

On Sunday, August 25, the university students living in our residence in Saigon hardly had time to sleep as they usually do on Sundays. Instead, they had to get up early in order to accompany their chaplain, Fr. Pierre-Jean Le Viet Thang, by minibus to the novitiate in Ba Ria.

In another section of Saigon, a large bus with 45 seats was waiting for candidates and postulants of the Assumptionists, the Little Sisters of the Assumption, and the Oblates of the Assumption. They were accompanied by the provincial's delegate in Vietnam, Fr. François Xavier Nguyen Tien Dung, Sr. Marie-Paulette Thanh Khanh, OA, and Sr. Diep, LSA. Fr. Provincial, after the long trip to Vietnam from France, was already resting in Ba Ria, spending a little time with the three novices who were about to make their first vows, and taking the opportunity to meet the local bishop.

Although everyone was invited to arrive by 9 AM, some came earlier in order to spend time praying at the gravesite of Fr. Paul Dong, the novicemaster who had died last fall in a motorcycle accident at the beginning of his second year in the position.

On this day his successor, Fr. Paul Nguyen Van Hung, presided at Mass in Vietnamese and Fr. Benoît Gschwind, the provincial, gave his homily in French and received the first vows of the new brothers before a congregation of more than 300 people: lay friends, brothers and sisters of the Assumption Family, the local pastor and some of his parishioners, the vicar general of the diocese, and family members of the three brothers, Pierre Ho Si Can, Joseph Nguyen Huu Du and François-Xavier Nguyen Xuan Phuc. Pierre Can and François-Xavier Phuc will begin philosophy and theology at the Franciscan Institute of Thu Duc, while Joseph Du will be going to France to continue his studies.

The day ended with a festive meal and then local songs and dance prepared by the students of

our residences.