

Called by name  
Isaiah 43:1-4a

There's a song by Mac Davis about a little girl in an orphanage who pokes a note outside the surrounding fence one day. The note read "Whoever finds this, I love you. Whoever finds this, I need you. I ain't even got no one to talk to; So whoever finds this, I love you."

Knowing that we are loved, makes the world different, doesn't it? Being loved for who we are enables us to be everything we were made to be, to exercise our gifts and abilities with confidence. It is something intangible, like spirit, yet love empowers us to give everything we have and are to life.

In Isaiah 43:1-4a, the prophet addresses a dispirited group of captives bringing them the word of the Lord. It is an intimate word – for all time and all people. Here, it is addressed to Israel, but it is also addressed to you and to me. Hear it, with your name in it. Sue, Bill, Marg, John, Barb, Al, Joan, Dave ... "do not be afraid; I will save you. I have called you by name, and you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned ... For I am the Lord your God, ... your Saviour. I will give up everything in the world for you. Because you are precious to me, and I honour you, and I love you."

"I have called you by name and you are mine - I would give up everything in the world, for you - you are precious to me, and I love you, and I honour you." That's how God feels about us. And there's more!

In the fullness of time, for a world that couldn't hear this word of love and salvation, God's word became flesh and dwelt among us.

A little boy once said it this way - "Jesus is the best picture of God what was ever took." The grammar is notorious, but the theology is bang on. John wrote, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believed in him might not perish but have everlasting life." And Luke wrote, considering the baptism of Jesus, that God beheld his son, his word made flesh, and pronounced, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Jesus is our glimpse of God. To be claimed by God, is to be loved by God.

How many New Year's Resolutions did you make? How many have you broken? It's not too late to make another one. Be it resolved that we remember daily that we are claimed by God, named by God and held as precious and honourable and loved, absolutely. Be it resolved that we live our lives, every day, showing, embodying God's love for us and for all God's created.

