

Vocation Story (1988-2019)

This life of mine started with its own beginning, and I was born on June 14, 1988. I was born and baptised as a Roman Catholic at Manetai in the Bougainville Province of the country Papua New Guinea. I received baptism on 21 August, 1988 at Sinoru Chapel by Fr Kevin Kelly, a German Missionary priest, and more significantly, four other missionary priests witnessed my baptism. In 2001, I received the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confession by Fr. Lukabai, a local diocesan priest. In 2007, I was confirmed as a Roman Catholic by Bishop Bernard Unabali. I started my education in 2002, at Kopani Elementary. From 2005 to 2009, I attended Kopani Primary School. I did my high school education at St. Joseph, Mabiri, one of the schools run by Marist Society, (2010-2011). Then I was selected to attend Bishop Wade Tarlena Secondary School, (2012-2013). I started seminary at Rapolo Major Seminary in 2016 to 2017. Then in 2018, I did my Spiritual Formation at St. Fidelis Seminary, in Madang. I wrote this vocation story in 2019.

Family Background

I am the son of John Pengasirah and Maureen Amine. I belong to a family of fourteen children, and I am among them as the fourth born child. My parents are illiterate; they did not attend any formal education, but upholding the Christian principles is so important to them and I'm proud of them.

However, my father can only read pidgin words since he was taught by one of his friends during their time working as plantation labourers. It made possible for him to attend Mabiri Ministry School, and graduated as a village catechist. He helped parents for the baptism of their children and young couples for the reception of matrimony. He sometimes shared Bible Readings on Sundays Service in the community.

He became deaf. His voice is thunderous with purpose of laughter and correction to us "his lovely children", as he always says when giving advice. He knows what he speaks but cannot hear himself and control the tone of his voice, so he is always very loud. His eyes sometimes become his ears. If anybody speaks to him, he uses his eyes to pick out the words spoken by just watching the lips move, and he is very smart at doing it. He loves to be simple; you would see him without any shirt on, but only his old towel around his neck. When you see him, you would feel compassionate to his way of life, but whenever you want to give him something he refuses to take it. His peaceful smile is always welcoming to little children. His moment with children is more enjoyable than those of his same age. He loves to be with little children telling them traditional stories. More significantly, he loves to be with children because communication with them becomes so normal because of the fact that he can only hear sharp pitched voice so clearly. I am mostly loved by him and my mother.

I was brought up during those dark years of Bougainville Civil War (1988-1998). I grew up with those sounds of the gun, the bomb and the cry of the people. I have known whom to fear and what to fear in those days. We had been running away into the bushes to hide from PNG Defence Force and BRA (Bougainville Revolutionary Army). Whenever we heard gunfire, we had to run quickly into a hiding place. We as little children were always told to be quiet whenever there was a sense of attack. When the war was in real action, we continued to live in the bush camp. I can remember one day when I and my two elder brothers were nearly killed by gunfire from a PNG Defence Force flying helicopter. From that moment, I learned the reason why we were being kept in the bushes. Then we were captured and brought to a live in care centre and this was the place and time that I had really seen the bloodshed of people dying with missing parts of their body. Somehow I was saved by fear but on the other hand I am psychologically developed for being always fearful.

Extra Ordinary Events

I had two extra ordinary events which I will never forget in my life. First, in 1990 I had a Mysterious Disappearance. When I was two years of age, as a family we moved to Aniovi village. Aniovi is the community centre where the Gospel of Christ first was proclaimed some years back. This was also my father's origin. However during that time, this place was also dominated by cargo cult practices. This is where and when I had this mysterious disappearance. I disappeared physically from my family for almost three days. They believed that I was taken away by one of the spirits of the bush, or of the river or of the mountain. This was an inherited belief that there are some kinds of disciplinary spirits of these places, but no

one ever known the reality. They searched for me from place to place, on the mountains, streams and in the forests nearby. As a plea for my return, they have taken a great competition between my family and those some my relatives among cargo cult group. Those among cargo cult group worshiped in the graves and those places they considered sacred grounds, but my family worshiped the invisible God, since my father was a son of one those first people who worked with missionaries. Then, on the third dawn after my disappearance, I was found crying inside a cocoa fermenting building. They could not believe that nothing had happened to my body and it was also impossible for me to climb such a high building. I was told this mysterious story many times by my parents, uncles and uncles, and still today tell this story.

The second event is the Vision of blue light. In 1997, when the Bougainville Civil War came to cease, we went back to our original home from being kept at Manetai Care Centre. My father rebuilt our family home; he built a big house and inside the house he constructed a prayer room. So as a family we prayed together in that room in the mornings and evenings. One evening after praying the rosary, I was left sleeping inside that room. With a surprise I woke to find myself surrounded by blue light. I thought it was one of my elder brothers coming with a torch to get me up. But then, I realized that the light was coming from nowhere. By the time my mother called me, the light disappeared. Without any delay I ran to her and told everything about the light. When I asked her what that was, she didn't care and explained nothing. From then on, I have seen that light more than two times and I've told no one. The last time I saw it was in 2007. This time it appeared with a voice in my mind saying "Felix you'll become a priest." I broke out in loud cry. I didn't know why I was crying. In same house, there was also my elder brother on the other side of the room, who also saw that light and broke out in singing. These are the words he sang, "Jesus you kam bungim mipla, insait long family blong mipela. Yu kam opim hat blong mipla, insait long family." I only told my mother about this experience.

To these days, I feel that I have the call to priesthood but it is still a mystery. I am an individual person, a unique person with all of my personality traits, but not separated from Melanesian culture, my family, village, clan, tribe, province, country and world as a whole. I belong to the world and my life is mostly affected and influenced by culture, environment, beliefs, religions and the values of the community.