

## **Glimpses**

Feeling drawn to Vietnam for more than 25 years, Salvatorian Scholastic, Paul Wilkin made his first-ever personal trip to the country in the summer of 2014. He hoped to discern if his call was to missionary life in Vietnam. With blind faith he jumped into the experience. He didn't speak the language and trusted others to help him make his connections in Vietnam. While there, he shadowed other religious in their ministries, ate meals with the people he met, taught English and took hundreds of photos. The call was not clear. However, weeks into his journey, while sitting on the end of his bed, he says, "I felt no need for anything more than what I had at that moment. I suddenly felt at peace."

Paul returned to Vietnam this summer, still not knowing the language and trusting people he met only weeks earlier. He arrived late in the evening after 54 hours of travel to meet a host he had never seen and who spoke little English. He immersed himself in the culture again.

### **Lasting Images**

He shared just a few, "Playing with young kids at the center run by religious for HIV moms and kids: The haunting face of a young girl – haunting in a good way – like seeing a butterfly fluttering in the midst of a night storm: The 12-year-old orphan who spoke some English, was so hospitable, friendly and bright-eyed: Praying four times a day and attending Mass, in a language he did not understand but was now learning: Pastoring to a woman who shared her unease about an imminent marriage to a boyfriend who yells at her and hit her once: And, in the Philippines, seeing people rush the sanctuary rail after Mass to get a blessing and sprinkle of holy water."

### **Why Vietnam?**

God's plans are revealed through all ways and means. So Paul, born in America and studying for the priesthood here, is opening his heart to the unknown in Vietnam. What unfolds remains unclear. Will it be teaching English to Vietnamese? Sharing Mass for religious or locals? Building a new mission? Will it be working to modernize ideas and practices for parishes and religious, or feeding the homeless and helping those in need?

Through prayer, faith, compassion and presence in a country for which he has had no connection, Paul continues to discern his call to missionary work in Vietnam. "I'm getting glimpses of what I believe God is calling me to do," he said.

[photo 1 caption]

Helping Sisters with English pronunciation and teaching them the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

[photo 2 & 3 caption]

Lunch time at the HIV center.