

My Vocation Story

I am Simon Youngopae, born on the 19th of November in 1990 in my small village called Ipai (Ipai-Outstation) in the parish of Wanepap in the Diocese of Wabag in Papua New Guinea. I come from a Catholic family background where I was born Catholic and raised Catholic and lived as a Catholic. This is because my parents are Catholic. My mother, Yasopa Kambi and father, Moses Youngopae got married and gave birth to six children, 4 boys and two girls. We are all baptised Catholic. Unfortunately, three (two boys and one girl) of them passed away during their childhood. And we three (two boys and one girl) of us are living, and I am the fourth born of my family. My elder brother got married and my younger sister also got married. My parents are subsistence farmers where our livelihood is entirely dependent on garden food. We do not have any form of income in terms of salary, wages, or any other form of business income. Unfortunately, my father died in 23rd of July 2016, but my mother is still living. Regardless of situations and difficulties in our family, we are happy to be a Catholic family.

Initially, my interest in a vocation started in 2003 when I was in grade four. This is because I was convinced and influenced by a Michaelite priest who always came to my outstation to celebrate Mass. I wished that one day I would be a priest. And I started to write my first letter of interest to the congregation of St. Michael in 2009 when I was in grade ten. I did not give up writing to the vocation director until I sat for the first entry test in 2011. Unfortunately, I failed that entry test, and I was out for one year. But my interest still lingered, so I wrote to the vocation director to give me second chance. Then I sat for the second time entry test and failed that again, and then the third chance was special because the vocation director accepted me to do the postulancy program (2015), but I also failed the entry test. However, three times failing did not bother me to give up my vocation in the Congregation of St. Michael. I asked vocation director (Fr. Josef Pekala) to give me fourth chance. It was very special chance because I repeated the postulancy program again in 2016, and unfortunately my father died in 23 July 2016. Despite that, I sat for the entry test and finally I was accepted for the minor seminary studies for two years (2017-2018) at St. Fidelis Seminary in the Archdiocese of Madang. After two years of propaedeutic, I continued philosophy studies at Bomana Catholic Theological Institute in Port. Moresby for two years (2019-2020) and attained a diploma in Philosophy, and now I am happy to continue my theology studies as a seminarian of the Congregation of St. Michael the Archangel towards priesthood.

I believe in this bible text: 1 Corinthians 1:25, "For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength." And my motto is; "striving to be a good person".

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