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LET'S
PICK A NAME

for
baby

A black and white line drawing of a baby lying on its stomach, wrapped in a plaid blanket. The baby is looking up and to the right with large, dark eyes. Its hands are near its face. The background of the illustration is a light blue and orange plaid pattern.

by Daniel A. Lord, S.J.

*A QUEEN'S WORK
PAMPHLET*

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THE QUEEN'S WORK

Deacidified

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LET'S PICK A NAME FOR BABY

or

Well Where Did You Get Your Name?

PARDON the smile of satisfaction as we catch our old friend Shakespeare in a mistake. What is probably his most familiar quotation runs thus:

“What’s in a name? That which we call
a rose

By any other name would smell as
sweet.”

There is no need to discuss whether or not a long-stemmed American Beauty rose would smell the same if we called it an onion or whether the delightfully fragrant tea rose would seem to have the same perfume if it were rechristened “Rosa Stinkerina.” Perhaps a rose could triumph over a name; but when it comes to people, a name can make a heap of difference. It was Romeo and Juliet who tossed about that famous couplet on names. To the Montagues the name Capulet was poison; the Capulets grew purple when anyone mentioned the name Montague. But under the influence of the moon Romeo and Juliet forgot their names and remembered only the charming persons who wore them.

Lots of Difference

But wouldn't it have mattered a great deal if Romeo had been called Tony Lumpkin? And would Juliet ever have become Shakespeare's heroine had she been called Myrtle McGlum?

I wonder.

It doesn't seem likely that Abraham Lincoln, who happened to have a singularly melodious name, would ever have risen to the White House had he been called Andy Gump. It would be hard for anyone to take

seriously a man named Andy Gump. Joan of Arc was blessed with another of those singularly mellifluous names; had she been called Sadie Glutz, her name would have been a dull thud in the corridors of history. George Washington would hardly have been father of his country had he unfortunately been named Mortimer Drip.

Actors and actresses from the beginning of stage history have known the value of a right name. Once on a time of course they changed their names so that the family wouldn't be disgraced by the world's knowing them as members of their families. Mr. Marmaduke MacMoneybags would have felt everlastingly disgraced had his daughter, Margarine, been seen in the light that beats upon an actress's face. Yet had Margarine MacMoneybags been an actress, she would have been very wise had she changed her name; that strange combination of names would have looked odd on a program. I knew a briefly popular tenor who changed his name from Walter Rust to Walter Percival. He was convinced that had he remained Walter Rust the gallery gods would all have called him Rusty Walter. A celebrated monologist of vaudeville days changed his name from John Cass to Charley Case. He was afraid that if he remained John Cass someone would start calling him Jack.

Musical Changes

So a little Irish girl named Bedelia O'Callaghan changed her name to Trixie Friganza and spent the rest of her life living up to her "moniker."

The custom among stage actors and actresses became the practice in Hollywood. Altering a hair-do, a figure, and a name were all part of the preliminaries by which a newcomer approached stardom.

An aspiring young actor named Archie Leach—a name that would do well enough in England—is today known as Cary Grant.

Hardly a woman star in Hollywood has failed to undergo a California name change.

The head of a model agency in New York is convinced that the right names for his young protégées are half the battle won for success. So out of a quite uncontrolled imagination he has called three of his most successful young prospects Chile, Candy, and—of all the most amazing—Choo Choo.

I noticed in the morning paper that the creator of the delightful cartoon character Barnaby isn't Crockett Johnson at all but David Johnson Leisk. He evidently decided that the patrons of the funny page would find his name too difficult.

What's in a Name?

What's in a name? Well a little runt of a corporal named Schicklegrüber made the wisest move of his life when he changed his name to Hitler. As Schicklegrüber he couldn't have upset anything, not even the village applecart. As Hitler he had a fair chance of upsetting the world.

Three little boys who had unpronounceable Russian names became Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin. Stalin's name by the way underwent a variety of changes. He started as Joseph Vissarionovich Djugashvilli. In the course of time he became successively David, Koba, Nejeradze, Tschijikoff, and finally Stalin. When he stopped with Stalin, he had picked the name that he wanted to characterize his newly adopted personality. How lucky for the commentators that he didn't stick to one of those early unpronounceable names!

You remember the venerable story of the father who deliberately called his son Percy. He explained that he wanted to see his son become a fighter, and "a kid with a name like that will have to learn to fight."

Bob Casey the war correspondent tells of a newspaperman named, incongruously, Abie Mahoney. That name sounds like enough to handicap an entire career, but

not when you learn that his full name was Abraham Lincoln Mahoney. There's music in "them thar" words.

A Second Chance

Fortunately for the children of parents minus an ear for music, the Church gives us a second chance at a name. Come confirmation, and the Catholic youngster adds a new name. Many a child who doesn't like his first name, one that was handed to him before he could do anything about it, takes a new name when he is confirmed and begins to part his name on the side. Abdullah Smith becomes A. George Smith. Oleo O'Brien can, thanks to confirmation, become O. Mary O'Brien. Young parents ought to remember when they are carrying their child to the baptismal font that never again will they have this human being so completely at their mercy. They can name the child anything that has struck their fancy. Many a mother calls her baby—to the eternal shame of the child—after the hero or heroine of some particularly fancy novel. The youngster may have to live by the "moniker" Saffron Willibord or, like the colored man I met in Virginia, King-James-Version Dooley.

At the age of reason children often take the bit in their teeth and correct, as far as they can, their parents' blight on them. Chauncey becomes Mike; Hermengild becomes plain Jane; Mount Morency is reduced to Lee; and Cunegunda is cut to an easy Kate.

...and a Third Chance

For some Catholics there comes a third chance for a name. Men and women religious often take a new name when they make their vows. Regrettably in times past mother superiors did some terrible things to the innocent novices who looked up confidently to ask, "What is my new name in religion?" Catholic humor is full of the

ghastly, titles that have been mother superiors' answers.

But in more recent years there has been a gentility in dealing with the names for young religious. Novice mistresses have reached beyond the sweet combinations of the names of familiar Catholic saints, reached far back into the treasury of history to find Pancratia, Brendan, Consilia, Philomen, and Zita. I have sometimes thought it would be easy to write the complete lyrics for an Italian opera with the names of women religious.

The custom of receiving a new name was of course common enough in men's religious orders too. Yet even in those more recent orders in which the novice retains his family name there prevails the custom of adding a vow name to the ones already received in baptism and in confirmation. In case you are curious (you probably are not), at my own first vows I added the names Francis, after the great Xavier, and Mary—for obvious reasons.

Many a lay member of the great third orders has received a religious name under which he will be buried and by which he will be known for all eternity in heaven.

Choosing a Name

This is a little booklet about names, with a strong emphasis, needless to say, on Christian names. At least once or twice in his lifetime everyone has something to say about the name that a child will carry. Young parents have to decide this most important factor in their infant's future. Uncles and aunts have been known to be summoned to consultation. The advice of friends is sometimes sought. And everyone knows that a wise and happy choice is most important. A name that has been chosen for some silly reason, a name that has no value, history, or significance, may handicap the recipient for long and painful years.

