

## MY RIVER OF LIFE – VOCATION STORY

I, Joseph Philip Pirimin, was born on the 24th of August 1994 on a small island called Duke Off York in East New Britain Province. We are four siblings in the family, one girl and three boys. My brother and I are the twins, and I am the second born twin. My twin brother's name is Alfred. My small brother's name is Nereus, and the elder sister's name is Josephine. My father is from the island and my mother is from Kavieng, New Ireland Province.

As child, I grew up within a very strong practicing Catholic Christian family. At the age of nine, I had a wonderful experience of God's protection and guidance. One time, I was able to walk alone without recognizing that I was traveling with the Lord. The distance which I had been going through was approximately about three to four kilometers from my village. Along the total darkness of my journey I came across two men who I heard saying, "Do not cry but walk quietly until you reached your destination."

As an adolescent, when I left home for schooling. I already knew how to pray and would be able to pray daily. My parents taught me how to pray using the different kinds of prayers, and most especially one of these common prayers I am devoted to is praying the Holy Rosary daily. From 2011-2014, I was elected twice as the school president, first for St. Jude's High School when I did grade ten (10) and then for Manggai Agro Secondary School, when I did grade twelve (12). My leadership experiences with the Lord were so many, and these inflamed in me the passion and the love for Jesus.

As an adult, today I am so challenged with life, and I feel that without Jesus I would be a hopeless person. Therefore, I draw from the past experiences of life, and I can remember the promise I made to mother Mary when I did grade one. I told her that if she would intercede for me, I wanted to become a priest in the future. As I was growing up, one day my father asked me "Philip what do you want to become after you had complete your schooling?" The response I gave to my papa on that very moment was, "I want to become a priest, Papa." At that time I did my grade seven at St Mary's Primary School, Karu.

And so, after I had completed my grade twelve (12) at Maggai Secondary School, unfortunately I had not been doing well in mathematics. My class patron saw my internal marks were good and he told me before I set the examination to apply for one of the universities in Papua New Guinea. However, because of my mathematical results I could not fulfill his wishes. There, after all that had happened, the thought of becoming a priest came back, and that time it was so strong that I was not able to resist. I wrote a letter expressing my interest to the Vocation Director of the Tuias Formation Center, Fr David Katim. He accepted me to join the other brothers in the formation center on the 2nd February, 2015. I stayed for only six months, and I was told by the bishop of Kavieng, Ambrose Kiapseni from Lihir, to go and do my Come and See program at my own parish with Fr Henry (MSC). Towards the end of 2016, I got my documents prepared and on the 2th February 2017, I left for Sacred Heart Inter - Diocesan Major Seminary Rapolo to begin my seminary formation.

I did propaedeutic one and two at the Sacred Heart Inter - Diocesan Major Seminary in 2017 and 2018, and before I was to go for Spiritual Program at St Fidelis Madang, I was told that my marks were below the requirements to continue and I had to go back home. However, after a couple of hours the rector of Rapolo, Fr John Cabrido called me back into his office and talked to me contrary to what he had been telling me. So then, I was able to continue my spiritual formation at St Fidelis seminary Madang in 2019.

In 2019, I was at St Fidelis seminary doing my canonical Year/Spiritual program.

I was appointed a music coordinator of the seminary, and I really enjoyed doing music arrangements with my brothers in the seminary, and I also appreciated the moments of being together with St. Cecilia as the teacher of music.

During the feast of Blessed Peter Torot, I took the privilege to coordinate with the rector of the seminary, Fr Patrick, and our New Guinea Islands(NGI) benefactors, especially those who were lecturing in Divine Word University, Madang Technical and the Madang tTeachers College with those of Danip Vocational School. The celebration of the feast day ended up joyfully with everyone's participation.

But before that wonderful celebration, our NGI families offered a statue of Blessed Peter Torot to the seminary, and we students built a beautiful Grotto of Blessed Peter Torot which was then blessed by Fr Patrick.

I also had a unique tale of the surrounding people of Midiba paddling their canoes through the seaside of the seminary. I most often took leftover food, served into big dishes, and gave it to them. At times I did the same to the handymen of the seminary.

I had also had the rector's consent to help out a seminary staff member who had no kitchen and whose family often did cooking just outside the house and when it is raining it was too difficult for them.

Furthermore, as I was consistently feeding the hungry people of Midiba, I was told by my spiritual director not to do that and it was really hurting me when I saw dishes of food being thrown into the seaside of the seminary while too many people were hungry for food. But then, what I did was not according to the direction that he was telling me. Another time the elder sister of my mother decided to come with her family to visit me in the seminary and would have dinner together because soon I would be heading back to New Ireland Province. I went and sought permission from the rector that my family would be coming during weekend to have dinner with me but he replied by saying, "If they come you will be removed out of the seminary program." I was full of wonder, so I told my family about everything that the rector had just told me.

However, they got the school bus, and they came and picked me up on the Saturday after the morning prayer and Eucharistic celebration. Some of the students saw that, and they reported me to the rector and to my spiritual director before my return in the evening. I knew those students who had reported me, but I forgive them all because it was my own fault. And as a consequence of those happenings, I had been recommended by the rector to get out of the seminary program and to look for another life apart from studying to become a priest.

Therefore, as I was facing those challenges it made me really wonder if it was truly God who is calling me for priesthood or not. After a year out of the seminary program, I personally thank God for his tremendous love for me. In the year 2020, the bishop of Kavieng, who is currently the Archbishop of Rabaul, Josephrockus Tatamai,, he recommended me to return to the seminary and to continue my philosophical studies in the Catholic Theological Institute Bomana.

And finally now I am back again in the formational programs and am beginning another chapter of my humble life with Mama Mary and Jesus my strength. Praise be to God. Thank you.