

4th Sunday of Easter • B
Christ the King • May 2-3, 2009

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me.

We each have a variety of names.

We have the name that we given to us at our birth, we may have a baptismal or confirmation name. A last name may have changed at marriage.

We have names that are given to us because of our work or profession: Doctor, Nurse, Professor, teacher, police officer, fire fighter, student, intern.

We may have a nickname. Some other names are spoken in anger or intimacy. Some names build us up, others tear us down, some names even hurt.

Other names speak of who we are: Mom, Dad, Sister, Brother...

Our true names speak to our identity. They tell a bit of the story of who we are. Today our second reading gives us two more names. These are important name given to us by our God and deserve some attention.

Our first name is **Beloved**.

What a wonderful name to be given! This name is given to each of us by our God. It is given at our baptism. Remember when Jesus was baptized and these words were spoken: 'You are my beloved, with you I am well pleased.' Those weren't just spoken to Jesus. They are spoken to us.

I am not sure we remember or reflect on this, our identity enough. There is so much in our society, our world, which tries to make us forget that we are **beloved**. We hear and remember those other names that tell us that we are not good enough, that we don't have this or that, that we don't measure up, that we are inadequate.

But that is not how God sees things. It is not what God calls us. God calls us beloved. That is our name; that is our identity. We don't have to bargain or beg, petition or plea; we are beloved. God loves us unconditionally—mistakes, flaws, sins and all. God accepts us as we are and in speaking our name, **beloved**, that is who are and what we become.

Our second name is **Children of God**. As God's children, we are invited to remember that we are in this together. It can never just be God and me. WE are the Children of God. We are children of the same Father, brothers and sisters in Christ. We have a responsibility for each other; and others have a responsibility to us. God has drawn our family circle very large. As God's children we are engaged, involved and connected. . In such a large group, it might be easy to sit back watch, assuming that others will take care of those in need, or do what needs to be done. Jesus calls us together, inviting us to belong. Our name, Children of God, reminds us to belong and embrace our call to be family, God's family.

Take a moment and think of your name. Think of some of the other names you are called. Now hear God speak your identity, your name: Beloved Child of God! Remember your name. Speak it to yourself everyday; write it on your mirror and remember: you are the Beloved Child of God.