Beyond this it may be a source of real encouragement to recall the meanings and the value of our own given names. The thought of heroic history bound up in our names may be new incentive toward high character and ideals.

Surnames

It happens that surnames, family names, as we call them nowadays, are relatively new. They arose out of a necessity for fuller identification when the population in an area began to increase rather rapidly. In a very small village a heavy reduplication of Christian names would seldom happen. If there was need for identification, the men of those days simply said that they were talking about John, who was the son of old John, or Thomas, whom everybody knew to be the son of the blacksmith, Herman. But soon, with population growth, every village had a great many Johns and Toms, not to mention Marys and Anns. So instead of saying John the son of John, the people said John Johnson. So we had Tom Thompson, and Frank Williamson, and Ned Jackson, and in other lands Ole Oleson.

Father Garesché created in his youthful poetic days a pen name for himself out of this happy custom and signed much of his poetry John Maryson.

This designation of a man by a union of his own name with the name of his father appears to be as old as history. Simon Bar-Jona, the first of the Apostles, would in modern English have been named Simon Jonason. We are a little startled when we first realize that the classic name "Ben Hur" is really the English Hurson.

From Town and Trade

Or it might be that a person was distinguished from the other villagers by the linking of his given name to the name of the town from which he had originally come. Among the many Marys of Christ's

time there was only one important Mary who came from Magdala. So she was called Mary of Magdala—in French, *Marie de Magdala*; in English, Mary Magdalen. The “of” might have been Von, Van, Mac, or even O’, depending upon the country that spoke of her. It is rather charming to realize that Mary Magdalen in Irish might well have been Maureen O’Magdala.

So you recognize with a sense of familiarity the towns which enter into the names Chesterton, Middleton, and a thousand others. You have men named London, Berlin, Newcastle. You have men whose original nationality is never forgotten because of their surname: Ireland, Irish, English, German, French, and the like. Perhaps America is not old enough, but thus far we have not as yet had a John American or a William United States.

We all become so accustomed to our surnames that we forget that practically every English name has a definite meaning. Indeed if we knew the language from which our names came, we would probably find that they too have meanings. A highly intelligent man once remarked to me, in apparent surprise and discovery, that German surnames almost always have meanings.

“So have American names,” I answered, stressing the obvious. “We take our names so much for granted that we forget their meanings.” Yet a study of many of our surnames reveals the trades of forgotten ancestors: Carpenter, Baker, Farmer, Cook, Shepherd, Hunter, Taylor, Waggoner, Gardiner. Long after the trade has vanished, we still have Chandlers and Wainwrights.

We have kept records of professions and ranks and dignities in such names as Priest, Bishop, Cardinal, and even Pope, Major, Sargent, and a hundred others like them.

Other Sources

Then when the Johns and the Jameses and the Williamses in home towns grew still more numerous, our ancestors took their names from objects in nature, from animals, and from characteristics that they had found impressive. We have men called Lake, Rivers, Berry, Apple, House, Frost, Park, Garden. The list could be continued almost indefinitely.

It sometimes happens that with a lapse of years a name becomes coincidentally apt. A Mr. Greathouse is the manager of one of St. Louis's largest hotels. Mr. Candy for years operated the Busy Bee Confectioners. Mr. Call was head of the Bell Telephone Company in Prairie du Chien. Recently the war administration in Washington confessed that it had on its roll of employees the names Mary Bean, George Fruit, Samuel C. Salmon, Esther Olive, William Meal, Fairfax Oyster, and Mable Corn.

Names were constantly being derived from the animal kingdom. Fox was a favorite name, and so was Lyons, spelled in the Old English way. Wolf was a surname long before it became a questionable epithet. But seldom if ever did people choose the names of animals whom they regarded as obnoxious. Apparently there never was a Mr. Skunk, Mr. Snake, or even Mr. Hyena.

We have named ourselves after almost all the colors: Gray, Brown, White, Green, Scarlet—though I never ran across a Mr. Yellow. Myles Connolly probably created out of his own imagination the name for his famous character, Mr. Blue.

So accustomed are we to accept our surnames as meaningless that we find no difficulty in taking for granted such horrendous names as Coffin, Slaughter, Butcher, Savage, and Belcher.

An extremely interesting chapter could be written about the origin of modern

Jewish surnames. For centuries they had none. Then well on in the Middle Ages they were forced to adopt surnames. Since they were not allowed to assume names already possessed by Christians, they initiated a series of names that they created by ingenious invention: Cohen, Levy, Goldstein, Goldberg, and a hundred similar names of quite recent manufacture.

Christian Names

In this little booklet however we are concerned chiefly with what are called Christian names. This is really a most important matter. Once a man has received a name, he must go through a quite elaborate legal process if he wishes to have that name changed. Even a woman when she selects her future husband is a little careless if she does not give at least a side glance to his name, something that she will wear for the rest of her life. One woman I know I thought rather clever when by the name of the man she chose to marry she changed her maiden name of Zimmer to her married name of Zimmerman.

Christian names were originally supposed to indicate the faith of the children and their dedication to some of the great Christian heroes or heroines. Oddly enough the names Maurice and Morris, now very common among Jewish men, really mean Moorish. That sounds unchristian. But if you happen to be a Maurice and a Christian, you need not worry; Saint Maurice, one of the great early Roman martyrs, had his Moorish name baptized in his blood.

Most Christian names are of course names that were once baptized in the glorious memory of great Christian men and women. Many a Jewish name has become Christian by the fact that it was once borne by Christian saints. By the very fact of their apostolate the Jewish names of the twelve at once passed over into Christian tradition.

But all Jewish names did not become Christianized. Once the great Jewish playwright Zangwill was asked what was his Christian name. "I have no Christian name," he answered, in perfect truth. His name, you see, happens to be Israel.

The Church quite frankly exhorts parents to choose names that are associated with Catholic history. Priests are constantly reminding us to think a little about the saints who first consecrated the names we bear. Those names are meant to be a challenge toward imitation. They invite us to duplicate once more the character and virtues of the great men and women who originally bore those names.

Yet even the exhortation of the Church and the vigilance of priests are not enough to protect innocent children against meaningless or silly names. Apparently nothing can force some parents to choose other than ridiculous names. So we still hear of children who are named Concertina Clavical McClub, and Persnikety Pumfernickle Cluck.

The poor child thus launched will indeed find life a sea of troubles. He is definitely handicapped by his handle. Indeed many a man or woman seems nominated for oblivion by his or her parents' bad choice of a name.

Queer Names

No wonder children with ugly, ridiculous, silly, or thoroughly meaningless names grow to bear a grudge against their parents. We Jesuits had a summer villa on Lake Beulah in Wisconsin, not very far from the little town of Mukwonago. When a fond parent in the neighborhood christened his first girl Beulah, after the lake, we wondered if he would call his first boy Mukwonago, after the town. I regret that I have not at hand a record of what became of the children of the famous Hogg family, what really happened when they

grew to consciousness and realized that an unfeeling father had actually called them Ima, Ura, and Hesa.

