

## He has called you by name

**A**mongst the greatest joys of being one of your bishops is the privilege of leading Confirmation services. It's exciting to hear people's stories of how God has met them and how he's changing their lives. While the congregation pray "Come Holy Spirit", I have the thrill of laying hands upon their heads and praying "Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit".

Just before this moment, the bishop makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each candidate (sometimes with holy oil) and says their name, followed by "God has called you by name and made you his own".

Our name is very precious to us. It is striking that when Jesus meets Mary Magdalene in the garden on that first Easter morning, all he needs to say is "Mary" and her life is transformed for ever.

The phrase in the Confirmation service is taken from a beautiful passage in the book of the ancient Hebrew prophet Isaiah, which for many centuries has given comfort and reassurance to those going through trouble. It speaks of the depth of God's amazing love and care for his people:

*But now thus says the LORD,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are  
mine.*



*When you pass through the waters I will  
be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not  
overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not  
be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.  
For I am the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.  
I give Egypt as your ransom,  
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you...  
you are precious in my eyes,  
and honoured, and I love you.  
Isaiah 43:1–4a*

God bless,

A handwritten signature in white ink on a black rectangular background. The signature reads "+ John Brixworth".

+John  
Bishop of Brixworth