Chapel in San Jose which serves the Vietnamese community. "I taught Catechism and led the choir during Sunday Mass," says Br. Thomas. "I really loved teaching and working with the kids."

Although he had not really considered becoming a Brother, encouraging words from Br. Joseph Hiep, FSC helped Pham begin the journey. "He encouraged me to go to Napa for the Postulancy Program," explains Br. Thomas. "I was really nervous because I didn't know very much English. But, I went and spent a year interacting with the Brothers, learning about God and St. John Baptist de La Salle, and tutoring kids. Every day, Br. Joseph would call me and remind me to take one step at a time, and that God would take care of the rest."

Following the year in Napa, he felt a calling to begin the Novitiate Program which is an in-depth year of prayer, community life, studying, learning and living the rules and expectations of Brother. At the end of the Novitiate year, Br. Thomas took the first, of what for him would become for him, seven annual vows and began to live and serve as a Brother in temporary profession. Each subsequent year, he reaffirmed the vow while serving as teacher and Brother at several Lasallian schools including St. Joseph's in Washington, De Manlac Academy in San Francisco, and the past four years at CBHS.

On Saturday, September 1, with his family, friends and numerous members of the De La Salle Christian Brothers community looking on, Br. Thomas, Br. Joe Kirk, FSC, and Br. Davis Caretti, FSC, celebrated their final vows at the beautiful chapel at St. Mary's College in Moraga.

"The Eucharistic Liturgy, the pronouncing of the vows themselves, and the subsequent celebration all witnessed to the fact that here were three young men who have found their vocation in life. And that is indeed a joyful occasion. Might we all discover, celebrate, and share the unique vocation through which God becomes present within ourselves and to those around us," explains Director of Vocation Ministry, Br. George Van Grieken, FSC.

"I was nervous but ready to make this final commitment," says Brother Pham. "And, I know that God is going to take care of the rest!"

