

Vocation story

The better my discernment, and make clear my choices. In my journey of discernment there are certain people who have been my models and who have inspired and motivated me. They are my families, colleagues, religious fathers and religious sisters, and my lovely friends.

Firstly, you know well that everybody in this world wants to live a happy and a meaningful life and not to regret afterwards and that's what I was aiming at in life. Today, in retrospect on my discernment, I just want to focus on persons who have been instrumental in my life. I have never dreamed of entering a seminary, and I have no notion of priesthood. Why? Because you will understand that my mother was a Methodist, now known as United Church, and my father is a catholic. To make it simple, I grew up with a lovely family in the context of my mother's family. Nevertheless, let me just focus on people who have inspired me.

In 2013, when I entered Don Bosco Technical School at Gabutu and had been a student there, I was struck by a famous saying of St John Bosco, "Give me souls, take away the rest." As days and months passed by on reflecting deeply on the phrase, it gave me an insight of opening myself to God. I was not reluctant, nor had I been compelled. On the other hand, what inspired me to change was the life and example of an elderly Salesian priest, Fr. Luciano Odorico SDB. I see him as a man of wisdom because of his simplicity and humbleness of life. He was my spiritual father afterwards.

Secondly, having in mind the desire of becoming a priest, I negotiated with my parents and they agreed with what I intended to become in life. On the one hand, my intension was also evident to my mother's family of. I remember them telling me, "Hey! Philip, you might become a priest." I just smiled with chuckles. Whenever there was a family gathering, they would ask for me and my mum would tell them that I was busy. However, before I entered the seminary, I decided to go home and prepared myself, which I did. I was able to forgo some of the things I saw as obstacles which hinder me from processing in life.

Thirdly, I have been here in the seminary, and taking the course of vocation discernment was a blessing from God to me. I really appreciate it because it helps me to distinguish and also clarifies certain perspectives and steps in making a good decision in life. As I was drafting my vocation story, it gave me many insights and notions, and some I noted them down while others did not. I am certain and confident of making a sound judgment about my decision because the decision is mine and no one else's, but before doing that, I have taken into consideration the stand of the church, the people and myself. When God calls, he modifies the call, the only thing I need to do is listen with my heart to what His Holy Spirit telling me and not to be afraid of the call because it is a great joy and the call is a sacred calling. Even though I had the desire of becoming a priest since 2014, and I was process for that by the Salesians, however, Christ said, "You did not chose me, I chose you." (Jn 15:16). I decided to join the diocesan priesthood because I was the youth representative in the archdiocese level and having been involved in the archdiocese program made me apply for diocesan priesthood. It took me time also to discern before applying to diocesan because discernment is a process that allows us to see without confusion and ambiguity.

Furthermore, using the method of the art of decision making and the steps of making a decision, I am certain and confident to say that I have the call to priesthood. Why? Because when I reflect back after studying the whole course on discernment, I see and realize that I have the necessary characteristics which are almost and nearly to Agape. I also came to understand and accept the fact that a vocation is a Gift and a Mystery from God according to St John Paul II. I have other plans in life but like it is said in book of Jeremiah, "Yes, I know what plans I have in mind for you, Yahweh declares, plans for peace, not for disaster." (Jer. 29:11). I did mention earlier that I have no intension of becoming a priest but however, now I realize what God wants in my life. And I believe it is Christ, who chose me (Jn 15:16), because I have opened myself to him, in similar way as in my commitment with youth ministry and also my personal prayer life. I have used my head and heart to come to an understanding of my decision because at a certain point a decision has to be made because discernment is not perpetual.

Finally, I know the things that give me consolation and things that give me desolation. For instance, getting drunk thinking it will give me happiness and consolation but afterwards it turns out to be a disaster which spoils my reputation. I also know my strength and weakness and like I mention already that I am fully aware of my decision. I have consulted my spiritual director and have been in a state of peace when drafting this case study. Most importantly I consult my head and my heart in making my decision.