

DISCERNING A BAPTISMAL NAME (OPTIONAL)

There is a long and beautiful tradition as to why some Catholics still do present a saintly or biblical name for their child at Baptism. **CCC 2158**, "God calls each one by name. Everyone's name is sacred. The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of the dignity of the one who bears it."

"Changing" your name shows a conversion of heart, and radiates God's goodness to the entire world. Throughout scripture, when someone was assigned a new name, it signaled a growth in Christian maturity to the world—choose a name of a Saint that has helped you grow in that Christian Maturity or a Saint who you'd like your child to be modeled after.

**We find people in scripture whose names were changed.
This is an outward sign of an interior change!**

ABRAM --> ABRAHAM

"No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations." -Genesis 17:5

JACOB --> ISRAEL

"Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans have overcome." -Genesis 32:28

SIMON --> PETER

"And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas (which is translated to Peter)" -John 1:42

Remember, this is optional. In the past, Canon Law required that parents have a Christian name for the child at Baptism. However, this is no longer a hard-and-fast requirement. In the current code of Canon Law, number 855 simply states:

"Parents, sponsors, and the pastor are to take care that a name ***foreign to Christian sensibility*** is not given."

In short, the canon suggests names like "Lucifer" or "Zeus" are off-limits and necessitates a Christian name be given to the child at Baptism, but "Todd" or "Jane" are permissible and don't require a saintly or biblical name.