

The Significance of a Name

I've always been fascinated by what people's names mean and the stories behind the naming of children and why they are given the name they are given at birth and through baptism. Much to my family's embarrassment I have been known to ask a healthcare assistant, a taxi driver and tour guide when I have not heard or seen that name before on an ID badge what is the meaning of their names are.

We took quite a long time thinking about the names for our children. Richard has his grandfather's names and Sophia has her names because of the meaning behind it – wisdom. Jim and I had visited Istanbul a few times and one of our favourite places was the Little Hagia Sophia Mosque with its amazing history, interior and Blessing by the Empress Sophia herself. One thing for certain is that when they were baptised, we prayed for them to know the love of God to uphold and protect them. This afternoon Poppy will be baptised here at St Brandon's, and we pray the same for her praying that this opportunity to be a follower of Christ will give her the inspiration of how to live.

Today's readings remind us that whilst we may find ourselves caught between the values of God's kingdom and those of the world around us, we will always have the love of God to protect and uphold us.

If we had heard the Jeremiah reading, Jeremiah laments that answering God's call has led to him being mocked and derided. Yet despite this, he can still sense a burning desire to speak God's words.

St Paul reminds the Romans that the life we take on through baptism becomes the inspiration for how we live. Paul encourages them to resist the temptation to conform to the demands of the world as they seek to respond to God.

In the **Gospel**, we see Peter's struggle to embrace fully the reality of Jesus's Way. Soon after being named 'the rock' on which the Church will be built, Peter is still holding on to the values of the world and struggling to accept what Jesus tells him about the suffering that lies ahead. When I hear this reading, it always reminds me of the many times that I have met someone who believes that they are Satan through a delusion and the one time that I met a young man who had changed his name through depol to Lucifer Diablo.. using this name to address him personally was always a challenge. It always helped me to reflect and confess before God the part of me that that is always tempted to value the world's values rather than Christ's.

Today's Gospel passage follows on from last week, where Simon acknowledges Jesus as Messiah, and is given the name Peter. Here, for the first time, Jesus speaks of his Passion, death and resurrection. Jesus must go to Jerusalem So far, Jesus had been staying in small towns, gathering followers and making himself known through miracles and healings. The following four chapters will relate his journey to Jerusalem, the city where prophets are put to death (Matt 23: 37). he must ... suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and scribes These three groups make up the Sanhedrin, an assembly of 23 to 71 men, appointed in every city to act as supreme court. Elders were city or national Jewish leaders. It is interesting to note that Matthew does not mention the Pharisees separately here. Peter began to rebuke Jesus Jewish culture could not imagine a Messiah who would suffer and be killed. Their long -awaited new leader would be able to bring them glory and fame. Peter here is voicing the feelings of the other disciples and the people. 'Get behind me, Satan!' Jesus sees in Peter a continuation of the temptations Satan put in his way in the desert at the beginning of his ministry. (Matthew 4: 10) 'You are a hindrance to me' The Greek word used here: skandaloi

(from which the word 'scandal' derives) meant any large block or rock which blocked someone's way. It also had moral overtones. Maybe it is used here ironically since Jesus has just called Peter his rock. Take up your cross This is not a specific allusion to Jesus's own crucifixion. Dying on the cross was a common Roman punishment and the cross had come to mean suffering or agony.

Today we ask God for the grace to be able to notice the rocks, boulders and challenges that prevent us from following Christ and the times where we are tempted to follow the values that do not belong to God exhibited in the person of Jesus.

This week we pray for those taking up their cross in the service of Christ and his Church around the world. We ask the Lord to keep them safe 'in the shadow of his wings'. We will be shortly welcoming Poppy and her family to St Brandon's for baptism as she becomes a follower of Jesus and this is a sure reminder to all of us to continue to pray that we might Trust in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit as God keeps us under the shadow of his wings.

Amen