

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Do not worry' Matthew 6 v 23, 16th February)

Who here is willing to admit that they are a worrier, an anxious person? I am putting my hand up though about 7 years ago I stopped being an anxious person, which might be a story for another time. Anxiety ruins people's lives. And Jesus **commands us** not to worry. 'You must not worry', but kindly. He's putting his arm round us and saying, 'if you are my follower, if you love me and do what I say, there is nothing to be anxious about.'

You might reply: 'why not?' There's a lot to be anxious about. But let me give you a strange reason not to worry. Because you have got a name. Let me tell you the name of the last Archbishop of Paris. His name was Vingt Trois. Who can tell me what Vingt Trois means? 23. Why do you think he was called 23? Because his grandfather was an orphan. And in the orphanage where he lived, he was boy number 23. He had a number and not a name. What would it be like if we had numbers instead of names? Bea was number 1, Freddie number 2, Connie number 3. It would not be very nice. I think if I was number 23 there would be a lot to worry about. When I was at secondary school, we didn't have first names. I was known as Wiggs. Actually, I wasn't known as Wiggs. My name was Wiggs Minimus, which means the smallest Wiggs, because I had 2 elder brothers, Wiggs Minor and Wiggs Major. It's not surprising that at my school there was a lot of bullying and a lot of caning. Because we weren't really people. Nobody called me Robert. You have a name because someone loved you. And your name means something. For example, Ana means 'full of mercy', Connie means 'faithful', John means 'God has been gracious', Freddie means 'peaceful ruler'. Bea means 'she makes people happy.' Andrea means 'strong and brave.' Harry means 'he rules at home.' Cain means 'spear'. Colin means 'little dog'. In the story of the creation at the beginning of the Bible, the name of everything is given to us by God. If you know that you belong to God, there is nothing to worry about. And that is what Jesus is trying to tell us. Mr 23, the archbishop of Paris discovered that he wasn't number 23. He was Andrew or André. He discovered late in life that God loved him.

May I now introduce you to the latest member of my family. This is number 4. My 4th grandchild. But fortunately, she is deeply loved, so that her name is not number 4 but Eva. You probably know that Eva, or Eve, was the first woman in the Bible, and the name Eva means 'giver of life'. And I want to tell you that your name tells you that you are special. We know that because we hate it when someone gets our name wrong. I Have been called Roy or Ron before now and I hate it.

Maybe the difference between being a believer or not is believing I have a name not just from my parents but from God. In the Bible reading that we heard this morning, God gives everything its name. Then he looks at what he has made and says: 'Behold, it is very good.'

Do not worry. God knows you from before you were born, and he knows what you need. Try to do his will and seek for his Kingdom. There's nothing to worry about.