Even battleships and Pullman cars fare better than do some children. Race horses get some pretty foolish names, but some of them get rather beautiful ones too. Yet I'm always puzzled about the name by which a jockey calls his horse when Prince Charming, Chaledon, or Skittish Maiden is tearing down the homestretch and it is certainly no time to be bothered with long and highfalutin names.

Most boys have a very accurate sense of names when they name their dogs. It takes some so-called dog fancier with an eye on a dog show to call an otherwise highly presentable animal by the name "My Bright-Eyed Champion Little Fellow," Number Three, or "Bop of Bopston," Number Four.

Fashions in Names

Fashions in children's names seem to run in cycles. Many a name has for long periods of time been almost forgotten, while during the same era almost every second child you met seemed to be wearing one of the modish names. At the very time when almost no one called a boy Patrick, every alternate mother called one of her little girls Patricia.

Then there was a run on Brenda—and I was really a little surprised to discover that Brenda is a perfectly authentic saint's name.

Shirley Temple created a vogue for her name which many a child will have to live down during the coming half century. Combination names became popular, especially if they combined with Louise: Mary Lou, Betty Lou, Peggy Lou. Right now Sandra, which is a slightly decayed form of Alexandria, is crashing the rotogravures.

Men's names too run in waves. For a long time Peter, Michael, Christopher, Paul, and other such sturdy names were no more in fashion than were wooden shoes. Then

the English novelists began to play them up, and now they are once more popular for the young fry. You can be almost certain that if someone starts the use of a new name and can persuade someone else to pick it up, a lot of copycats will follow the lead. You'd think that people would want an individual and distinguishing name. Yet names, like hats, shoes, and women's accessories, apparently must be in the fashion or they are considered not worth the carrying.

The name Thelma got a great boost when Marie Corelli wrote her mildly shocking novel of the nineties.

Sappho was the name of a Greek poetess whose fame was, regrettably, none too white. Olga Nethersol brought the name Sappho back to popular attention when she played before audiences of shocked Victorians the part of a woman of that name. But as always happens, the name caught on. You were not surprised when you heard some frivolous-looking mother crying out to her child, "Stop your crying, Sappho!"

During the days of the French Revolution and again during the more recent revolution in Mexico names were used in direct insult to things sacred and Christian. It wasn't uncommon for the revolutionary leaders, usually of the depressed classes, to call their children Pilate, Herod, Judas, and even on occasion Lucifer.

God Names His Own

Names must indeed be important if God Himself has given considerable thought to them.

There is scarcely a name in the Old Testament which has not some rich significance. The name of each archangel is really a description of his work. Michael, who resisted Lucifer, cried out, "Who is like God?" From that day he was called Michael, which means, "who is like the Lord." Raphael had the role of healer to

Tobias and was known as God's physician. The great Archangel Gabriel's name means "hero of God."

Emmanuel means "God with us"; and Raphael, "the gentle son." Sarah was "my princess," and Seth was "the appointed one." Tobias meant "the goodness of the Lord," and Esther was "the star."

When Christ chose Simon as the head of His Church, He changed his name; Simon became Peter. In this Christ was following the custom of His Father, who had changed the name of Abram to Abraham when he designated him the father of all the faithful.

A positive dispute centered around the name of the Lord's precursor, a dispute which his father settled when he indicated that God's choice was the name John. Saul gave up his Hebrew name and became Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles.

The New Testament is filled with the deep significance of Christ's own name.

At the name Jesus every knee throughout creation shall bow.

The Right Choice

It is clear that the correct name given to a child may not only be a symbol of characteristics which the parents hope to see developed in the child but a positive inspiration to the child to acquire these characteristics and to develop these virtues throughout his life.

We are wise indeed to remember all this when we are considering the name for a new child. And even if the opportunity to choose a name for a child never comes to us, we are wise if we pause to consider our own names, to sift their meanings and to look back to the heroes and heroines who have carried those names, in order to see whether or not we are living up to the rich meanings and connotations of the names we bear.

Rules

What rules should a person follow in the choosing of a name?

Rather recently I read somewhere a list of such rules drawn up by a writer. Alas and alack! my personal filing system is distinctly sketchy, and the clipping which I meant to make simply slipped away.

But in a way I am glad I lost the list. My rules and his may overlap. Still I remember that his list ended much too abruptly. He did not waste an upward glance at the saints, because of whom we happen to have distinctly Christian names.

The first rule I suggest for the selecting of a name may sound almost frivolous: Be sure that the name is capable of being reduced to an attractive nickname. For whether or not you want it, the comrades of your boy and the friends of your little girl are going to cut the names Gwendolyn down to Gwen, Patrick to Pat, Susan to Sue, and William to Bill.

“Father calls me William;
Sister calls me Will;
Mother calls me Willie;
But the fellers call me Bill.”

(I am quoting Eugene Field by ear, though I believe that those lines are the opening of his memorable “Just 'Fore Christmas.”)

Since a child is going to hear his nickname much oftener than his full name, be sure that his name in nickname form won't make him—or you—wince. For many reasons I doubt whether you would call your daughter Fatima; the shortened form, you see, would be Fat. You may have an attractive family name like Muelbach, but your boy will have to live by the tag Mule or Muley. Assisi is a lovely name, rich in associations with the great Saint Francis; but don't christen your child Assisi Jones if you don't want him to spend his life under the name A. Sissy Jones.

Rules Two and Three

The second rule seems to me no more than fair: Be sure that the name you give the child is distinctively masculine or feminine. It isn't fair to leave people in doubt—when they hear the name or read the signature—about whether the person is male or female.

Alpha is such an ambiguous name. Historically it is the name of a man; it sounds as if it ought to be the name of a girl. Once and for all, wouldn't it be possible to agree that Marian, Florence, and Evelyn are girls' names? Yet I have known very masculine men who carry those names. And I have sometimes heard them give labored explanations about how they came by names that the average hearer regards as women's names.

The third rule runs thus: The name should not carry with it any unpleasant suggestion which the bearer will have to live down.

There are certain names, beautiful in themselves, which have become so associated in people's minds with one ugly character or one scandalous event that the name cannot stand on its own merits. The child with such a name must live under the shadow of someone else's wrongdoing. Abelard means "noble firmness"; but it at once recalls the notorious renegade monk.

You wouldn't call a child Ananias, any more than you would call him Munchausen, even though Ananias really means "the grace of God." Boniface was once a beautiful name; now it means "an innkeeper." I knew a charming novice who burst into tears when her heartless novice mistress told her her new name in religion. "Bruno!" she sobbed. "That's the name of our dog."

In France you can apparently still call a child Camille; not so in America, where the name is associated with the poor consumptive dying on her mock-heroic bed.

Delilah is a beautiful name, but the original Delilah was certainly no lady and surely no inspiration for a young Christian. You couldn't call a child Godiva without everybody's recalling the white horse and the famous ride. Ichabod is regrettably so immediately associated with the adventure of the headless horseman that the original meaning of the name is now quite significant—"the glory is departed."

