

Fredrick Sebie-Archdiocese of Madang - My Vocation story

Dear friends:

I am Freddy Sebie from the Archdiocese of Madang. Currently I am doing my first year Theological Studies at Catholic Theological Institute at Bomana, Port Moresby. This is my seventh year of being in the seminary, and I am glad to share my vocation story with you all. The story I wanted to share is a not merely a story but a story of life. It is a way of living as life continues with new experiences and aspirations each day. This is my story. My call to the vocation of priesthood is a desire, something that happens inside of me, which I still cannot fully comprehend and explain. But I believe in God's providence and the free will which He has given me to freely accept and pursue what I am aspiring to, and I believe that God is calling me to become His servant one day.

I did not know when and how to start pursuing this call when I grew up until I reached the tenth grade. This was the time I first met with my Diocesan Vocation Director and expressed my desire to study for the priesthood. I said, "Hey! Father, I was thinking about the priesthood; I am thinking of becoming a priest. Can you give me some advice?" He was a very pious man and he gave me the best practical advice I ever got.

First he asked me a very simple question yet thought provoking, a question to test my faith. He said, "Freddy do you really understand what you are talking about? Think of your family first, because the priesthood is not a career in which you will earn a living and help your family. Study hard, get a job, and help your family." This way of thinking is common and imbued in all our Melanesian cultures which family and relatives comes first - what we call "wantoks". Then he said that the Lord has great plans for you in whatever service you are called to serve. But if you are not satisfied after a while, then take a real hard look at the priesthood. So I had to think about it for a while but still I could feel this desire inside of me. Unfortunately, he told me that they no longer accept students at the tenth grade and this made me think even harder.

However, he said if God is really calling you, God will make His own path, and he encouraged me to study hard and keep contact with him. And I believed in what he said. After two years I completed my twelfth grade and got accepted into the seminary. I first entered St. Fidelis Minor Seminary in Madang in the year 2011 where I did my two years of propaedeutic studies (2011- 2012), and then another three years of philosophical studies at Good Shepherd Major Seminary in Banz, Jiwaka Province (2013-2015). The following year (2016) I did my pastoral year of formation in one of the parishes in my home diocese. When I reflected back on my own lived experiences and my blessed history, I felt and saw God really working in my life.

And I have to admit the fact that personally I had a lot to put up with especially with my past six years of formation. The events of my past six years of formation have evolved so rapidly that I have not been able to digest what has really happened. At times there are some things I feel I cannot accept and seemingly I am lost between imagination and reality and the truth is, I still cannot fully explain my vocation and it seems like a mystery to me, how God works in my life.

As I continue with my formation and studies with prayer and reflection, God continues to inspire me with new insights that shed light on some of my questions and doubts about my own calling. I now come to understand that God does not show partiality when He calls and chooses certain men to become His servants. God calls and chooses from different backgrounds and walks of life just like he called His prophets in the Old Testament, and Christ in the New Testament called his disciples. Therefore, with the faith and conviction I do believe that God is calling me to become His servant to work in his vineyard one day. I am now happy being a seminarian on this journey toward priesthood.

Finally it is a word of thanks and acknowledgement to those people who have collaborated with God to make me realize my own calling; those who are really supporting me in this long journey. Some of them worth mentioning especially are my Bishop, Rev. Archbishop Steven Reichert OFM Cap. through the Archdiocese of Madang, the vocation directors, the seminary formators, and the generous benefactors and the faithful Christians of the Archdiocese for their continual moral, spiritual and financial supports. And I am not

forgetting my beloved parents, siblings and other relatives who are always supporting me. May the good Lord bless you all always!