

## VOCATION STORY

Raphael Gobi

My name is Raphael Gobi, the eldest son of Mr. Obera Gobi (my father) and Rita Hela Gobi (my mother), and both of them are still alive. I am the eldest of six children in the family. However, my parents took care many of my elder cousins, so we regard ourselves as brothers and sisters. Anyway this is my vocation story. My vocation story to become a priest or the desire to become priest, started when I was in the Sunday school, where my mother used to take me the church every Sunday to attend mass in the Parish of Mary Help of Christians, Sabama. The Parish is under the Salesian Missionaries, and I was usually amazed at the Salesian priest by their charisma and spirituality. However at that time I was small, and the feeling faded when I went to the primary school in the year 2003 to 2011.

In 2012, I attend Don Bosco Technical Secondary School, Gabutu. And again, the school is a Salesian School for non-selected boys who did not have the opportunity to enter in to the system schools. As I was studying, that same feeling and admiration came back, but I was not really into it. When I reached grade 12 in 2015, I joined the vocation group together with some other boys, but for me, I was just trying to find out about my desires and admirations.

Somehow I found myself interested to join the Salesians as an aspirant, so before the national exams I wrote an interest letter to the vocation promoter expressing my interest. In 2016 I was accepted to join, and was sent to Rabaul to start as a pre-aspirant in Vuna Bosco together with other 11 boys. Of course I was home sick for some time, but it turned out ok.

My desire started becoming a little bit clearer, but not so much, as it was my first time. Anyway it was a wonderful experience in the pre-aspirantate. In 2017, our group was sent back to Port Moresby to continue as first year aspirants in Savio Haus Bomana. Eight of us attended CTI taking up Religious Studies, Year One. During that time, I was really focusing and aiming to become a Salesian priest. I really enjoyed every bit of the formation. Suddenly during the year, my father was sent to prison, due to some accusations in the work force. And he is a police officer, and he is the only one that provides for the family, because unfortunately my mother is just a house wife. So when my father was in the prison I was really affected as a first born. My mother and the other siblings were really suffering - no food, light, lunch money, bus fee, etc. Thanks to be to God, he was with us in the time of pain, by leading some good friends and few relatives to support them. Fortunately, and by the grace of God, my father was released.

In 2018, I took a year out and went to live with the Salesians in Gulf Province. I purposely came out because I was still confused about whether to make my decision to continue, to become a Salesian priest, and also because of the fees. With the help and guidance of the Salesians in Gulf, I was able to come back to Savio Haus and to continue my studies in CTI, in 2019. I completed the year, and then I realized that the Salesian life was not for me. So again I went out to look for job to help my family in 2020, but that did not turn out well. And one Sunday as was going to attend mass, I met another Salesian priest, and he asked me, what are you doing currently, and then I explain my situation. After he asked me, are interested to come and help me in the parish, in Gulf? I accepted the invitation and followed him the next day to the village. I was helping in the construction of the school, teaching catechisms, preparing others to receive the sacraments, and animating the youths in the parish. By doing those things, the desire came back to me, but this time it was different, not to be a Salesian, but rather a Diocesan priest. Of course there was still the issues in my family and expectations. However I wrote my interest letter to apply as a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Port Moresby. I thank and praise God for all the experiences and difficulties I encountered, and continue to ask Him to strengthen me in this journey of life. Therefore I submit myself to his will. Amen.