

"You will know when He calls you"

Blessing Nina Emmanuel talks about journey to the faith, inspired by her family and the chaplain at her university.

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"You will definitely know when He calls you." Those words kept ringing in my ears after I met with the university chaplain. Just after I got admitted to university, my father told me he wanted me to be baptized before I graduated. I had never thought about that. I only wanted to

spend four stress-free years in Pan-Atlantic University, bag my degree and continue my academic *hustle*.

I was raised in a loving family that instilled values of kindness and compassion, but I was not a practicing Catholic like my parents. I went to Mass about twice a month or whenever I felt like it, but that fateful meeting with the chaplain shook me. I really wanted to know what it felt like to be called by God. I started going more often to the chapel to pray and also spoke with the priest more often. Each meeting had me longing for more.

My longing to know Christ on a deeper level compelled me to explore the Catholic faith. I found a sense of belonging and warmth of the chapel community, and my journey to embrace the faith began with tons of doctrine classes. A Maths lecturer, Ms. Akudo, offered to give me

catechism classes. At first, the classes were no different from my Theology lectures (all first year students take a course titled “Introduction to Christian Theology”), but as time passed, I realized that these classes touched other fundamental teachings and gave me practical guidance. They helped me integrate the faith into my daily life. I got to challenge, discuss and understand the Church's teachings.

On Divine Mercy Sunday this year, a week before my birthday, I got the best present ever: I got baptized. It felt weird, but at the same time solemn and peaceful. As the waters of baptism touched my forehead, I felt a special kind of peace, one I have never felt before. The words spoken during the ceremony also resonated deeply within me, and I received the body of Christ for the first time in the same Mass.

Prior to my baptism, I had always longed for that indescribable intimacy with Christ in the Eucharist, but I could only sit and pray along. It was very special to finally get to receive the Eucharist. I joined my family in receiving the Eucharist and fully partake of the sacred mystery of Christ's love and sacrifice!

Since my Baptism and first Holy Eucharist, my life has been transformed. The sacraments have become the foundation of my spiritual life, guiding me through challenges and joys. I find solace in prayer, and the teachings of Jesus inspire me to love unconditionally and serve others with kindness.

My journey of faith is a testament to the transformative power of God's love and grace. Embracing the faith has brought profound joy, a sense of purpose, and an unwavering trust in God's plan for me. I hope to receive

the sacrament of Confirmation from the archbishop in November this year. I am excited to continue growing in my relationship with God and to share the love and compassion that I have found on this sacred journey.

I am eternally grateful to my family, my friends, the school chaplain, my godparents, and the school Catholic community for supporting me wholeheartedly on this journey. I hope my testimony inspire will others to explore and embrace their faith journey with openness and sincerity, knowing that God's love is ever-present, guiding us home.

My baptism name is Nina – the one whom God has been gracious to, and has granted countless favours.

"You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you." – St. Augustine

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