

What's in a name?



Georgina Byrne *reflects on* Isaiah 43:1-7 and Luke 3:15-17. 21-22

So much of who we are, how we present ourselves to the world, is wrapped up in our name. Our name might represent our nationality, our background, it might give away our likely age, or the aspirations of our parents. Some people spend their lives having to spell or explain their name. We grow into our names – some of us change them.

Isaiah 43 reminds us that our name has something to do with our relationship with God. God, the creator, we recall, names things in the beginning of Genesis and they come into being. When Isaiah tells us that God calls us by name, it signifies that God calls us into being and gives us our purpose. God knows who, what and how we truly are. We are God's.

In Luke's version of the baptism of Jesus, God names Jesus "my Son", and in so doing, imbues Jesus' life with a meaning beyond imagining. Jesus is named as God's son, by God, and his whole life's purpose is made known.

Christians often recall their own baptism on this day. The Prayer Book catechism reminds us that our baptism makes us "a member of Christ, the child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven". Whatever our moniker, God has called us into being for a purpose. We are named, called, and known by God. ☺

O God, you call me into being and know me by name; walk with me through the journey of life. Protect me when storms rage and fires burn and hold me precious in your sight. For I am your child. Amen.

Ephesus

Part 2 – Mary's legacy to mothers

by Sr Janet Fearn

Sr Janet continues her tour of Ephesus.

As well as being a guest at the House of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus, I was also a pilgrim. Regardless of the joy of the resurrection and of being reunited with Jesus, Mary's post-resurrection life would always include the horrific memory and image of Calvary. I wanted to bring to Mary all the mothers whom the loss of a child has changed for

ever. She has shared their pain and heartbreak and understands their struggle to rebuild life.

Many Christians are unaware that Muslims regard Jesus as a prophet and hold Mary in such high esteem that she is mentioned five times in the Qur'an. Hence, despite the differences in Christian-Muslim understanding and belief, Jesus and Mary can unite the two religions in the harmony for which both Jesus and Mohammed prayed. It also explains the tangible peace surrounding the shrine – broken only by birdsong. ☺

“For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

Galatians 3:26-27

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

Lestyn is my late-born lamb. He's pure black with a tiny white dot in the middle of his forehead and he's my favourite. He is two months younger than the other ram lambs and therefore smaller but full of life... until two days ago, when I found him collapsed in the field. He couldn't walk, he couldn't see very well and he was terrified. I carried him on

my shoulder to the small shed where we keep straw, laid him down and gave him an antibiotic injection and some molasses. The next day I did the same. Each morning I've expected him to be cold and still and each morning I've been wrong.

Hope can feel so distant, yet today he joined his flock mates and began grazing. The God in this, for me, is in the brilliance of the discovery of antibiotics and their preciousness as holy life restorers. ☺