

My Vocation Story

I'm Jeffrey Ossom from Midiba village of Alexishafen Parish from the Archdiocese of Madang. After completing my matriculation study at the UPNG Open Campus at Madang branch, like other youth, I went back to the village and socialized with my peer groups. Whether good or bad it doesn't matter; we enjoyed the life aimlessly as it is without goals and hoping nothing to be as important in life. My Christian faith was diminishing without much involvement in religious activities, at least occasionally.

It was a time of reflection and pondering into my life when one of my very best friends, with whom I usually teamed up together, died unexpectedly from a snake-bite in his very young age. My parents started convincing me to refrain from some of the things which are not good, or otherwise I would be the next one to die. I started to realize what they have said to me and the importance of life as the privilege. My family are active religious members which I try to imitate them attending mass services and participating in other organised religious activities in the community. I then became a model of a change in the community, and many of my peer group accompanied me and we started grouping ourselves up as an organised Catholic youth group in the community.

One day the parish priest sent to each local outstation asking for the young people to form a youth group in the parish. From there, they appointed me as the Alexishafen Parish youth president. This was a challenging time where I was to deal with the youth and elderly people with different mindsets, trying to lead the people, especially the youth, to live peacefully and practically live a Christian faith so that the whole community could live in peace.

While doing that, I was inspired by my parish priest; Fr. Rischo, SVD, from Indonesia who is so kind and open for discussions. He is friendly where I felt comfortable to work with him and as well as seeking further help, especially to get intellectual and spiritual advice from him. He was very spiritual and intellectual as well, humble and patient, his homilies were very powerful, which bore a great impact to the parishioners. The parishioners are touched with his homily, and they discussed his homilies everywhere they were and came for directions, not only for spiritual needs but other advice and recommendations to the well-being of their lives.

It was very interesting for me. I came to admire him, and I tried to find my way out, hoping that one day I could become somebody like him. While organising the youth activities and other related church activities in the parish I started to write a letter of interest to the vocation director, and I was accepted to sit for the entry test. I passed my entry test, but unfortunately the vocation director refused to allow me to the seminary at first because I was a matriculate student where they would only accept grade 12 graduates, and no school leavers. I was so distressed, but my parish priest assumed me to be patient. At last, thanks to God, all those in grade 12 were unable to make it through. The vocation director realized that I'm the only one left. He called for me and told me to go to the seminary. Happily, I went to the seminary only one day late after the school started at St. Fidelis Seminary in Madang.

It was a radical change in life in which I came to experience the love of God for me, when I myself responded to his call and tried to discern the reality of life. I have completed 3 years in St. Fidelis Minor Seminary in Madang and now I'm facing new challenges of life again in human formation in major seminary in Holy Spirit Seminary, Bomana, in Port Moresby doing Philosophy 1 at Catholic Theological Institute.