

What do you want to be when you grow up? A lawyer? A farmer? A teacher? An actor? A doctor? A scientist? An engineer? A musician? An investment counselor? An accountant? An astronaut? A politician? An artist? A writer? (All I wanted to be when I grew up was a millionaire.)

You have heard these questions since you were a child! No doubt, you have been counseled, directed and pressured to choose one. You have been told that certain professions should be considered because they pay well and warned that others should be avoided because they don't. In making your choice, you are, no doubt, under pressure to please parents, counselors, teachers and peers.

"What do you want to do when you grow up?" I believe that this is the wrong question to ask young people. The proper question for Christian parents to ask their children is: "What does God want you to do?"

The Lord tells each of us: "*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you.*" Jer.1:5 Each one of us is a unique expression of God's love and creativity. In the entire world there is no other person exactly like you, or me, or any one.

Besides being unique, you are not here by accident. You were created for a purpose. You have a mission. You have something to do here that can be done by no one else. Your responsibility is to find out what your purpose is and what your mission is, and then carry it out with all your might. Your God-given purpose on earth is called "your vocation" or "your calling." Every human person has a vocation, that is, a call from God to be and to do something for Him and His Kingdom.

With many people pulling you this way and that way, saying that you ought to be this or you ought to do that, how do you hear what God is calling you to do? This is how: We hear God by listening to our own hearts. To be able to hear God speaking to us, we must spend some quality time with God and with ourselves. That means that sometimes we need to turn off the TV, the radio, the headphones, the computer, the advice-givers and just be quiet! That means you have to leave your friends, your family and your neighbors once in a while, just to be alone in the presence of God.

For many people, just being quiet is extremely hard to do and even scary! Many people are not used to being without noise and without people every waking moment of the day. When we go off and listen to our own hearts, we will hear our call, our vocation, where we need to go.

There are four main vocations in the Catholic Church. They are: Marriage, Religious Life, Priesthood, and Consecrated Single Life. Each and every person is called to one of these states. Which one are you called to?

Don't forget, you do not choose your vocation. Your vocation is a calling from God. Your choice is: Will you say "yes" to God's calling?