Associations

Quite sadly some of the most beautiful names have been cashiered out of circulation by chance connections with evil. Sometimes they have become ridiculous and absurd through no fault of the names themselves.

The cult of Saint Jude has been thoroughly reawakened in recent years. Seldom does anyone call a child Jude, simply because Jude is the short form for Judas. The crime of the traitor Judas seems to take precedence over the virtues of Saint Jude.

Lucifer is the Latin word meaning "one who carries the light." It was the name given to the glorious angel in heaven who shone like the very sun in God's court. Today it is the name of the Devil, who is doomed to eternal blackness.

Merlin is a beautiful old English name, but unfortunately it was preempted by the shoddy necromancer of King Arthur's court. The name is not however completely lost, for it is found today in the form Mervin, which is simply a slight change from the "wizard's" more familiar name.

Do you know what name has for its meaning "beautiful as the day"? Jemimah. Still few use it because Aunt Jemima and her pancakes are so thoroughly associated with a very black smiling face crowned with a bandana. Salome means "peaceful" and was the name of one of the holy women who laid the Savior in the sepulcher. As

often happens, the good woman is largely forgotten; it is the Salome of the Seven Veils that is the current association of that name. I think that for many a long year Americans will refrain from naming their children Adolph. With remarkable fitness Adolph happens to mean the "noble wolf."

Rule Four

The next rule, number four, seems simple too: The name chosen for a child should not make possible constant jokes on it.

No name or combination of names should have a funny sound. People are inclined to laugh if they meet a man called Samuel Samuels. The commander of our United States Army has refused (quite aside from other reasons) to consider the title of Field Marshal. He doesn't want to be called Marshal Marshall. Yet I once met a poor unfortunate whose name was Johnson Thompson; you couldn't say it without stuttering, and you couldn't hear it without a smile. If your name is Piper, which is in every sense a beautiful name, you certainly wouldn't inflict upon your son all the jokes that would result from your naming him Peter.

Ida is a lovely name, which means "perfect happiness." But it is one of those names which in combination challenge the hearer to atrocious puns. Heaven help the poor girl called Ida Clare. I have known unfortunates with that name. If your name is Paine, you'd better skip the Ida.

Lamb is a charming surname, and Mary is always beautiful. The combination however, Mary Lamb, will not suggest Charles's charming sister but the object of the famous nursery rhyme. Lotta, made popular and famous by the English actress Lotta Crabtree, was at the end of the century quite widely bestowed. But it would be cruel to victimize a girl with the name Lotta Sand for example.

Once there was a woman named Helen Hunt. On her name was based the most cherished story of all third and fourth graders, the story of the teacher who told her class that if anyone had lost a purse he could go to Helen Hunt for it.

Marriage created a simply atrocious pun on names when the late Admiral Dewey married a new wife. Her name happened to be Mildred, and not a paper in the country failed to call attention to the fact that their honeymoon cottage will be Mil Dewey.

Fifth Rule

The fifth rule is one which should, I think, be suggested in all fairness: Don't give the child the complete name of some already illustrious person. If your name is Smith and you name the child Abraham Lincoln, that is all right. But if your name is Ruth and you name the poor unfortunate Babe, he is doomed.

Of course it may happen that the famous person is a direct ancestor of yours. That makes the case quite different. At the turn of the century one of the greatest football players happened to be a young man by the name of Edgar Allen Poe. Sports writers tell how one day as the stands were cheering for Poe, an absent-minded professor touched a student on the arm and asked, "Is he any relation of the famous Poe?"

"Great Scott!" cried the astonished student. "He is the great Poe!" As a matter of fact he was a descendant of the creator of our modern mystery story, so he had a legitimate right to the name.

But what fun the sports writers had when William Shakespeare of Notre Dame flunked his English examination. The famous English organist, Thomas A. Becket was always reminded that he was in the wrong cathedral — he should have been in Canterbury, they said, not Westminster.

Fortunately for the second Jack Dempsey, he outfought his predecessor and completely eclipsed the fame of the man who first wore that name.

It would however be completely unfair to call one of the Holmes children Sherlock, or a Vance child Philo, or one of the Garden girls Mary, or the Roger baby Ginger. Such a name would doom the wearer to obscurity in the shadow of an already famous namesake. It is really hard enough to live at a time when one's name is already dominated by some illustrious contemporary. When I was a collegian, every Chicago boy named Donahue was nicknamed Jiggs, in honor of the White Sox first baseman. As gentle a priest as I ever knew happened to have the same name as a briefly notorious gangster. So every boy that the priest taught, referred—behind his back of course but persistently and universally—to this gracious and learned priest as Snake Kennedy.

Sixth Rule

No matter how hard we try to be individual, names have a way of repeating themselves endlessly. Yet we can at least try to observe the sixth rule: The name chosen should be as distinctive and individual as possible.

A man named John Kelly is likely to have to share that name with ten thousand other John Kellys throughout the country. Jane Smith will in the course of her life meet girl after girl wearing the same name. Those who happen to have a name that is endlessly repeated are likely to spend their lives reading mail that belongs to someone else and having other people open mail intended for them. Phone calls and bills and invitations will go astray simply because of the identity of names. Some friends of mine moved into a large apartment building where there were already two other families whose surname was the same as

theirs. They broke their lease and moved within a month. The strain of constant mistaken identity was wearing down their health; they had to seek either a new home or a room in a psychopathic hospital.

Yet even the most widely-used name can be made individualistic. **John Smith** is, I suppose, as common a name as you will find. But by the addition of a middle name, Talbot, the famous priest author made his name distinctive and memorable — **John Talbot Smith**. **John Brown** is certainly a recurrent name; **John Mason Brown** is a name that belongs exclusively to the famous dramatic critic and war correspondent.

It is a little reassuring in this connection to consult the telephone book. Jones is a family name that continues down long columns. Perhaps because of its very frequency, parents named Jones are the ones who seem to give their sons and daughters the oddest and most unusual names. They have found individuality even at the price of eccentricity.

Seventh Rule

You can regard or disregard this seventh rule if you wish. (I have no doubt that you will do the same for the other rules if you have a mind to.) I strongly advise however that the name chosen should sound as if it stemmed from your native language.

Certain names are thoroughly associated with certain nations. Achilles, it is true, was a Greek; Achille is as thoroughly French as is Hercule or Adrienne. Unless you have Scotch ancestry, Angus is a very misleading name. Boris properly belongs to Russia, in which language the name means "fight," or to a Hungarian, in whose language the word is used to mean "stranger." Caesar passed his name on to modern Italians. Nigel and Diana, though of remote origin, are now the exclusive property of the English; so for that matter is Cosmo. Noel drifted from France to Eng-

land and then to Ireland, where it now remains; I doubt if it belongs in the United States any more than does Olaf, which is thoroughly Scandinavian.

