

Jacob Tumun

My Vocation Story

I (Jacob Tumun) come from Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Fatima, in the Archdiocese of Mt. Hagen, which consists of Western Highland and Jiwaka Provinces. I am the first born in the family of seven, with three younger sisters and four brothers.

My desire to become a Roman Catholic Priest started when I was two or so. As long as my memory can recall, when I first attend the Sunday school in the main station in Fatima, I was really attracted by the elevation of the bread and wine during consecration time. Later, when I saw Fr. Peter Van Andrchiam SVD (a Polish Priest) elevate the Holy Eucharist during Mass, I usually told myself that one day I would be doing what he (Fr.) does. I really admired him, and unlike most kids, I never lost focus in the Mass, especially during consecration. This admiration persuaded me to beg my grandparents to take me to the main station where I could attend Mass every Sunday. However, as the time lapsed (schooling years), my desire to become a priest was not firm, but the Catholic faith was solid until 2013.

When I was in grade eleven in 2012, I started to feel the conviction to become a priest, so I started writing to the SVDs. The SVD's Vocation Director replied and we were in touch via letter for almost two years. I was determined to join the SVDs at the beginning of 2014. Nevertheless, prior to the National Exam (in 2013) one of the MSI sisters arranged with the Diocesan Vocation Director to conduct an entry test for admission to St. Fidelis Seminary, Madang. The arrangement was successful and sister brought the entry test to the School on a Saturday, and fourteen of the grade 12 of that year were ready to do the entry exam. After the opening prayer for the exam, Sr. (Vimala) asked one of my classmates by the name of Lucas Philip to check me, if I was around and willing to do the entry exam. On the other hand, having no idea of the arrangement, I did my laundry in the morning and was in a deep sleep in my room at the dormitory. He (Philip) came and called me through my window. I responded and he whispered the words: "come and do the entry test!" He was in a hurry because he wanted to do the test, so he returned immediately. Imagine! Just waking up from sleep and not knowing what it was all about. Out of curiosity, I ran after Him with a sport wear and a shirt in my hand. As I walked on the side of the Science Lab. I saw boys doing the test. I wore the shirt and as soon as I reached the door, Sr. gave me a paper and said just give a try. I borrowed a biro and did the entry exam. I had ample time to complete the exam and it was mostly on English grammar and Comprehension. That day passed and we carried on with Nation Exam etc.

During graduation (i.e. late Nov.), in my attainment certificate attached to my diploma was my acceptance letter for admission to St. Fidelis Seminary the next year. I sat down in the tent thinking about it very hard because I was an average student in the class, and I hoped I would have other offers too. Besides, after the graduation Sister approached me saying, "Congratulations Jacob! Out of the 15, you are the only one who was picked to go to the seminary." At that instance, I told myself I would go to the seminary even if I got any offer from any other tertiary institutions, because I was hand-picked. Fortunately, I was down with one point to be qualify for the course that I applied at the UNITEC. I affirmed that entering the seminary was my real calling. However, my father and the relatives were not happy with my decision, because I am a first born in the family. I was bold and confident with my decision so they finally allowed me to be my own boss.

I have been journeying in the seminary life for last seven years. Seminary life is challenging. As for me, even though life is challenging in the Seminary at times, and sometimes I am being assailed by many difficulties, I am still clinging to my vocation, and my desire to become a priest has never diminished. In this connection, I would like to sincerely thank Almighty God for the continuous grace. I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to the generous benefactors both within and abroad for your unceasing support in all areas of formation so far and the years to come. I aim is to become a Philosophy Lecturer in one of the seminaries in the country. Thank you and may the good Lord continue to bless you in all your undertakings.