

On Different Names, and the Ghost

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Over the years, I've gone by a lot of names. But only to select groups of people. Or select individuals, even. For example, my Uncle Lee called me **Cobbie** when I was kid. He tagged me with the moniker one night when all I ate for dinner was corn on the cob. In my memory, no one else ever called me Cobbie. Only Uncle Lee. And he called me this until the day he died. That was a long, long time ago, but I still cherish the memory.

A moniker memory I don't cherish so much was my sister's name for me. She called me **Pooh Bear** for a while, probably because I loved the character. I thought Pooh was a great name for the bear, but I didn't like it for me. Fortunately, it didn't last long. Nor did **Pip**, another moniker I didn't care for. This one was given to me by a few of my classmates in high school freshman English because they thought I looked like the *Great Expectations* character in our book. Great...

Another nickname that came later in high school was just my initials. **JR**. I liked this. I even signed-off on some notes to friends to encourage it. Several of my classmates called me this, and when I had my 50th high school reunion two years ago, some of my classmates picked up calling me that right where they'd left off. Nice. If you're doing the math, you'll see that I graduated in 1972. The TV series *Dallas* came out in 1978, so I was JR long before it was a glint in Larry Hagman's eyes.

JR followed me into college, too, perhaps because several of my high school friends went with me to U of I, and with them already calling me JR, many other people on the floor of our residence hall started calling me the same. And I'm not even sure exactly how, but JR followed me into the corporate world as well. So much so that when I retired nearly thirty-three years later, it seemed that more colleagues than not knew me by JR. Except for the handful that called **Reynolds**. Only Reynolds.

But not Mom. She never went in for any of these names. She called me **Johnny**. Not all the time, but often enough to make it memorable for me. And well into my adult years. If (almost) anyone else called me Johnny, I squashed it. But when Mom called me that, I loved it. Perhaps sensing this, my wife started calling me Johnny as well. As with Mom, Gail doesn't call me this all the time, but enough to make it memorable, and I love hearing it coming from her lips, too.

Happy Pentecost, when we all ponder the Holy Spirit and when I think of another person who goes by many names. Back in my altar boy days, I grew up calling the Holy Spirit the Holy Ghost. This transitioned to the "Holy Spirit" along the way for me, but now I'm back to the Holy Ghost. Actually, just "Ghost." I figure we're on single-syllable basis. In today's Gospel, Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the Advocate, and then as the Spirit of Truth. I've also heard Ghost tagged as the Paraclete, the Counselor, the Comforter, the Sanctifier, the Breath of the Almighty. All excellent monikers. And Bishop Barren often calls the Third Person of the Trinity just the love that connects the Father and the Son. Lots of names to choose from, and I don't think Ghost cares which one we use. Under any name, *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*.