"Out of the Groove"

Where names are concerned, people find it easy to fall into grooves. They get into the habit of naming children by a limited number of names, and soon they seem afraid to swing outside the very circumscribed litany. Perhaps the American Negro goes to the other extreme. Just the same one has to admire the way in which the colored can roll the new and melodious name over on their tongues and make music out of a free combination of given names and surnames. A reporter writing up "Carmen Jones," the colored adaptation of Bizet's famous opera, found some very interesting names in the cast of characters. I myself read them with relish: Elton Warren, Carlotta Franzel, Napoleon Reed, Urylee Leonardos, Randall Steplight, and J. Flashe Riley.

New Combinations

Do you remember the ancient story about the colored boy who said his father's name was Ferdie and his mother's name was Liza so they called him Ferdiliza?

Once upon a time authors made a real struggle for originality in names. Dickens traveled the streets of London and jotted down every unusual name that he saw on a sign over a shop or in the window of a store. Eventually his names became almost descriptions. Uriah Heap is less a person than a character. The same can be said of Scrooge and Tiny Tim. Nicholas Nickleby, quite independently of his story, happens to have one of the most distinctive names in fiction.

Shakespeare's characters have given their names to an entire mental temperament or

to outstanding physical characteristics. When you call a man a typical Hamlet, you thereby describe him. If you say that a young man is a Benedict, you recognize at once his newly married status. No young woman lawyer has ever escaped being called a Portia, and any notable murderess is promptly called a Lady Macbeth.

Even today authors strive to find original names for their characters. Mrs. Mitchell searched long before she found the name Scarlett O'Hara. Amusingly enough she first surveyed the neighborhood to be sure that no one there bore that name; then just as her book reached its popularity, a new bishop was appointed to Atlanta who happened to have exactly the same name as that of Scarlett's fictional father.

Sinclair Lewis has made a very skillful choice of names for his characters. Elmer Gantry has become almost a common noun rather than a proper name. His Arrow-smith is an unforgettable name. Even though "Gideon Planish" was a poor book, the name itself is almost unforgettable.

During the late eighteenth century theater programs tried by the very names of the characters to indicate in advance what the actors and actresses would be like and what they would do. So your country cousin was announced as Bob Acres; Lydia Languish was bound to live up to her name; and Anthony Absolute faced his father, knowing that his temper would be like his surname.

Later on musical comedy carried this technique to ultimate absurdity; the characters had such ridiculous names as Lotta Smoke and Vaseline Cheseborough.

No Catholic young person will ever forget that Father Finn aptly called the young runner Claude Lightfoot and selected as the name for the pattern of all Catholic boys Tom Playfair.

Again and Again

I have been saying that in the matter of names we all tend to get into a groove and use the same names over and over again. We have forgotten most of the names in the long litany of Catholic saints and the bright list of heroic Catholic dead who fill the pages of our martyrology.

To find out just how grooved we are, we took three pages of the St. Louis telephone book and tabulated first names. We found listed there 269 different men's names. But some of them recurred tiresomely: William, 68 times; John, 49; Walter, 36; Charles, 29; Henry and Harry, 27; Robert, 27; Edward, 26; Thomas, 26; George, 25; Frank, 22; James, 21; Fred, 18; Raymond, 18; Arthur, 18; Richard, 17; Paul, 15; Harold, 13; Louis, 13; Roy, 13; Joseph, 12; Albert, 11; Samuel, 10; Laurence, 6; Michael, 5.

There are not nearly so many women's names as there are men's names in the telephone book, since most women are listed under the names of husbands or fathers. But of the 165 different women's names, these are the leading candidates for popularity: Mary, 21, Katherine (in its various forms), 9; Helen, 8; Ann, 8; Marie, 7; Margaret, 7; Minnie, 6; Elizabeth, 6; Dorothy, 5. Then Nola and Ruth, with 4 each, and Virginia and Myrtle, with 3 each.

Why Names at All?

What is the purpose of a name? Why should anyone bother to give a name at all? Why aren't we just numbered, like prisoners in the "pen" or destroyers in the fleet? When we come to think about it, we realize that a name serves many purposes.

What are those purposes?

Well one of the radio programs has a way of sticking people with simple questions that aren't complicated. The master of ceremonies once asked what was the

primary purpose of cowhide. His victim suggested everything from shoes to Sam Browne belts. The obvious answer is: The primary purpose of cowhide is to keep the cow together.

Now if you were to ask people the primary purpose of a name, they might almost forget that it is simply to identify the person who bears it. If every human being in the world had a completely different name or combination of names, we would come very close to the ideal objective.

Meaningless

The second reason why people are given a name is usually connected with family tradition. The name has been in the family, and it must continue to be worn by one member of each generation. Yet as the generations overlap, the name becomes almost a nuisance. At a Thanksgiving dinner party, if someone happens to call, "Fred!" it is likely that grandfather, father, eldest son, and three cousins will answer. Family tradition is fine where the name itself is an attractive one. But unlucky is the poor child who is born into a family that has always had a Udo, or a Bustamente, or a Crackpot. Frequently enough people pick a name just because they happen to like its sound. Some mothers have a sense of melody, so they choose, without knowing why, a name like Lillian, Melanie, Nola, Bruce, Philip, and Hilary. Artistically they are right. These names are beautiful because they happen to contain the beautiful letters of the alphabet—vowels, and the liquids, l, m, n, and r. Irish and Italian and Spanish names are beautiful because of the vowels and liquids of which they are composed. The Greeks had long recognized the melodic value of such names.

More rarely do people pick names because they happen to know their meaning. Yet there are names which can be high compliments to the wearers. There are

others which by their very significance are inspiration to virtue.

Almost all first names, like surnames, have a meaning. When human beings first came to name their offspring, they had to manufacture names. So they often chose names which were descriptive of the child himself, of events that surrounded his coming into the world, of characteristics which they hoped he would bear as a man. That procedure is still followed among primitive people. We have no reason to be amused at the names of American Indians. Chief Sitting Bull, Rain-in-the-Face, Running Warrior, Great Bear, Strong Fighter, and squaws' names such as Pale Cloud, Gentle Deer, Woman in the Night, and so on, are all descriptions which have very clear meanings to those who chose the names.

Originally all names were chosen in this way.

For instance . . .

Alfred means "the crafty counselor," and Alphonsus "the man eager for battle." Our American Indians would have appreciated either of those names. Bernard is "the strong bear"—and the Sioux would have nodded their approval. Dorcas is "a gazelle," and Ernest "the stone of the eagle." Evelyn means "a hazelnut," Genevieve "a white wave," and Irene "a messenger of peace." Leonard means "strong as a lion," and Oscar is "the bounding warrior." Stanislaus is "the glory in the camp," William "the helmet of courage."

So our ancestors, like the American Indians today, when they named a baby did not merely give it a title; they gave it a description.

Rufus was that fellow with the red hair. Though today Barbara is one of our most beautiful names, originally it meant "the hairy one"; then because the Romans were very careful about their appearance, in contrast to the less civilized peoples, who

were long-haired and bearded, Barbara came to mean merely "the stranger or the foreigner in our midst."

I sincerely doubt that most people today pay the slightest attention to the meaning that the particular name originally bore. Every so often a newspaper will run a feature story on the significance of names, and the newspaper office will be flooded with a batch of mail from people with names no one has ever heard of.

