

MY VOCATION STORY

My name is Kalom Brian. I was born in April 4th 1996. My village is called Mapuna in Pomio District, East New Britain Province.

I first set foot on the seminary ground on the 7th of February 2024. It was so amazing to experience the new environment and above all, the nature of the place. How beautiful the arrangements of the buildings are. And I believe that, it portrayed the image that being a seminarian, I must have transformation in my life by rearranging myself and focus on what I am here for.

Having come this far, I would like to acknowledge and appreciate my parents who are devoted Catholics. I was born to this beautiful couple where I was raised in the Catholic faith. They taught me the basic prayers and basic teachings of the Catholic Church. The most important worship we treasured in family was that, we would always attend Sunday Mass. Interestingly, my parents are simple, and they possessed the good virtues, especially, loving, caring and inviting people to our family home. Through my parents, I came to learn and understand the importance of prayer, participating in parish activities and concern for other people.

My education has an interesting story. I went to Ubai primary school in 2006. I did grades one (1) and two (2) in the year, 2007. The school is one of the Catholic agency schools in West New Britain (Kimbe). The school administration upheld the church's principles. Every morning, the students were encouraged to begin the classes with the morning devotion. Besides, we had the school holy mass every Friday with the school's chaplain. I sensed that the balanced program set by the school moulded me to become a good person. Thus, I believed that the faith I learnt from my family and the school really helped and sustained my Catholic faith. I still treasure years spent in the family environment and at the school. I always feel the sense of balance in my life: physically, spiritual, and intellectually. Hence, I usually enjoy my life in all aspects of life.

In the year 2013, I completed grade eight; I was selected to Kimbe Secondary. I began a new chapter in academic life. In the year 2014, I did grade nine. I intended to become a boarding student but due to the space limit in the dormitory; I was misplaced. The 2014 academic year, I stayed at home and travelled by the Public Moto Vehicles. It was almost five months and I realised that I had spent a lot of money, especially on transport and lunch. Hence, on 25th of October 2014, I submitted my second application letter for the boarding house. It was a blessing for me that my request was granted. I was very excited because my request was approved by the school board. It was 5th February 2015, that I was officially registered as one of the boarding students of Kimbe Secondary School. And I was really happy for being in the school campus, because it was my opportune moment to ponder and commit myself toward the studies.

After three (3) months as a boarding student, I reflected and evaluated that it was a blessing and a lot of privileges of formation. Moreover, the environment was conducive to continue my studies. On the contrary, I also had my weaknesses and challenges that I had encountered in life. I accepted those difficult moments as my stepping stones to move forward and to achieve what I was striving for. One of my strengths was that we had a Divine Mercy group in the school. Every Wednesday evening, the Catholic students would gather together for prayer. I come to know how to pray and recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

Unfortunately, my grade ten (10) results were not satisfactory to qualify me to do grade eleven (11). Consequently, I enrolled at the matriculation centre in Kimbe Open Campus to upgrade my marks. While upgrading my marks, the admiration and desire to become a priest was already growing in me. But in fact, I did not know the procedure to follow in order for me to enter the seminary. My parish priest was wise to guide me to enter the seminary. I was about to complete my last courses, and I had submitted my interest letter to the Vocation Director, Fr. Michael Bula. A week after handing in my letter, I went to interview with the vocation director. In our discussion, he shared something about the vocation and the priestly life. He further elaborated that to become a priest, one must totally give himself for the service of others. Meaning to say, you must let go your past and embrace Christ in your life. It would enable you to answer generously to God's call. Henceforth, what you do along in your journey of faith,

must in accordance with Christ teachings. In that manner, you would become a true disciple of Christ. Truly, the conversation really motivated me. Therefore, I intended to become a diocesan priest, and we were making correspondence.

A month later, I received a text message from the Vocation Director's Office informing me that I was accepted as one of the candidates of Kimbe Diocese. Eventually, I went home and informed my parents about my acceptance and the path that I wished to follow. They were happy about the decision I made. My father told me that the family would be ready to support my studies. He added that I should be constant and focus on the decision. I took it personally that it was a great challenge that my father gave me.

It was on the 10th February 2017, my late Bishop William Bill Fey, Cap, sent me to the Sacred Heart Minor Seminary Rapolo to do grade eleven (11) and twelve (12). In the year 2019, I had completed grade twelve (12) at Vunabosco Technical Secondary School (Kokopo). Furthermore, it was from the years 2020 and 2021; I continued my studies at the Rapolo Seminary as a propaedeutic student. Moreover, I experienced that the seminary formation was totally different from the life I had been living in the secondary school. I really treasure the programs that have been already in place for me to follow. A few activities are: daily mass, praying of the rosary every evening, benediction, Lectio Divina, etc. These spiritual exercises energize me to persevere in the seminary formation.

In 2021, I completed the propaedeutic year. My Bishop asked me to take a year out. I followed the bishop's advice, and I went home. I stayed with my assistant parish priest. I would follow him to help out in different sub-parishes. I might not be invited, but I showed my interest to follow the priest to learn good pastoral experiences from him. I realized that it was a great opportunity for me to be with a priest. It was not a waste of time, but rather an opportune moment where I gained my experience, especially in pastoral works.

Moreover, my intention to return to the seminary formation was so high. Hence, my assistant parish priest recommended me to the bishop and his consulters. It was a blessing that I was accepted, to Good Shepherd Seminary for doing the Spiritual Year program. So last year 2023, I was at Good Shepherd Seminary. And this year 2024, I am now here at CTI doing my first year in philosophy studies.

To conclude, I can say that, as a seminarian striving to become a priest, I must have the passion to prayer, eager on scripture study and the lover of the Eucharist. Thus, it will help me to develop a meaningful relationship with the Lord who always loves us. Therefore, my personal relationship with the Lord is very important; because it will enable me to become an honest and holy priest in the future, serving the Church as the (SERVANT OF ALL SERVANTS). Therefore, I have the desire to become a priest and have decided to follow Christ.