

Ephraim Keh

My Vocation Story

My calling began from my childhood, but personally I did not realize it when I was growing up. However, after completing my secondary level, there were experiences that helped me to realize my vocation to the priesthood, for which now I found myself in the seminary. Therefore, it happened that I was not able to be selected to any of the higher institutions after completing my twelfth grade. But at last after some of my applications, I was selected to Kimbe nursing college in West New Britain. So my parents and I prepared my belongings and everything, and we went for the registration. As soon as we arrived at the college, unfortunately, the registrar told me that I was late for registration and my space has been already occupied by one student, so I would have to wait until the next year and re-apply again. So that was it. There were no options any more, even though my father did try to convince her of our lateness due the weather, but no way. So with hope and trust we returned back home. After that my father then engaged me on a part time job with one company, and I worked only for six months. Then I left due to some machinery sound or I will say some health related issues. It was very dangerous and risky at my kind of age to be working under uncontrolled sounds which can definitely damage hearing or would cause some long term effects on me, despite of the muffs and other personal protective equipment. So I myself decided to leave. Then my father did his best to try to look for possibilities in impossibilities at least for me to secure some space in one of the institutions' but it didn't work out. So he just told me, "Son I have tried but I was not lucky anywhere, so just stay and we will see what will happen ." With all these events, then, I was wondering what was happening to me. After all, all my marks were ok, and I had the possibility was eligible for any colleges or other higher institutions to pursue my studies, but what was it really? So I was a bit troubled there. Anyway, I just accepted the situation and stayed back home, helping my parents for almost one and half years with hope. During this one and half year I was very much involved in church organized activities, and the first thing that I did was, sometimes I used to follow my parish priest to the sub parishes in the very remote areas as an altar server. Furthermore, I can still recall one Good Friday that I had led the whole community with the Stations of the Cross. I didn't quickly give up but I also continued to attend the masses and be faithful in receiving the sacraments. Suddenly, the rector of the Sacred Heart Seminary and the vocation director for Archdiocese of Rabaul somehow on his pastoral visit to our community caught me there after the mass. So he called me in the evening and interviewed me, and on that very moment he gave my acceptance, and he told me that "I will be leaving tomorrow and by next week I will be also expecting you at the seminary." So I accepted it then, and I shared it with my parents. They were so filled with joy that they brought me to the seminary as soon as possible. Oddly, during my twelfth year, the come and see program was first introduced in our secondary school, but I did not attend one. So what had happened was very unexpected for myself and my family, However, by reflecting on how much I had gone through, in fact it was really a special call for me to the priesthood. Therefore, it was where I also came to realize that though you may have all kinds of plans in your life, but the heavenly father has the final one.