

CALLED BY NAME

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine. Isaiah 43:1

These words of God through the prophet Isaiah are powerful ones indeed. They tell us of a God who knows us so personally and deeply that he calls us by name.

The tradition of taking on a new name to show a new role can be traced to the Old Testament. When Abram was called to lead his people to believe in one God, his name was changed from Abram, meaning "Father to Many" to Abraham, meaning, Father of Many Nations. In the New Testament we find Simon's name changed to Peter, meaning "Rock", because he was to become the rock upon which Jesus founded his Church.

At the beginning of the rite of Baptism the celebrant asked your parents: "What name do you give your child?" And your parents spoke your name. From that moment on in the rite you were always called by this name. Parents are encouraged to give their child the name of a saint (for at least one of the names.) Why do you think the Church suggests this? It is so that you will have a specific friend in heaven to be your guide throughout life.

In the rite of Confirmation, you are again called by name. The Church encourages you to use the saint's name given to you at Baptism as your Confirmation name to emphasize the strong connection between these two sacraments. If your baptismal name is not a saint's name, you are to choose one for Confirmation. At the moment sacrament of Confirmation is conferred, you will stand before the minister of Confirmation. He will then make the sign of the cross on your forehead with chrism saying, "(Your name), be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."

Making the Decision

Whether you use your baptismal name or choose a new one, it is important to learn as much as you can about your patron saint. After all, you are asking this saint to be your friend and advocate for the rest of your life.

There are many sources of information available on the saints on line...be sure to specify Catholic in your search.

Choosing a Name

Being given a name is a significant part of belonging to a family and to the Christian community. When you were baptized, your parents and godparents were asked to present you *by name* for the sacrament. For the Sacrament of Confirmation, you are asked to reaffirm your baptismal name, or to choose the name of a saint whose example you wish to follow. Some candidates pick the name of a relative whom they admire and who also represents a model of Christian witness.

This is a decision that should include your family. As you chose your name for Confirmation, here are some ideas that might help you:

Talk to your parents or someone else in your family about your own name.

Where did it come from?

Why did your parents give you this name?

In choosing a saint's name choose a saint that shows a particular spiritual strength or gift that inspires you? This might be someone who takes a strong stand for his or her faith, a commitment to serving the poor, a prayerful life, or a dedication to social justice.