

+WEEKLY REFLECTION

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He calls us by name

What's in a name?

Names may be filled with meaning and associations.

We may not like our given name or its possible 'short forms'. People only call me 'Pat' once!

Names can be touching when said with tenderness. They can be repulsive when said with disdain or hate. And they can have unpleasant overtones associated with bullying, nastiness or bad memories; even if we meet the same people later and they have changed and are now lovely.

If we have been 'called names' they are usually unflattering at best and more often disgusting - insults stick with us.

But there is one name that is truly ours; that can never be taken away and never tinged with horrible feelings - never derogatory.

This name is the one God knows us by, our true name. Pause for a moment and think about that, that the wonderful, amazing, creator of the universe knows each of us, individually, by name.

And there is more.

Not only does God know our name but we know His. There are more meanings and more depths to His name than we can ever imagine or think of but we know it and can use it, each of us, personally. This gives us access to the power and glory of God.

On the night before he died, Jesus called the disciples his friends. No longer servants but friends.

We are also called, by name, to be followers and friends of Jesus and his Dad, working together in the power of the Holy Spirit.

They know us personally; all our strengths and weaknesses; all the characteristics that make us who we are. They know us individually by name; just as we may know them by name.

'Thy Kingdom Come' is an initiative for the 10 days between Ascension Day and Pentecost, during which we are encouraged to pray for five people to come to know Jesus.

It is personal to each of us; my five won't be the same as anyone else's five. But the one thing that we will have in common is that we pray for them by their name.

What's in a name? With God everything, everything that is true, glorious, wonderful, personal and real. 'I have called you by name, you are mine.' (Isaiah 43: 1 NRSV).

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