

My name is Benjamin Tanai. I come from a family of nine children, seven males and two females, and most of them got married. I am the last born in the family, and most often when my family jokes, they call me the last born of Jacob, because out of Jacob's twelve sons in the tribe of Israel Benjamin was the last born. Anyway, most of my brothers are working in the government sectors so I am very lucky that they support me in meeting my necessary needs in terms of money, advice and giving encouragement towards my education. I feel that I am being loved very much, first and foremost by my immediate brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, cousins and community as a whole. Unfortunately I really miss the presence of my real beloved parents because they were shot to death, and they were burned into ashes with the house by the Papua New Guinea Defence Force during Bougainville crisis. But I was not killed; God saved me because he has a plan for me and God's plan is what now I am trying to fulfill as a seminarian studying to become a good priest. Wow!! Thank God! Praise God! Alleluia, Amen. I see that God has always protected me since when I was born in 1986 up until today. And now I am 30 years old. On the 15th of December I will turn 31 years old, and I will continue to pray that God will continue to protect me until I fulfill my vocation as priest if God really wants me to be one.

I originally come from the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, the beautiful island in the sunrise-east of Papua New Guinea. More particularly, I am from the central part of Bougainville called Evo/Torau; just nine kilometres away from the Panguna pit. I was brought up by the tribe called Asikopan, meaning "brave tribe" and this tribe is scattered everywhere in the central region from east to west.

How did I come to join the seminary? Coming to seminary was not my primary aim; my primary aim was to become a politician. Since I was in primary school I was thinking strongly of becoming a politician because having seen them coming around our school, so dressed in their best suits and a briefcase in their hands attracted me, so I have been wishing that one day I would become a politician when I completed my school.

However through the long run my thought turned out to be different when I came to high school. My aim to become politician changed into becoming priest. The way of thinking changed. This happened when I was influenced by our school chaplain by the name of Fr. Michael Bora. Every morning we used to have mass celebrated by Fr. Michael. He used to deliver the best homilies. I used to admire him. He's very intelligent, well integrated and always seem to be very transparent in his positive attitude towards everyone. Somehow along my life I also reflected deeply about myself especially how God protected me during the worst Bougainville crises. Even though I was near the point of my death, God didn't allow me to die. For me personally I looked at this very seriously of why God didn't let me die. Then I came to a thought that "what can I give back to God for safeguarding me during the war? So as the years were passing by at that time, somehow Fr. Michael motivated me so I eventually decided that I had to enter the seminary for the first time in 2007. Today I am doing TH2 and next year I will do TH3, which will be my final year. I am very privileged and I am very happy that I am currently studying at Bomana Catholic Theological Institute. I love to be a seminarian, and I enjoy my life as seminarian.

Finally I would like to thank God for making it possible for me to make my right choice to come to the seminary as my best choice in life. And also thanks very much for the benefactors both nationally and internationally for the subsidies and financial donations you give to the school to help it run smoothly both the Holy Spirit Seminary and CTI as a whole. Without your support in both prayers and material the vocation in Papua New Guinea would not be nurtured, but because of your continued support, the vocation is growing. As the saying goes, "Divided we fall; united we stay."