By Eric Hesla

Living with the Assumptionists these past two years has been a tremendous blessing, which I will always cherish in my heart. In my experience, it has been a community of prayer, a community of scholars, and a home.

By sharing in a common spiritual life through daily prayer and Mass, I have grown closer to the Lord and have been more attentive to His activity in my life and in the lives of those around me. This common life of prayer also reinforces a sense of community. I know that my brothers are praying for me and that I am praying for them. In this way, the community here follows St. Paul's command to Christians to encourage and edify each other (1 Thess. 5: 11). Further, in centering our common life in the sharing of the Eucharistic meal, we are reminded that it is Christ who forms us into one community, one body.

As a student of theology, life here has been equally edifying. Most of the students who live here study theology, and I have discussed with the community issues or questions that have been raised in my classes or research. Often these discussions lead to fruitful debates and greater clarity. Further, in line with their order, which was founded by Emmanuel D'Alzon, who strove to promotion Catholic education, and which has as its spiritual Father the great Doctor of the Church, St. Augustine, the Assumptionists here promote an environment of intellectual inquiry and study. Thus, in my experience, this place is not just a community of faith, but a community of scholars who are seeking to understand their faith more fully.

The Assumptionist Center has also been my home. Through events like Thanksgiving dinner, singing Christmas carols, birthday parties, movie nights, evening socials, and even just eating dinner together, this community has become my family. Because my parents and siblings, whom I can visit only occasionally, live on the other side of the country, it has been very important to live in a community where I feel welcome and at home.