



'Don't Choose Me, Lord . . . But He Did'

With Religious Vocation Week and Mother's Day marked so close together, it was only natural, I suppose, that my thoughts returned recently to my freshman year at a small college for women in Erie.

Most of the girls were day students. Only 14 of us freshmen were boarders, a hallway separating the school wing from the convent.

I do not know if the proximity was responsible but during the spring of that first and only year I was to spend there, a total of six friends crept one by one into my room to confide that they had come to a momentous decision.

By the time the fourth one had put in an appearance, she did not even have to finish the sentence. I would do it for her. "You are going to join the sisters at the convent," I would say and she would nod happily.

We would hug each other. I would offer congratulations and she would go off down the hall to confide in still another, while I would sit on my bed with my head in my hands.

Secretly I was horrified. In spite of a Catholic

Sarah Child



All in the Family

upbringing which included being versed in the ardor of the saints, I was at least 20 years away from knowing about the kind of love that outburns any worldly relationships.

More importantly, at least from my point of view, there was a new baby at home. A sister, whose arrival 12 years after the last child had been born, had taken us all by surprise. Pink and cuddly, she was deliciously soft and huggable. At 18 I was not much taken with the idea of marriage, but I was definitely enthralled by babies and hoped they belonged in my future.

"Don't choose me, Lord," I prayed guiltily that spring and it was with great relief I left that convent-college atmosphere in June, convinced He hadn't.

But, of course, He had. Although for something

different. Obviously He didn't think I was any more fit for Sisterhood than I did. Argumentative, independent, stubborn and mostly mouthy, I wasn't fit for anything much except to be left alone to grow up.

Well, I wasn't left alone. But, I was helped to grow up — very slowly. And, somewhere in the middle of it all I was made to see that in spite of my independent self it was not I who was calling the shots. The choice of what I should do with my life had been made for me, probably long before I ever couched that silly prayer. Once I got that through my head everything was eminently easier.

As Mother's Day approaches I think of that long ago prayer and the Lord's almost certain amusement as I go about my day, tearing out my hair, screaming sometimes at the top of my lungs and wondering aloud what I ever did to deserve such an incorrigible crew.

And, I imagine His smile last thing at night as I thank Him for my vocation and assure Him that all these years later, I'm still enthralled by babies — both the little kind and those asleep down the hall now grown up.

Mother — Lifelong Assignment

(Age 5) My Mother
My mother is nice. She likes me. We got a dog. Mork. He likes me.

(Age 9) My Mother
I am writing this assignment about my mother to get my Cub scout badge. My mother is a little bit young but she's almost old. She makes me clean my room but sometimes takes me skiing. She likes cheesecake red her garden to go out and my dad. She doesn't like mud lizzards loud music. liver or when we fight. She makes good spegety and meetballs. When she was little she lived on a farm and had 11 cats and a dog and cows and chickens and horses. This makes my 100 words (counting the title).

(Age 12) My Mother
My mother is probly like most other mothers except shes different. You said to write about what makes her different. Well, for one thing, shes different because she has me (ha ha). Also she has my dad and my two brothers (who aren't as nice as I am). She likes to sew. On Valentines Day she sneaked into our dressers and put

Dolores Curran



Talks With Parents

hearts on all our under — (oops) . . . all our shirts. She's pretty nice except when she gets mean. Like when we used her curling iron to drill holes in our snowmen. And she won't let me watch Saturday Night Live. Otherwise shes nice.

(Age 16) My Mother
My mother has a 79 Rabbit that gets 39 miles to the gallon. It has a fuel injection engine and mag wheels but she doesn't want to have it customized. Sometimes there's a shiver in the transmission but I think thats because she

doesn't use the clutch right. She used to have a 55 Chevy, yellow with a cream top and I think that's cool. Her next car might be a trans AM with a T-Bar sunroof or maybe a Datsun 280ZX with spoilers. Well, I guess that's all I've got to say about my mother.

(Age 22) My Mother
This sociological profile of my mother will indicate that in spite of her early mal-education and the lack of authentic survey data back then, she has managed to flourish adequately in the modern era. Some of her attitudes, of course are a bit primitive, but in spite of those, she strives to stay abreast of what is going on in society and continues to show a great interest in my studies, for example. She and my father have never failed to support me in their own quaint traditional way.

(Age 35) My Mother
I dedicate this work to my mother who listened to me when I was boring, who suffered me when I was insufferable, and who loved me when I was unlovable. Thanks, Mom.

Interesting Past, Different Present

In the St. Cloud, Minn., diocese the external appearance and current activity of two people totally conceal their quite different pasts.

Kathleen Kelly works day after day preparing meals, washing dishes, changing beds and cleaning rooms at "The Dwelling Place," a Franciscan Retreat House located in Sauk Rapids on the Mississippi River.

When first introduced to Kathy, I judged from her simple clothes, quiet demeanor and kitchen labors that this woman lived in the neighborhood and had been hired by these Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls to help with the housework.

My judgment was far off the mark.

She is Sister Kathleen of that community, holds several degrees, including a Master's in sociology, and chose this life style during her sabbatical year from the academic world.

Her past places and posts reveal remarkable experiences.

She taught sociology at Viterbo College in the midwest, became the first woman resident at Catholic University's Theological College or seminary preparing young men for the priesthood, served four years as a campus minister at the University of Cincinnati and supervised for three years the development of a pre-marriage inventory program as well as doing some marital counselling in the Crookston diocese prior to assuming the role of Kitchen Lady at "The Dwelling Place."

Fr. Joseph M. Champlin



Our Church Family

Those frequent uprootings have helped her intensify a spirit of powerlessness before the Lord. To move from instructor in the nation's capitol to a new ministry at an Ohio university to an administrative task in a small rural diocese near the Canadian border meant leaving behind comfortable patterns of living and close friends to start over in a strange territory. Such transfers cause pain, leave us uneasy in unfamiliar surroundings, push persons to rely upon other people for help, and above all, to trust in the Lord.

Sister Kathleen reflects here the steps toward detachment practiced by her model, St. Francis. This sabbatical year of quiet, hidden, manual labor likewise mirrors the humility of the Saint from Assisi.

Having acquired all the degrees or courses needed and traveled as a lecturer or student around the world, she thought it might be in keeping with the Franciscan spirit to withdraw from the limelight for a year, to spend her months in this quiet way with the physical works, solitude and reflective prayer which accompany it.

When one meets Kenneth Kruchten for the first

time, the immediate thought comes to mind, "He must be the older pastor of a nearby parish." This big, tall man with full, but greying hair wears a black clerical suit.

That judgment also misses the mark.

For most of Ken's life, he held, successfully, executive positions in marketing with two corporations in the state, earning at the time a six figure salary common for top flight management people in business. Married and the father of eight children, he retired at 55 from his secular job, accepting full time employment for the diocese at a salary then 90 percent below his previous amount. For the next five years he not only kept at his post, but also entered the formation program for permanent deacons, being ordained on June 2, 1978.

As diocesan development director, Deacon Kruchten has been using the skills he sharpened in the marketing field. By visiting with priests and leadership persons, he has formed a picture of parish fiscal needs. With that information, Ken has begun the design of programs which will increase Sunday collections, provide Catholic alternatives for persons who have received an unexpected, significant sum of money, establish a diocesan annuity investment plan and offer guidance for parishioners in drawing up wills.

Are there other people like Kenneth Kruchten in the secular world who would like to retire at an earlier age from their positions and use their talents as well as training for the Church on a full or part time basis?