Named for the Great

But today most people who attach any meaning at all to a name do so because of the name's connection with a person whom they admire.

Many a convent-bred mother has named her children after nuns who taught her, even if later this caused the child considerable confusion. If you meet a child called Tarsicius or Domitilla or Immaculata, you may be absolutely sure that the child's having that name resulted from the affection which the mother bore for some beloved teaching sister.

Never does it happen that a national hero captures our imagination without a group of children's being named for him.

During the first World War, I was secretary of the Students' Army Training Corps at St. Louis University. Sometimes as I jotted down names, it seemed that one out of every three of the young men registered had Dewey for a first name. After a short time as soon as the boy announced that his name was Dewey, I instinctively asked, "Were you born in 1898 or 1899?" It had to be either of those years. The battle of Manila was fought in 1898, and Dewey's star of popularity set during the following year.

All over the country some years ago singers were praising "Franklin D. Roosevelt Jones." The song was popular be-

cause almost all of us knew some child who was named for the President.

After Bataan an epidemic of young Douglas MacArthurs sprang up.

During the three campaigns of William Jennings Bryan the country became marked by youngsters christened in his honor.

Compliments to a Friend

One of the most notable ways by which a man can compliment his friend is to name a child for him. He is telling his friend that he thinks very highly of him and would be proud to see his son grow up to be like him. In later years when the child asks about his name, he will be told about the man for whom he was named. A kind of ideal has been created in his life. Between the original wearer of the name and the one to whom it was lent, a close, intimate, personal, lasting link is forged. A name can do all this.

No one who has ever had a child named after him has failed to recognize at once the compliment implied. So parents have not been above naming their children because of the desire to flatter wealthy or important relatives. Mr. and Mrs. Jones may not regard Jeremiah as a particularly streamlined name. If it happens however that Uncle Jeremiah is a millionaire who may write little Jeremiah Jones into his will, Jeremiah the younger may as well prepare to bear with his name until his uncle dies, when he can cut his name down to Jerry.

Though dear cousin Bethseda has spent her whole life trying to forget her name, she is none the less complimented when the young Barton baby becomes Bethseda the second. Cousin Bethseda will then probably look at her diamonds and decide that it is only fair to leave them to her namesake instead of to her faithful cook.

Quite naturally we take it for granted that a person who has been complimented

by a baby's having been named after him will take special interest in this namesake, an interest that will show itself in tangible forms.

History in a Name

So a simple given name is much more than a mere combination of letters. In it are connoted history, friendship, hope, human ideals, flattery, expectation, and the record of human virtues. The infant may have no history of his own; he already carries the long and dignified history of his name. Over a crib the hands of friends meet in new affection and gratitude as a name is conferred in honor of a lifelong friendship. Parents regard their baby, not as an abstract being, but as someone who will, they hope, live up to the meaning of his name and to the reputation of those who have carried it.

When Protestantism came with its great revolt, one of the things it did was to kick out a large part of the tradition of Christian names. The New Testament had a way of being embarrassingly Catholic, so the "reformers" went dashing back to the Old Testament in search of names that had not been borne by Catholic saints.

The religious rebels were considerably disturbed to find that it was practically impossible to name a boy or a girl without paying tribute to a Catholic saint. If you gave a boy any of the current names, you thereby promptly recalled some great Catholic bishop or monk or missionary who had come to the country direct from that monstrous Pope of Rome. In the same way you gave a girl a name to commemorate some virgin or abbess or Catholic mother or famous nun, none of whom would have understood what in high heaven or deep hell the "reformers" were talking about.

So the dawn of Puritanism saw an epidemic of Old Testament names presented

to the newborn children: Jeremiah and Jeroram and Eliakim, Aaron and Leah, Josiah, Jonathan, and a hundred other names of the same ilk.

When the supply of pronounceable Old Testament names was exhausted, the followers of the new religion—largely under the influence of Bunyan — drew on the abstract virtues. They named their children Faith, Hope, and Charity, little suspecting that these names had been worn by the Catholic Saint Sophia's famous daughters, who were martyred in very Catholic times. Their children became Prudence and Charity—very abstract of course; but Saints Prudence and Charity, decidedly not abstract, were canonized Catholic martyrs.

Back to the Old Testament

Then they really did go far afield of things and times Catholic. They called their children Swear-not-at-all Ireton, Glory-to-be-to-God Pennyman, Hew-Agag-in-pieces-before-the-Lord Robinson, Obadiah - bind - their - kings - in - chains - and - their - troubles - in - irons Needham, Praise-God-Barebone, and If-Christ-had-not-died-for-thee-thou-hadst-been-damned Barebone.

You will note that the Barebone brothers really topped the climax.

Naturally this kind of thing didn't last. The Christian names of the Catholic saints were too deeply imbedded in history and tradition to be tossed aside for long or ever to be lost. So nowadays when a baby is brought to the baptismal font, no matter in what brand of Christian church, it stands a pretty fair chance of being named after an Apostle, a martyr, a doctor, a confessor, a virgin, or a widow whose name is fondly inscribed in the Catholic martyrology.

Why Names?

Once more and in briefest synopsis let's recall that names are usually chosen for any or all of the following reasons:

1. For purposes of exact identification.
2. Because the name has perdured in the family.
3. Because the parents happen to like the name—its sound, or its meaning, or both.
4. Because the parents have admired some person who carried that name, whether a famous historic person, or one of the contemporary great, or some fictional character they have met in a novel, or a devoted relative or friend.
5. Because the parents felt that the person for whom the child was named might be of service to the child and watch over his future career.

The Higher Level

Thus far we have been talking about names as any human being might regard them. As Catholics and as Christians we find the whole question of a name lifted to a new level. Indeed it is lifted to the level of the saints.

Certainly we want our children to be clearly identified. But beyond that we should like to have them identified as members of the world-wide family which is Christendom. In fact we would be a little embarrassed if we learned that our name had never before occurred in the glorious records of that family which is the Church.

We wouldn't call a boy Phoebus because, as it happens, Phoebus is merely the name of the old pagan god Apollo, and there never was a Christian saint who baptized that name. But we wouldn't hesitate to call a girl Phoebe (really the feminine of Phoebus), since Saint Phoebe was one of the first Christian martyrs—in the church near Corinth—whose life was so exemplary

that she was noted with approval by Saint Paul. It is a glorious thing to bear the name of an important member of our great Christian family.

Unfortunate indeed is the child who bears merely two family names, like Johnson Jones, or Sullivan Kelly. Even though the family for whom he has been named is quite illustrious, he has still lost contact with that higher and more illustrious family of the saints.

A Bow to the Saints

You do not need to read far along the lists of the saints before you find names which are both beautiful in sound and rich in significance. Beyond this, Christian names became traditional simply because they were lifted to such exalted heights by the famous men and women who carried them, those saints who lived and died on earth in order to become our immortal relatives and friends in heaven.

