

July 28, 2019

"I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME: YOU ARE MINE!"  
(Isaiah 43:1)

"THUS SAYS THE LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and formed you, O Israel: FEAR NOT, FOR I HAVE REDEEMED YOU; I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME: YOU ARE MINE ". Has GOD called you by name? "Did you hear HIM calling you through the whisper of a mild wind? Or did you hear God call you by your name of baptism or confirmation?"

WHY ARE NAMES IMPORTANT? I recall in my former country France, when a baby or a child was baptized, first it had to be registered by the mayor of the village or town, and his name at birth had to be an official name taken from the national calendar of saints. Yes, we were encouraged to always give Christians names at Baptism and Confirmation. Tradition for Conformation has remained still today. Praise the LORD! But the one for Christian names at baptism is more and more rarely applied.

I am always surprised by some of the names chosen by parents at baptism. These names are more and more secular or pagan and less and less Christian. I invite every future parent in our parish community to do their utmost to choose for their children a Christian name at birth.

The entire Chapter 43 of the prophet Isaiah entitled "Promises of Redemption and Restoration", is a testimony of how God chooses to help us, totally without cost to us. It is a great example of how the Lord acts in our lives. We just have to cooperate, the Lord says: "When you pass through the water, I will be with You; in the rivers you shall not drown. When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned;"

He is the one who invites us to come and meet Him at Mass.

At the end of each Mass, the priest or the deacon says, "GO and ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD!" Or he can say, "GO IN PEACE GLORIFYING THE LORD BY YOUR LIFE!" What do I need to change in my life to glorify God? How can I do everything for the glory of God as opposed to do things for my own glory, my own satisfaction, my own pleasure?

NAMES are very important. They are an integral part of our character and personality. As Christians, our names can us define our personal relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ. I told our new Parochial Vicar, Father Philip that he is blessed to have the name of one of the twelve Apostles. Philip is mentioned several times in the New Testament.

Many of you have already met Father Philip and have appreciated his New Jersey accent. Clearly he does not have any German accent (several generations separate him from his European ancestors). I thank you for having already displayed strong support to Fr. Philip. Our parish is truly blessed to have

a young (33-year old, 3 years of priesthood) energetic and spiritual parochial vicar. I can see the deep love he has for Our Lord Jesus Christ, which translates in a strong desire to evangelize and bring people closer to Christ. A great influence on him has been his own father, a widower like me, who has just been ordained a transitional deacon for the Archdiocese of Newark. God willing his father is expected to be ordained a priest for Newark on May 23, 2020, and will be then known as Fr. Edmond IIg, or simply Fr. Edmond (another great Christian name).

I plan to attend Fr. Edmond's Ordination in May. It will happen just the day before our new Archbishop Gregory will honor our parish by coming to celebrate the 11:30 am Mass on Sunday May 24. Can you imagine the JOY of Fr. Philip assisting at the priestly ordination of his father and the next day being a concelebrant at his father's first Mass! All our parishioners will be able to share such Joy with Fr. Philip.

As I am writing this column, I am getting ready to get on an Air France plane to spend some quality time with my family in Southern France, near Lourdes. As I mentioned to many of you, this will be my first true vacation since becoming a priest 10 years ago. For once, I have displayed some willingness to slow down. In past, my vacations were usually in leading pilgrimages for our own parishioners, which I very much enjoy. I had planned to go to the Holy Land this month...and for once, I was wise in postponing six months ago that pilgrimage to 2020. It will be from June 21st 2020, to July 1st 2020, many of you have already expressed interest in joining us and be an integrated part of our celebrating all our past pilgrimages in the context of the 40 YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF OLHOC!

May all future parents at OLHOC pray before choosing a beautiful Christian name for their children yet to be born!

Be assured that when I visit the grotto of Lourdes in a few days and am fully immersed in the waters of Lourdes, I will pray for all of you that are in need of physical, emotional, and/or spiritual healing!

Looking forward to returning to Waldorf on August I fully rested and refreshed! May you all have a most blessed summer!



*One in Christ,  
Father Alain*