

In today's modern age hopefully one's vocation is something that is chosen by ourselves. It's not like the olden days where the first son follows the father's profession, the second goes into the military and the third becomes a priest.

That's not to say we are not influenced by outside experiences; for example, as I believe I have told this Council before, when I was a small boy I found a doctor's bag under the tree at every Christmastime. There was little doubt in which direction I was headed. My sister, incidentally, in those more politically incorrect times, never received a doctors bag — only a nurse's kit.

As I was raising my children I told myself that I would not unduly influence them this way or that with regard to their profession. I did, however, doubt that commitment was correct when one day I observed my young son riding on the back of a trash truck at the end of a pickup on our street. I escorted him off the truck and asked him why he did that. He said "because when I grow up I'm going to be a trash man—I really like trucks."

In any case, although my son did not grow up to be the trash man he wanted to be, I did become what my parents wanted me to be, a doctor. Not that I'm complaining — we are who we are for several reasons, not just that we were pointed in that direction.

It is, however, interesting to have pipe dreams. For example, I asked myself the other day 'what would have happened if I had become a priest?' Let's put aside the theological concept that we are all in some sense priests. I'm talking about it in a vocational sense.

Let's pretend we were going to choose to be a priest. If we weren't a diocesan priest, to what Religious Order would we belong? Perhaps we would be influenced by the people around us and with whom we came in contact. Most of the Claretian Priests who taught me in high school came from the same general neighborhood in Chicago. I am pretty sure that Brother Knight Paul here at our Council would have been a Eudist.

What about the rest of you. Have you thought about it? Dominicans have the tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas and the great motto "To Praise, To Bless, and To Preach." Besides they have a terrific nickname: Black-friars.

How about being a Jesuit. Leaders in education, research, and willing to go anywhere they are needed. Ignatius Loyola was a former soldier and who would not be attracted to the concept of an Order open to "anyone who wishes to serve as a soldier of God" and whose motto is "For the Greater Glorie of God."

Franciscan? Who does not love St. Francis. The Franciscans have been an order since 1209. They are the Custodians of Holy Places in the Holy Land and have been so for centuries. My favorite saint, St Anthony of Padua, was a Franciscan!

Or, if your personality is more toward the contemplative, how about the Order of St. Benedict with their motto of "Pray and Work?" Pope Gregory I (of Gregorian Chant fame) was a Benedictine,

Or Augustinian or Paulist, or Redemptorist (founded by St. Alphonsus Liguori).

The choices are almost endless and all have a slightly different trajectory — something for everyone's personality. And once you decide what you want to be, then in the fantasy of your mind you can be in that Order in a

sense by living in a manner in the real world that parallels that Order's intentions. Like a Monk living in the World.

Hmmm. Now let's pretend we were in the spaceship Enterprise. What character would yourself be?... Perhaps that's better for another time.