
« SOURCE OF LIFE, WHAT IS YOUR NAME? » (3)



Lent is a very special time! A period of forty days to allow us to develop a greater intimacy with God, to help us love our fellow-pilgrim brothers and sisters more and more. My friends Danny and Carrie are terrific to be with, on a journey! Their sense of wonder is a real tonic, for me: it arouses my own! They know that along the way, on the road and in the mountains, cross-country skiing or snowshoeing, I like to stop a while, catch my breath... and pause to contemplate and offer a prayer.

CAREFULLY CHOSEN NAMES

From the very first day I ask my friends in the religious education class to tell me their names. There was pride in the boy's answer: "I'm Danny!" I said: "You've got a beautiful name, one that belonged to a prophet, a wise man of Israel, a man who had visions, a lover of God who was ready to give up his own life, to remain faithful to God." "My name is Caroline but everybody calls me Carrie, I don't know of any saints with such a name!" "There are many Carols and Charleses in England and France, and Pope John Paul's own name was Karol, which comes from "Charles," where your name comes from." "You can be proud of your names, and I think they fit you very well, they indicate that you are wise, that you have a good relationship with God, and that you have developed your sense of wonder very well! I wouldn't be surprised if one day we were to talk of a John Paul the Great like we talk about Saint Basil the Great and Saint Gregory the Great. People with the name of Charles are terrific! They're leaders who are very popular in our history. Carrie, you, too are probably called to be a great influence on your group. And you, too, Danny!"

MORE THAN A STORY OF NAMES...

In the second chapter of the first book of the Bible, we read that: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him. God had formed out of the ground various wild animals and various birds of the air, but none proved to be a suitable partner for the man. So the Lord God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs, and closed up its place with flesh. The Lord then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, the man said: 'This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called *woman*, for out of man this one has been taken'. That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body" (Gen. 2:18-28). This is one of the oldest accounts of creation, and in poetic language it reminds us that God created everything and made humans stewards of His creation. Through naming, a very special relationship is developed between all living beings.

SOURCE OF LIFE

Sharing thoughts is already taking place at the breakfast table: "Mom, where does life come from? Is there someone who is the source of life?" And Mom replies: "The one who gives life to plants, animals, and people is God. Follow me!" She leads them to a table where they see a beautiful, big book, a very special book. The mother picks up the book, sits down, looks at her children and says: "The Bible speaks to us about God. It tells the story of many people like you, people who marvelled at all the life they saw around them. And these people gave beautiful names to God, the Source of Life. Carrie remembers that her dad had once told her: "It's very

important to have a name. When we love someone we give that person a beautiful name, and the name is said with care, and we even invent nicknames to those we love, as a sign of their being close to our hearts.” And Danny tells them how it makes him happy when his mom calls him “my little bit of sunshine!” Danny’s mom replies: “Tomorrow I’ll tell you the story of some people in the Bible, and we’ll discover together the beautiful names they gave to God, the Source of life.” And Dad added: “God knows our name, and He loves to call us by name. In the Bible we can read these beautiful words: ‘I have called you by your name, and you are mine’.” (Is. 43:1) The parents then conclude their sharing by saying: “Danny and Carrie, the Source of Life tells you: ‘I have called you by your name, and you are mine!’”

A VERY SPECIAL ROSARY

When we watch television we can see Muslims running their fingers over prayer beads. For Muslims, God has existed for all eternity and He has one hundred attributes which the people love to repeat as a prayer to Allah. Each one of the one hundred beads represents one of God’s attributes: the Compassionate, the Merciful, the King, the Holy One, our Peace, the Ever Watchful, the Almighty, the Creator, the Victorious, the Judge, the Glorious, the Strong One, the Living One, the Just One, the Generous One, the All-High One, the Eternal, the Light, the Patient One, the Defender, the Hidden One, the Sublime, the Majestic, etc. In His goodness God revealed his name to Moses, in the burning bush: “I am who am.” He is really the Life, the Living One, the Source of Life.

CREATOR, ALMIGHTY, FATHER, AND LOVE

Together with Danny and Carrie, let’s look at the story of four people in the Bible who gave loving names to God. As a boy, David was a shepherd with his father and brothers, then he became king of his country. David enjoyed speaking to God in his heart, and he felt a lot of joy in giving God loving names. He called the Source of Life “Creator,” the one who is the Source of life. He was so enthusiastic over this that he exclaimed “Long live God our Creator!” Jesus is the most important person in the Bible. He is God’s greatest lover. When he talked about God, Jesus called him “Father,” and he also invites us to call him Father. He taught us a beautiful prayer: “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name!” John was a friend of Jesus, and with him he called God by a beautiful name: “Love.” He wrote letters, telling people about this beautiful name of God, and these letters are in the Bible. “God is Love.”

“YOUR NAME BE PRAISED!”

Isn’t it good for us, today, to exclaim with all the believers: “Your Name be praised, O God our Father! As we want to forgive, forgive us, and give us today what we need. May your reign be proclaimed over all the earth. Help us to love, today, to love your will, and bring peace everywhere on earth as in heaven. Give us peace today, peace in our times, and from all evil present and to come, deliver us, Lord.”

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