

ALPHONSUSE PENGA

MY VOCATION STORY

I grew up in a Christian family; my parents were both Catholic. I have five sisters, and one brother; we were seven in the family. My mother was a president of the Legion of Mary group in our community. Every night before going to bed, we had to recite the rosary. And this became part of my life. There are two kinds of vocations, married life and the celibacy; celibacy is a kind of vocation in which a man or woman gives himself totally to God by leaving out everything on earth and following God. Everything, I mean the earthly pleasure, money, possessions, and women, because to follow Christ means a person must be physically, spiritually, and mentally free from all things on earth.

To me I was not meant to study for the priesthood, but now I feel that God is calling me to serve his people. When I was still a boy I did not have any intention to become a priest. During my primary school, my aim was to become one of the politicians later on. And so that is why I wanted to study political science. My religious studies teacher was always telling us, when we had a catechism class, she always read the life stories of the saints to us, and then later she told us to reflect about the story, and how these stories will help us in our studies. All my primary school years, I did not know about the priesthood, and the role of the priesthood. I thought that to become a priest is just like wasting time, because I see that priests are not going to have a wife, priests do not have money, and also they did not have to own anything. They have to give up everything, and so I think that to become a priest is wasting time.

However, all my bad thoughts about the priesthood were changed when I did my grade eight. That was in (2008), before I sat for my final examination, and my mother told me that I had to entrust my exam to the Blessed Virgin Mary, because Mary was a mother of the Church, she will always intercede for us, and will always be ready to help us in our struggles. So I thought to myself that I will try; if it works, then I will continue to practice it. Every time I go for Sunday's services, receiving Holy Communion every Sunday I confess every time when a priest came to celebrate mass with us in our community. And these continued until I completed my high school, in (2010). After I completed my secondary level I applied to Bishop Bill Fey, and Bishop Fey sent me to Madang to do my formation at St. Fidelis Seminary. Last year I was sent to Rapolo to do my first year of religious studies, and this year I was here in Catholic Institute of Theology, for my second year. I have encountered many difficulties in my seminary life, but I always have faith in God, and Mary is always helping me. Christ said whoever wants to follow me, carry his cross everyday and follow me. And I believe that Christ is calling me to become his servant, to proclaim the Good News to the people, and serve his mission here on earth.

But in all, I'm happy in all the seminary activities here in CTI.