

Hi, my name is Japhet Kemali. I was born on the 01/05/1989 on Goodenough Island in the Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea. I am the 4th born in the family of six (five boys and one girl). My dad is a subsistence farmer and a very dedicated church leader. My mom is also a dedicated church believer after her conversion from the United Church.

Life in a village setting is great. I enjoyed everything on my island. Some of the things I like most are fishing, gardening, hunting, and socialization with friends and family. I was educated in my own island from elementary to grade eight (Eloelolona Primary School). I was selected to attend Santa Maria High School in 2005-2006 for Grade 9 and 10. In 2007, I was the first one in the family to be selected to attend secondary school. This time, I experienced the pain of leaving my parents. I had to leave them for two years because Cameron Secondary School was a long way from home. I endured the two years of studies (11-12). After my studies I was advised by Bishop Francisco Panfilo, to take a year out for community experience. In 2009, I was sent to my own parish (Bolubolu) for my experience. I enjoyed being with the people, and socializing, especially through prayer and church activities.

Vocation Story

My calling started when I was in Grade Four. That was in the year 2000. One fine evening, when my family sat for dinner, I do not know what came to my Dad's mind; he started distributing our future professions. I can still remember the fresh words of my dad. This is what he said to me, "Japhet, since you are the humble person in the family, you will work for the Missions." I did not understand all these but I kept on working hard to fulfill my dreams. I wanted to become a doctor to help my suffering people on the isolated island. My dreams of becoming a doctor was fading away because the Vestments of the Priests had disturbed my mind.

After completing my grade 12, the desire of being a Priest was so great. I presented myself to Bishop Francisco Panfilo, SDB (Bishop of Alotau Diocese), with all my intentions. I was so happy and thanked the Lord for the exception given to me. My dad was the one who supported my intentions of becoming a priest. I do not know, but I know that he always prayed for me to get this far of being a seminarian. My mom always tells me, "I am always praying for you." My parents and community and parish are working hard and praying for me to get to the priesthood.

When I entered the seminary in 2010, it was a cool and very friendly experience to my life as a seminarian, which I had never experienced before. More important than to me was a new discovery, and learning about other people with their culture and life style which gave me inspiration to look beyond my vocation to priesthood. During my stay, I discovered the true meaning of life which lies in the simplicity of each one's being, which they have shown always in their smiles, laughters, and attitudes towards other seminarians, especially to me was so great that it was more than to be appreciated. The years have run smoothly with exchanging of words, studies, sharing the joys with sparkles of smiles. I always treasure these in my heart. But all the joy and laughter was halted in 2015, when my lips became heavy to speak and my cheeks became numb and the running tears from our eyes began to flood away the joys of the 5 years. I was removed from my seminary status because I was not following the rules and regulations of the Holy Spirit Seminary. All my happiness was gone within a split of a second, but what remained within me is the memories of the past.

I never gave up when Bishop Rolando Santos, CM, affirmed that I was no longer a seminarian. In 2016, I engaged with the youths and Sunday School. I taught Catechesis and served priests in the Mass. In 2017, I was involved with the organization of the Way of the Cross, and many more things I did. Suddenly, my face started brightening up when Fr. Thomas Losema, asked me to stay with him in the parish to do some parish work. From then on, I proved to him that I am a changed person. When Bishop came for his Pastoral Visit, he heard stories about me and decided to enroll me again into the seminary. I am happy again this year (2018), to be back again into Holy Spirit Seminary. Thanks be to God.

My Big Thanks to all those who have contributed to my vocation. And also big thanks to those who are helping us out in the Holy Spirit Seminary: Friends, Benefactors and Families.