Naming a child for a saint is natural and supernatural wisdom. If that parent is provident who with an eye to the child's future names a son or a daughter after a rich relative, exceedingly wise is the parent who names a child after one of the richest of all relatives, those canonized saints, who have access to the eternal riches of God.

No stretch of fancy is required to make us realize the pleasure that a saint takes in the knowledge that an infant has been named for him or her. At the very moment that the name is conferred in baptism, the saint in heaven acquires a new interest upon earth. The little child is his namesake. Out of respect for the saint's achievements and in the hope that his virtues will reappear upon earth, these adults have named a child for him.

If we mere earth-bound mortals find it hard to be chilly toward a namesake, we can be quite sure that the saints feel a personal interest in new protégés.

If our hopes are realized, the growing child will find his patron saint an inspiration. He will want to imitate the purity of Aloysius, the tremendous courage of George or Vincent, the faith of Thomas of Aquin, the innocence of Agnes, or the domestic virtues of Jane Frances de Chantal.

Don't Cheat the Child

A child is simply cheated if, rather than a saint's name, he has been given, let's say, the name of an inanimate jewel. Any boy would rightly be ashamed of the name Topaz, when he might have been christened Michael or Paul. A girl should resent her name if it is Diamond, when it might have been Claire, or Catherine.

Every new Christian name is a very important thing. It is given at the moment when the baptismal waters are flowing over the head of the child and he is being made an adopted son of God. The name commemorates this significant occasion. That name will identify him forever in God's sight. As the name is pronounced by the priest, the recording angel writes it in the book of eternal life. All his days he will be called by that name, and the name will be associated with his achievements and flavored by his characteristics.

Certainly at such a moment the child has a right to a dignified and beautiful name, a name rich in historic associations and linked with the Church Triumphant.

How ridiculous to hand a child at that solemn moment a silly name like Grenadine, or Syncopation! How unkind to deprive him of a heavenly patron merely to perpetuate a family name!

Rich in Meaning

I have been finding considerable pleasure these past few days in paging through the martyrology of the Church. The names it contains are wonderfully rich in meaning. It would seem almost as if God had planned

the names of his saints so that each would be resonant, melodic, and deeply significant.

For instance... Abigail means "her father's joy"; Agatha is simply "the good girl"; Agnes, "the lamb"; Allan, "the cheerful man"; Ambrose, "the immortal"; Andrew and Charles in their distinctive languages mean simply "the man," perhaps the highest compliment that could be paid a man. Angela is "the messenger of God"; Anna, the Greek work for grace. Beatrice is "the girl who gives joy"; David, "the deeply beloved." Katherine means "pure and unspotted"; Christopher, "the Christ bearer"; Drusilla, "the flower watered by dew." Helen is "the torch"; Hanna, another form of Anna, "the gracious gift." Ida means "perfect happiness"; Enid, a name that was given as the highest compliment to a woman in the Middle Ages, means "the lady who is spiritually pure." Lucille, Lucy, and Luke all mean "born at daylight"; Patrick and Patricia are the people "born of noble blood." Rachel is "the gentle ewe," and Sarah is "my princess." Susanna, Sue, and Susan, "the white and graceful lily." Zoe means "the gift of life."

Historic Value

Added to the name's distinctive meaning is the glorious historic connotation that goes with the name of a saint. These are the truly great men and women of all times, the Apostles who followed the person of the Savior, the martyrs who died for truth, the doctors who presented God's revelation before kings and people, the confessors whose lives were public proclamations of the beauty of Christianity, the missionaries who carried the faith to the ends of the earth, the great benefactors of the human race, and members of a thousand professions. These are the canonized Popes, kings, emperors, queens, and princesses who were and are far more radiant for their beauty

of soul than for any garment they wore. These are the crusaders in a thousand battles for right. These are the learned monks and holy priests who have faithfully served the people of God. These are the nuns and virgins who set a gleaming standard of purity. These are the wives, mothers, and widows who made happy the lives of those around them. These are the outstanding members of our race who have contributed most to our lasting happiness.

Mary

Inevitably and in every country Mary has been the name given most frequently both to men and to women. Oddly enough the name itself means "bitter," from the Hebrew word *mar*, associated with the Jewish bondage and exile in Egypt, where Miriam, sister of Moses and the first to bear the name, was born.

But Mary, greatest of womankind, has been so beloved and honored, so pre-eminently the ideal of womankind that her name in a hundred forms is the one most frequently given to children. Men have of their own accord taken her name, since they could think of nothing more inspiring than to bear the name of their heavenly mother.

Should anyone find the name Mary too commonplace in itself, he may be interested to read some of the variants on that name. It is possible to call a child after heaven's queen and yet use one of the following forms: Marian, Marion, Miriam, and Marie. Mary is also Molly, Mae, May, Maureen, Maria, Marianna, Marianne, Maris, Marr, Marilyn, Mariette, Maryath, Marot, Malkin, Murrock, Murchie.

Variant Names

Elizabeth, which means "gift of God," has been, along with Catherine and Anna, the most popular name for girls. The reason of course is the close association of

Elizabeth and Anna with Mary and the Savior, and the two great saints, Catharine of Alexandria, patroness of philosophy, and Catharine of Siena, sometimes called the greatest woman since Mary.

But here again a wide variety of forms is possible. Elizabeth becomes Elise, Elissa, Eliza, Lisbet, Iseult, Isolde, Elsa, Elsie, Elspah, Elspeth—and of course Betty, Bess, Beth—and the dozen other sweet names derived from Elizabeth.

Anna, which means "grace," can be Anne, Ann, Annette.

Catherine has probably more spellings than almost any other Christian name. In its most recent form it has become Kateri, the charming name given to the Lily of the Mohawks, Kateri Tekakwitha.

Men's Names

From the dawn of Christianity the names of the Apostles have been unfailingly favored. Even those Apostles who had long and difficult names, like Bartholomew, have not been forgotten; Bartholomew has been contracted into the smart and easily remembered Bart.

So too have the great martyrs been popular, like Stephen and Lawrence, though saints' names like Sebastian and Pancratius prove a little difficult for an American tongue. George, whose name unromantically means simply "the farmer," has become the symbol for all heroic slaying of evil. Francis and his great disciple, Anthony, have passed their names on to hundreds of thousands of young men. Francis Xavier, with the abbreviation X. for the Xavier, is so distinctively a Catholic badge that even when its wearer falls away from the faith he continues to proclaim his Catholic origin with that telltale F. X. We have only to name the saints to recall the greatness of their achievements: Bernard; Benedict; Dominic; Augustine, whose name in Eng-

land became Austin; Cecelia; Agatha and Agnes; Helen, who was a queen; Joan of Arc, who saved a king; Stanislaus; Gabriel, who brought the purity of angels to earth. If Aloysius and Stanislaus are hard names to pronounce, as is the name of their spiritual father, Ignatius, nevertheless none of these names has been lost, since they are so frequently middle names.

My Own Name

For a brief time I was very much worried for fear that I had been given a name that had never been borne by a saint. There is in the Jesuit Order a story about an English convert who arrived at the novitiate whose name was an unusual family name most difficult to pronounce.

