

## VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Before coming into the religious life, I was filled with different kinds of ideas, because many changes influenced me as I was trying to follow what is best for me as a person. I came to realize the importance of life, so I decided to enter the religious life by joining the archdiocese of Madang. The life I was leaving was different from the current life that I have now. The life of a person like me is different compared to those who have both parents.

As a Grade six (6) dropout from the year 1996 is different from those who graduate from big institutions like me as standard six dropout. The life that I had with my parents was a struggling thing for our survival as a family. Even though there were struggles, we stood as a family and fought for what was best for us. I was able to leave my parents in the year 2007 towards Madang where I did all my studies. Living with my parents for twelve years without a proper educational background, I decided to make a change in life. I left for Madang in that year, which was a bit sad for my parents and myself as well. I did my seventh grade in 2008 and the following year I completed my grade eight so I had a chance to do the ninth grade the following year. Life in Madang was challenging for me as a dropout from the past years. The thing that surprised me and also kept me persevering in my studies was that I was challenged by Archbishop William Kurtz. He asked me about my grade so I told him that I was doing my grade seven. Then he said the only grade that you're required to finish to enter the Seminary is grade twelve. This gave me the great challenge. However, I kept his words till I reached grade ten.

After completing the tenth grade I was selected to do grade eleven in another Secondary school. I did all my best with many other students from all over Madang Province. When I was about to finish grade twelve I was not feeling happy about myself, so I withdrew from school that year which was 2013. I stayed home with my sister and her husband becoming a babysitter to my sister's children. I saw the struggles of the people in that place because of the shortage number of priest. This was another experience that I encountered with the people looking for priests to celebrate Mass with them. I was influenced to enter into the seminary by my own desires because of what I saw with my own eyes. The following year I went to complete the final grade, which was twelve, and I did exactly what I was planning to do with my own life. I wrote letters to the vocation director's office to be accepted to join the seminary. I received the letter that I was accepted to enter the seminary the following year.

While in the seminary I realized that the life I was encountering in the outside world was different from this one I am experiencing. I met new faces from all parts of Papua New Guinea while in the seminary. In the year 2017, while doing my spiritual year in Madang, I lost my mother. She died in that year, but I never attended the burial of my mother. The following year I also lost my father, and now I am in the seminary still struggling for my priesthood vocation. The purpose that I am in the seminary is not for my family or my friends or whoever it is, but it is for the church of Christ. The priesthood thing is not private but it is for the people of God. My goal is to be a good priest, a holy priest, and an obedient priest to my bishop.

NAME: BENEDICT KISSU