

My back ground information: My name is seminarian Joseph Aria. I took up the seminary studies under the diocese of Kimbe. I was born on Wednesday the second of March nineteen ninety three (1993) in a small village called Lauvore in Kaliai parish. I was raised up as a village kid from my childhood until the state of adolescence. My parents were faithful Catholics before their engagement, and by the time we were born we all fell into the cult practises of the Catholic Church. And so, Catholic is our denomination since the beginning of our family. My father got married to my mother on the twenty sixth of November, nineteen eighty five and Father Patrick Taval was the priest who dispensed the sacrament of marriage on their wedding day. Actually my father is one year ahead of my mother, meaning he is older than my mother. My family is comprised of seven children. But, exactly we were a total of six and making it seven is our adopted brother. There is something interesting during the birth of the six of us. Actually it is like a sequence in delivery. My parents' first born was a girl, followed by a boy, followed by a girl, followed by a boy which is myself, followed by a girl and the last born is a boy. I was the fourth born out of the six in the family. In my family we promote the virtue of sharing and caring for others. My family is a holy Christian family that always followed the rubrics of the church. In fact my parents were the ones with other women in the community who first brought the organisation "Legion of Mary" into our community. At that time, my father was appointed as the chairman of our sub-parish church under the patronage of St. Augustine, and my mother was appointed as the secretary of the curia of Legion of Mary.

On the other hand, I discovered one of the major problems that have more influence on my family back ground. It is difficult for my parents to look for money to pay the school fees for seven of us in the family. We do have coconut plantations, but it is very difficult to earn the income out of these plantations. Transportation is a problem to us. Therefore, it takes us miles or kilometres to bring our cash crops to sell and buy goods to sustain our living and also to pay the school fees.

Furthermore, in the community we lived by clans (family ties). But as for me, my clan is famous and is known in the whole area. Because of its familiarity, I usually received help from other people. I was raised up by my own biological parents and not adopted by another family.

My education information: The journey of my education is a bit of a yoyo since the beginning of my schooling. I had begun my educational journey in elementary school in my own community in two thousand and one. At that time I was just like a toy car controlled by a remote not knowing anything at all. But, my first impression of learning is when I started my primary learning in grade three (3). I continued to grade four in two thousand and five, but I was paralysed by sickness in the middle of the year and did not complete my fourth grade. The sickness seriously affected my right leg, causing swelling and stopping me from working. I did continue on to grade five in two thousand and six after the recovery from sickness. I have completed lower primary at Kandoka community school (grade 3-6). Because of some situation regarding the teachers, I decided to transfer to another primary school. I managed to get the transfer letter and enrolled at Salkei primary school. That was in two thousand and nine. I finally completed my grade eight final examination in two thousand and ten and stayed at home with my parents waiting for the result of the examination. A month later, I was told that my name had appeared at the list of Gloucester High School for two thousand and eleven first intakes.

Gloucester High School is one of the best institutions in the province with quality teachers but, because of the attitude problem of the students, I decided to go to Poinini Agricultural Technical High School. Poinini is one of the Catholic schools in the province under the patronage of St. Edmund Ignatius Rice. In two thousand and eleven I began my academic year as a grade nine student of Poinini high school, and Fr. Gabriel Tovo was the chaplain at that time. This was a terrible and a challenging year for me. I remember the way I was treated with the other students those who transferred from other institutions. We were treated as low class students in our first academic year. We were given a classroom with no desks and used it till the end of term three. As for me, I usually used an empty carton box as my desk to write on. Despite of all the struggles and difficulties, I made it through and completed the first year. I thought of myself that nothing is going to happen like this the following year, 2012. But I was wrong. In two thousand and twelve, I still faced the same situation again. A month before our grade ten final examination, a big fight broke out in the school between the Talasea students and other boarding students. The dormitory of the boys was burned into ashes and as a result, I did not have a proper time to prepare for my final examination. After all that had happened, I was selected to continue eleven and twelve grade at Kimbe secondary school.

This was a new chapter of my education journey. In secondary I have experienced new things, especially the environment and also the weight of learning. I did grade eleven in two thousand and thirteen and twelve in two thousand and fourteen. I love science, and so during the screening of courses, I chose mixed science (applied science). The reason is that I love biology because it deals with the life of every living creature on earth. I am always eager to learn many things in biology and also try hard to have a good result at the end of the year. While I was in grade twelve, the desire of going to the seminary was becoming stronger and stronger, and so I wrote to the vocation director expressing my desire to become a priest. After the screening of the applicants, they accepted me as a candidate for 2016 propaedeutic year one. I was given a year out to stay with my parish priest after I completed grade twelve at Kimbe secondary school. I spent the whole year, 2015 in my parish helping out my parish priest and also the communities in the parish. I was recommended by my parish priest through this one year, and so my name was clearly approved to enter the seminary in two thousand and sixteen.

Life in the seminary: Many would say that a priest inspired me and therefore I would go to the seminary to study to become priest. As for me, my calling to the seminary is different. Also I was not inspired by other person or any priest to the priesthood life. The desire of becoming a priest is not when I was in the secondary school or when I was not selected to any college. No. It began when I was in primary school. One morning I attended a school Mass and at the point of the consecration of bread and wine a thought came to me about the vocation to the priesthood. From that point it grew until the time I entered the seminary in two thousand and sixteen. When I was at home with the priest in the parish I was excited to go quickly to the seminary without any knowledge about the seminary life. But when I first arrived at the seminary, I felt like i was cutting myself away from my family. It seemed also like I was totally out of place. But, as the weeks went on, I started adapting to the situation and by the end of term one, I already get used to the program. I completed my two years propaedeutic program at Sacred Heart Seminary, Rapolo and continued doing my spirituality year program at St. Fidelis Seminary (2018) and this year in the Holy Spirit Seminary.