

## What is your true name?

“Then he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Kephas” (which is translated Peter).” (Jn 1:42)

In today’s Gospel we hear Jesus changing the name of Simon to Peter. There is an important tradition of God changing someone’s name when entering into or changing the level of His relationship with Him. Abram to Abraham. Sarai to Sarah. Jacob to Israel. Saul to Paul. There are others, but these are the most famous. This changing of the relationship implies entering into a new covenant.

A covenant is a contract, but not all contracts are covenants. (A pen is a writing instrument, but not all writing instruments are pens.) In a contract, two parties enter into a mutually beneficial agreement exchanging goods and services. The guarantee is the “word” of both parties—you sign your name on the bottom line. On your honor (word/name) you agree to fulfill the terms of the agreement. A contract can be dissolved by either party if it is no longer deemed beneficial.

In a covenant also, two parties enter into an agreement but instead of exchanging goods and services, they exchange persons. (Instead of: that is mine and this is yours; you are mine and I am yours.) The nature of giving oneself also means that this arrangement is permanently binding. (If I give myself to someone, then I am not ‘mine’ any longer and cannot give myself to anyone else.) Since that is profound and often difficult, the covenant is established not on my honor (my name), but on God’s honor. To establish a covenant you must swear an oath—calling on God’s Name to be the guarantor of this arrangement.

So, what of your name? When we are baptized we are formally given our name. When we are Confirmed we are given a new one showing the significance of the Covenant we are entering into, but even more:

“...but rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” (Lk 10:20)

“To the victor I shall give some of the hidden manna; I shall also give a white amulet upon which is inscribed a new name, which no one knows except the one who receives it.” (Rev 2:17)

“The victor will thus be dressed in white, and I will never erase his name from the book of life but will acknowledge his name in the presence of my Father and of his angels.” (Rev 3:5)

“Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the pool of fire.” (Rev 20:15)

At Mass, we say: “Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only speak the word and my soul shall be healed.” *That “word” is your name.* God calling us by our true name to be in communion with Him and healing us.