

GLIMPSE

How Appropriate

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What's in a name? I was riding in a car one day, with my grandmother and her good friend in the backseat. The car dipped into a pothole and the friend hit her head on the window and wrenched her neck. Now the story gets into the area of believability. We continued the drive and my grandmother read a roadside sign, "Dr. Bump, Chiropractor." Well, we all began laughing except the friend. She wanted to stop to see if the good doctor could fix her very painful neck. Long story short, he did and she fixed him by eventually marrying him.

Our family dentist was a college friend of my parents. Yup, Dr. Meaney drilled and filled all six of us. I know Fr. Pope, Fr. Grace, Fr. Bishop and there was the famous Jesuit writer, Fr. Dan Lord. There were the two famous baseball pitchers, Bill Hands and Roley Fingers. No kidding! I have a friend who married into the Fittings family and her first child was named, yup, Piper. Why not!

I do not think we all do our names. These are just real and humorous ones. The more important reality is how the things which we do, we tend to over-do. My father was a lawyer. He would come home shortly before dinner still being, still recovering from being, a lawyer. Our dinner table was arranged with Dad at one end and Mom at the other and three of us on each side. After plates were filled, the jury was called to attentive eating while the judge listened patiently to her favorite arbiter. When the case was finally settled and our stomachs were not, my mother would call for an adjournment and retire to her kitchen chambers for dessert. Dad was good at what he did, except he would tend to keep doing his good when it was not the good place to do it.

I have meals with my Jesuit companions who teach by lecturing. Guess what? Yup, what they're good at, they continue even through desserts. We who preach, well, we are good at that of course and we have to be caring and careful. I wonder if dentists, when meeting somebody new, check out their teeth. What I am getting to eventually is that what we are good at might not be good at the time or space.

Now God is always good at being God and good at all eternity-time. One aspect of God's goodness is that God meets us exactly as who and how we are. Prayer in all its forms is Truth meeting truth. If we are philosophers by mental practice, then God has to, yes, has to come, bless, and attract us through our questioning and arguing. At the end of the Book of Job, God took Job to court and debated with this faith-tested soul. The scientist will be looking for proofs and God will lead that person to the unprovable and invite that person either to kneel down in delighted surrender or to keep banging on the wall of wonder.

Our part in the relationship which God offers demands that we do not change personalities or let go of our strengths so that God can more easily find us. My name, my occupation, my particular peculiarities are the very ways God comes calling, comforting and caring. What we are good at is part of our name. What we are good at is appropriate in the relationship God adapts to. What we are good at is not how we get to God, find God, but they are our meeting places where God is already Godding. We do not change our names to be met by God. God knows us by those names. It is only a glimpse, "A rose by any other name is still a rose."