The novicemaster looked stern when the convert gave his name. "There is no saint with your name," he said.

"Then," said the new arrival, "it is your task to make one."

I had been named out of my father's love for his own father, a Presbyterian minister. I took it for granted that this minister grandfather had received his name straight out of the Old Testament. Daniel, most famous for the episode in the lion's den, was, I knew, one of the four major prophets. The "El" at the end of a name always meant some relationship to God. Even "Dan" was the Hebrew word for judge.

But what of its Catholic connotation? I myself had little enough hope of sainthood.

Yet my Catholic mother had not failed me. There are in the Catholic martyrology seven saints named Daniel: four martyrs, a bishop, a monk, and a member of that strange fraternity that reached sanctity on the top of high columns and in the early ages of the Church were known as Stylites. Like other lucky Catholic boys I had been given namesakes in heaven. Indeed from the seven saints who had borne my name it

was quite easy to construct the pattern of a complete Catholic life: the courage and faith of the martyrs, the zeal of the bishop, the studious prayer of the monk, and the contempt for the world which characterized the Stylite, who lived literally with the world at his feet.

At confirmation I took the name Aloysius. Yet its Latin form has always troubled me. I felt I should have preferred a more completely Anglicized name. For the sake of those who may hesitate before this name of Latin ending, I can remind them that Aloysius is merely another form for Louis, or Lewis, or Alois. In all his life Aloysius probably never was called by his Latin name, except when it was translated for the records of the Society or was used in its Latin form by some classical-minded fellow Jesuit.

Wide Variety

Certainly there is no excuse for a Catholic's becoming grooved in his selection of names. He has only to turn to the martyrology to find the widest variety of names.

Among the saints of heaven there must be some who have tens of thousands of namesakes on earth. On the other hand there are others who might with perfect right feel themselves a bit neglected. No one seems to be named for them anymore.

I made it my business to go through the catalogue of the saints and pick out names that might easily be restored to current use. For each name I shall give merely the verbal meaning, leaving it to my reader to explore the records and discover for himself the glorious achievements that made the saint great.

There is Alban, which means "pure, white"; Anselm, "divine Helmet"; Anthea, "the lady of flowers"; Aurelia, "the golden maid." There is Austin, "the illustrious"; and Baldwin, "a priestly friend." I was surprised to find that Barry is the Irish

name for a good marksman and Bede the word for prayer. Bertram is "the bright legion," and Brockwell "the strong champion." Celeste means "the beautiful one"; and Claudia, though it meant originally "the lame girl," became in time associated with one of the greatest of the Roman families and a group of early Christian families. Clement is "the merciful," and Derrick is "the people's ruler." Cornelia is "the one royally born"; Corinne means "our little girl"; Cordelia, "the daughter of the sea." Dunstan, a magnificent old English name now almost forgotten, and Duran mean "the eternal one." Felicitas is the "happy" name once frequent in Catholic families. Garret and Geoffrey and Giles are names historic in their significance. Ives, the great lawyer, bears the meaning "an archer," and Joel is "the strong-willed." Laetitia (not more difficult to say than Patricia) is "the gay one"; Ravina, "the white skirt"; Vera, "the faithful and true"; Veronica, "the true image of Christ." Malcolm and Kester and Perrin are names almost forgotten. Pascal is "the child of Easter."

The Irish Saints

We could add to that list the names of saints like Adrian, Agatha, Aidan, Alcuin, Aubert, Chad, Cuthbert, Eric, Eustace, Felix, Fergus, Flavia, Justin, Paula, Pelagia, Roch, Ronan, Scholastica, Urban.

I have been accused, and not without reason, of seeming to write more frequently than not about the Irish. Perhaps that is the dominance of the Irish streak in me. But I ask to be forgiven if I recall to my readers the names of the Irish saints.

Every one that I list is musical. Each one of them was borne by some great servant of God.

The name Bridget, which in itself means "strong," largely disappeared because of

its condescending nickname, Biddie. Someday it may come back. The masculine form for Bridget, also meaning "strong," is Brian or Bryan or Brien. But let's go through those Irish names. There is Cora, "the maiden." There are Darby, "the free man"; Darcy, "the dark one"; and Dermot and Diarmid, both meaning "free." There are Duff, "the black"; and Evan, "the young warrior"; Fergus, "the strong man"; Fingal, "the white stranger." Kenny means "the man of vast bulk" (in another form the name is Kean); Kevin is "the handsome man"; Keiren, "the brunette." Manus is the Irish form of Magnus; Mahon is "the bear"; Myles, "the soldier." Macaire is "the happy one"; Moria, "the soft and gentle maiden." Neal is "the champion"; Owen, "the young warrior." Phelim is "the good"; Shawn, the Irish form for John. Pierce turns out to be what the Irish made of the name Peter, as Sheila is the Irish form of Cecelia. If Toole is "the lord," Tiernan is "the king."

We could go on with the Irish list—and shall: Aidan, Angus, Comin, Caron, Colman, Columba, Comgal, Conan, Cormac, Crordan, Dagan, Declan, Drustan, Ernan, Fiehlin, Finan, Finbar, Finian, Ibar, Kiaran, Kilian, Malachy, Medana, Meldan, Brendan, Monan, Odran, Senan, Tuda . . .

It would be a very simple thing, wouldn't it, to set that litany to music?

Surnames as Given Names

If anyone, urged by the fashion of the day, insists on using a surname for a given name, he can still remain within the catalogue of the saints. For I found to my surprise that many a surname was originally a Christian given name. Gilmor originally meant "servant of Mary"; Gillespie, "the servant of the bishop." Gwynne was the Welsh word for "white"; Harding, the Teutonic word for "firm." The English family name Hasting was originally the

name given to a swift young warrior. Goddard was merited only by a man who had shown divine firmness.

Hodge was the English form for Roger. Hubbard was the English form for Hubert, as was Hutchins for Hugh. Once on a time Larkin was Laurence, and Pollock was originally Paul.

Lear meant a man of the seas. Lloyd was Welsh for "the gray man." Maynard meant "mighty firmness"; Meredith, "the sea protector"; Morgan, "the sea dweller"; Murphy, "the warrior who was from the waves."

Randolph was "the wolf about the house," probably the wolf who had been domesticated and had become the house dog; Rice was an "outstanding warrior." Sanders was "the helper of men." Warren was "a protecting friend"; Warner, "a protecting warrior."

Once on a time all these names were given names, not family names. Almost all of them had been borne by illustrious members of the Church Militant.

But if you look still further for surnames, I suggest the surnames of some of the saints. Here are four: Loyola, Ferrer, DePaul, and Chantal. Look further among the names of the saints for other saints' surnames, if you wish them.

Our Names

So a name is really a very important thing. It should not be given to a child lightly or frivolously. Our name should not be forgotten, nor should its history or associations be overlooked.

Important as our name is while we walk the ways of men, it will have a new significance when it is called by the voice of the angel at the moment of judgment and we will stand before our heavenly Father and our brother Jesus Christ, who knows us by our name.

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