



Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

January 17, 2021

What's in a Name?

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

In Giorgio Vasari's painting, *The Calling of St. Peter and St. Andrew*, the upper scene shows Peter and Andrew walking toward Jesus. The lower central scene depicts Peter in the center, with Andrew behind him, and Jesus enthroned on a rock pointing toward him.

The scene is simple for a reason. Jesus' call is simple: Follow me. Our response should be simple, too. We often complicate the call with questions, fears, or doubts, wanting clarifications and assurances. But it is a simple imperative that requires a one-word answer: yes or no. Or as Samuel responded, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:9).

Sunday Readings

1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19

So [Eli] said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'"

1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy Spirit within you?

John 1:35-42

[Jesus said,] "You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Cephas (which is translated Peter)."

Once accepted, the call implies a new identity born of a new, deeper relationship. When Jesus calls Simon, he changes his name. In the Bible, a name change indicates a new mission or purpose. Abram was renamed Abraham to father the Old Testament people in faith.

Simon is now Cephas, or rock. His mission is to father the New Testament people in faith. He is to be a solid, unbreakable foundation for his brothers—and eventually the whole Church. His strength comes not from perfection, for we know Peter was weak, but from his acceptance of Jesus' love and call no matter his own weakness.

Similarly, in baptism and confirmation we take new names that come with our new, deeper calls. It is a meaningful Catholic tradition that parents name their children after a saint who becomes a model for their lives. Like Peter, we are called to greatness by Jesus, who looks at us, names us, and says, "Follow me" (John 1:43). Let's live up to that beautiful, simple invitation! +

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A Word from Pope Francis

Jesus does not want disciples who are merely able to repeat memorized formulas. He wants witnesses: people who spread hope, with their way of welcoming, smiling, and loving; above all loving because the power of the resurrection makes Christians capable of loving even when love seems to have lost its motivation.

—General Audience, October 4, 2017



REFLECTION
QUESTIONS

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REFLECTION

- Are you named after a saint or someone in particular?
- If so, how does that saint or person inspire you?

The Church on Cremation

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

Catholics have loved relics for centuries. Although you may not realize it, the altar where Mass is celebrated usually contains an altar stone with the relic of a saint in it. It's common on saints' feast days to visit their graves or venerate their relics and be blessed with them. Is it possible to connect this adoration of relics to how we commemorate the death of our loved ones?

- Upon my entry to greet a third-grade class, a little girl's hand shot up with a sense of urgency. I couldn't avoid calling on her. "My grandma died," she reported matter-of-factly. Stunned, I responded with, "I'm sure she's in a good place, and one day you'll see her again." The girl answered instantly: "I know she is. I saw her this morning. Her ashes are on our kitchen table."
- Siblings are in turmoil over the sale of their childhood home. A few years ago they fulfilled their mother's dying wish by spreading her cremated remains in the backyard flower garden. They never dreamed they would have to sell the family home. Should they tell the prospective buyers?
- Another family placed their mother's ashes in small lockets on gold chains that can be worn. They distributed them to their mother's dearest relatives and friends at her memorial service.



- A father's cremated remains were divided between his two children. He has two burial plots, one in a cemetery in Philadelphia and one in Brazil, his home country.

I'm sure you've heard similar stories about cremations and the distribution of a loved one's ashes. Reactions are either extremely positive or negative. It seems no one is indifferent on the subject. What does the Church say?

Catholic teaching on this is clear. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "The Church permits cremation, provided that it does not demonstrate a denial of faith in the resurrection of the body" (CCC 2301). Furthermore, the

Church usually has clear instructions reflecting the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' guidelines about the placement of the cremated remains in a cemetery or place of respect, such as a mausoleum.

The Catholic News Service reported that "Catholic cemeteries have lost 1 percent of their potential business each year since the Second Vatican Council relaxed burial and cremation restrictions." Many parishes have opened their own columbariums.

More and more, it seems cremation is prevailing over the tradition of burial. This is a leap, but maybe our fascination with relics has predisposed us to this latest trend. If we desire to be close to saints we've never met, how much more will we desire to stay close to those we love and have known for a lifetime, even when they've gone home to God? It's important that we understand and uphold the Church's teaching on the subject. +

Does our fascination with relics predispose us to choose cremation?

PRAYER

Lord, draw me close to your heart that I may come to know and love you more deeply.

—From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

January 18–23

Monday, Weekday:

Heb 5:1–10 / Mk 2:18–22

Tuesday, Weekday:

Heb 6:10–20 / Mk 2:23–28

Wednesday, Weekday:

Heb 7:1–3, 15–17 / Mk 3:1–6

Thursday, St. Agnes:

Heb 7:25–8:6 / Mk 3:7–12

Friday, Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children: Heb 8:6–13 / Mk 3:13–19

Saturday, Weekday:

Heb 9:2–3, 11–14 / Mk 3:20–21

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