

The Brief Story Of My Life

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

You are so generous to us, the diocesan seminarians residing now at the Holy Spirit Seminary, studying here in Catholic Theological Institute (CTI) - Bomana, Papua New Guinea. I am personally very grateful to you, my good benefactors, and Christ's faithful constant sharing of the love of our Merciful God.

Andrew Kangal is my name and I am from the Archdiocese of Mt. Hagen up in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. My parish is Fatima. I am the last born out of five brothers and two sisters. They all got married and have their own families. My parents are aging now and are waiting patiently for me to become a good priest. Currently I'm doing the second final year of my religious and theological studies before my archbishop ordains me into a deaconate ministry and priesthood afterwards.

In 1934 Fr. William Ross, SVD Missionary from US came to my area. He evangelised the natives of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. He established several mission stations which became parishes afterwards. Several Dutch priests came later and took care of the mission stations entrusted to them. Fr. Peter Van Anderson SVD a missionary from Holland, built the mission station in my area into a magnificent parish with several schools including the Good Shepherd Seminary, and he was the first rector of that seminary. He baptised my mother when she was at her thin [I don't know what he means here] age. My father and I received baptism from him in 1997 during Easter in our parish, and that was the time when I did my second grade in Our Lady of Fatima Primary School.

When I attended the secondary education in 2005-2007 at Fr. Peter Secondary School, the top school that my parish priest had founded, I had a dream of becoming a pilot, since I used to do pretty well in the subjects of mathematics and science. At my eleventh grade I was asked by my English teacher to do a book review. I searched in the library and found a small book at the corner of the shelf. The book was entitled Francis of Assisi. I didn't know what Francis of Assisi was all about, so I borrowed the book and started reading it. It was written in simple English words, and when reading through it I was greatly moved to follow the example of Francis of Assisi, abandoning his luxurious life for Christ in the poor. During that year my parish priest put up the notice for the vocation club and asked the interested boys in the eleventh and twelfth grades to be in this vocation club. Inspired by the life story of Francis of Assisi, I was one of the six boys who formed the vocation club in Fr. Peter Secondary in 2006. Every Thursday evening we used to gather together with the parish priest at the school hall for prayer especially saying the night prayer using the breviary. That was the first moment of my life to use the breviary.

My parish priest Fr. Peter Van Anderson was my spiritual director and confessor since I attended the primary education until I first entered the seminary formation at St. Fidelis Seminary founded by the Franciscan Missionaries which is located in the Archdiocese of Madang. He died during my first year in the seminary formation. Like Francis of Assisi who had left every possession, love ones and security, I also left the share of my land allocated to me by my father to the rest of my brothers. I informed my two beloved girls whom I had engaged with in secondary school about my calling to the priesthood, and I told them to look for new partner in life. Both of them said that my decision broke their hearts, but I never see them and have had no contact with them for several years when I am in the seminary, and finally I heard that both of them got married and have beautiful families.

On the one hand seminary life and priestly formation is very challenging, but on the other hand it is very beautiful and enriching for me. I am formed to be a true man, the man of God and the man of the people of God. There are lots of people who are poor in the spirit and poor according to the standard of the world. Therefore, my interest in becoming a priest is to save one of the poor for salvation through Christ more than anything. I want to follow the example of St. Francis of Assisi and St. John Vianney in their way of imitating Christ. They left the earth to others in order to win for heaven. They were knights to honour and win not the earthly, like kings and fair ladies, but the other way shown to us by Christ himself.