



SOCIETY OF SAINT PETER THE APOSTLE

# INSIDE ST. GREGORY THE GREAT SEMINARY IN GHANA

By Inés San Martín

*“Without the subsidy made possible through World Mission Sunday, it would be near impossible for us to re-open for the next academic year.”*

*— Fr. Michael Boakye Yeboah, Acting Rector*



## St. Gregory the Great Provincial Major Seminary at a Glance



**Location:**

Kumasi, Ashanti Region, Ghana

**Founded:**

1990

**Forming seminarians for:**

Six dioceses across Ghana

**Current enrollment:**

216 seminarians

**Formation pillars:**

Human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral

**Support:** Subsidized by the Society of St. Peter the Apostle through the Pontifical Mission Societies USA

**Vision:** To form holy, educated, and compassionate priests ready to serve the Church in Ghana and beyond

In the hills outside Kumasi, Ghana, where the call to prayer mingles with the rustle of palm trees and the hum of nearby farms, the St. Gregory the Great Provincial Major Seminary stands as a beacon of hope for the Church in West Africa.

Here, 216 young men from six dioceses across Ghana live, pray, and study together, preparing to dedicate their lives to serving God’s people.

Their formation — spiritual, human, pastoral, and intellectual — is made possible thanks to the support of Catholics around the world who give to the Society of St. Peter the Apostle, one of the four Pontifical Mission Societies.

“Since the inception of the seminary, the Pontifical Mission Societies have been of tremendous help to us,” says Father Michael Boakye Yeboah, acting



rector of the seminary. “Without the subsidy made possible thanks to World Mission Sunday, it would be near impossible for us to re-open for the 2026-2027 academic year.”

That annual subsidy, he explains, covers the essentials of daily life. “It is used predominantly to feed the seminarians,” he says. “Local farmers from the six dioceses send us foodstuffs, but it is the subsidy that forms the main backbone of funds needed to feed them.”

Electricity bills, fuel for the generator, and maintenance of the boreholes that supply the community with clean water also depend on those funds. “Most of our teaching and non-teaching staff only take home a token of appreciation,” Father Boakye adds. “We continue to be grateful to God for gifting the seminary the services of these kind people.”

### **Seeds of Vocation**

Behind every vocation is a story — often one of resilience, faith, and

gratitude. For **Andrews Kwasi Yeboah**, a second-year philosophy student, that story begins in the fields of Ghana’s Bono Region.

“I come from a humble, hardworking family rooted in farming,” he says. His parents, both smallholder farmers, worked tirelessly to raise five children. When his parents separated, his mother carried the full responsibility of raising the family. “Through these challenges, I learned the values of resilience, community living, and hard work,” he recalls.

His call to the priesthood grew gradually. “On January 1, 2022, during a spiritual formation program in our parish, something awakened within me — a genuine and burning desire to respond to God’s call,” he says. Encouraged by his parish priest and a close friend, he applied to the seminary after finishing high school.

“Life in the seminary is a deeply reflective and transformative experience,” Andrews explains. “It allows one to respond meaningfully to God’s call while developing spiritually, intellectually, pastorally, and humanly.”

Though the journey has its challenges, he says, “I embrace them as part of my growth in readiness to serve selflessly in the future.”

### **Answering a Persistent Call**

For **Kelvin Dwomoh Frimpong**, the call to priesthood was more like a gentle but persistent voice that refused to be ignored.

“I was born into a devout Catholic family in Asante Mampong,” he shares. “From an early age, we actively participated in parish life — attending Mass, praying the Rosary, serving at the altar.”

He first felt drawn to the priesthood as a boy serving at Mass. “I admired the priests who celebrated the Eucharist with such reverence and humility,” he says. But doubts about his worthiness led him down another path. He became a teacher, spending two years in the classroom. “The call did not go away,” he says simply. “It only intensified.”

With the guidance of spiritual directors and the encouragement of priests, Kelvin entered St. Gregory’s. “It was a moment of surrender and trust in God’s plan for my life,” he recalls. “The seminary has been a grace-filled journey of personal growth, spiritual formation, and deeper self-discovery.”

There have been challenges — doubts, struggles, and the complexity of community life — but he sees them as opportunities to grow in humility



and maturity. “The priesthood is not merely a profession,” he says, “but a sacred vocation, a lifelong mission of love, sacrifice, and service to God and His people.”

#### A Late Vocation, a Living Witness

At 39, **Paul Badoh** is among the oldest seminarians at St. Gregory’s — what the seminary calls a “matured candidate.” His journey to the priesthood has been anything but linear.

“As a boy, I wanted to go to school like other children, but my parents did not have the means,” he recalls. Instead, he became a tiler, mastering

his trade and finding steady work. Yet, “my childhood desire to become a priest grew stronger.”

Encouraged by his parish priest, Paul entered primary school as an adult. “People made fun of me because my classmates were far younger than me,” he says, “but I was determined.” Step by step, he advanced through school and was eventually admitted to the minor seminary — and now the major seminary in Kumasi.

“It was a dream come true,” Paul says. “Here in the major seminary, I do not carry the usual financial burden because my school fees are covered

by the kindness of benefactors from the United States and elsewhere.”

He is acutely aware of how fragile that support can be. “Without the generosity of those who share what they have, I could not pursue my vocation. But I know that God will always touch the hearts of kind benefactors so that we can continue our studies.”

#### Faith, Formation, and the Future of the Church in Africa

Ghana is home to more than **3.5 million Catholics**, about **10 percent of the population**, according to the *Annuario Pontificio 2024*. The Church is young, dynamic, and growing — but with that growth comes the challenge of forming enough priests to serve the faithful.

Across sub-Saharan Africa, the number of seminarians continues to rise, even as vocations decline in other parts of the world. According to Vatican data, nearly **one in three seminarians worldwide** now studies in Africa.

“The formation of priests here is not just for Ghana, but for the entire Church,” Father Boakye says. “Many of our graduates serve in other African countries, and even beyond.”

In Ghana, where agriculture remains the main livelihood for more

than **30 percent of the population**, many seminarians come from humble farming backgrounds like Andrews’s. Their formation — sustained by the generosity of Catholics around the world — ensures that future priests can continue to preach the Gospel in communities that hunger not only for bread, but for the Word of God.

Each day at St. Gregory’s begins with prayer and ends in gratitude. “During our communal prayers,” Paul says, “we always remember our benefactors. Our rector reminds us that we must pray for those who help God provide for us.”

The seminarians’ lives are marked by simplicity, study, and service — and by hope. “The day we are ordained,” Kelvin says, “it will not be our accomplishment alone. It will be the fruit of many hands, many prayers, and much love.”