

## The Holy Name of Jesus

Did you know that the Holy Name of Jesus is so great that it is repeated 977 times in New Testament? It's that Name we celebrate on New Year's Day, or in Church-speak, The Feast of the Holy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For many years, Holy Name Day was associated with the Feast of the Circumcision. For in accordance to the Jewish culture of the days when Jesus dwelled on earth, a child became a full member of his family when he was circumcised, at which time he received his name.

Matthew and Luker tell us that "The invocation of the holy name of Jesus is the simplest way of praying always. When Jesus' name is repeated often by a humbly attentive heart, the prayer is not lost by heaping up empty phrases, but holds fast to the word and "brings forth fruit with patience." This prayer is possible "at all times" because it is not one occupation among others but the only occupation: that of loving God, which animates and transfigures every action in Christ Jesus.

From Saint Bernard (A.D. 1090-1153):

*The sweet Name of Jesus produces in us holy thoughts, fills the soul with noble sentiments, strengthens virtue, begets good works, and nourishes pure affections. All spiritual food leaves the soul dry, if it contain not that penetrating oil, the Name Jesus. When you take your pen, write the Name Jesus: if you write books, let the Name of Jesus be contained in them, else they will possess no charm or attraction for me; you may speak, or you may reply, but if the Name of Jesus sounds not from your lips, you are without unction and without charm. Jesus is honey in our mouth, light in our eyes, a flame in our heart. This name is the cure for all diseases of the soul. Are you troubled? think but of Jesus, speak but the Name of Jesus, the clouds disperse, and peace descends anew from heaven. Have you fallen into sin? so that you fear death? invoke the Name of Jesus, and you will soon feel life returning. No obduracy of the soul, no weakness, no coldness of heart can resist this holy Name; there is no heart which will not soften and open in tears at this holy name. Are you surrounded by sorrow and danger? invoke the Name of Jesus, and your fears will vanish."*

*Never yet was human being in urgent need, and on the point of perishing, who invoked this help-giving Name, and was not powerfully sustained. It was given us for the cure of all our ills; to soften the impetuosity of anger, to quench the fire of concupiscence, to conquer pride, to mitigate the pain of our wounds, to overcome the thirst of avarice, to quiet sensual passions, and the desires of low pleasures. If we call to our minds the Name of Jesus, it brings before us His most meek and humble heart, and gives us a new knowledge of His most loving and tender compassion. The Name of Jesus is the purest, and holiest, the noblest and most indulgent of names, the Name of all blessings and of all virtues; it is the Name of the God-Man, of sanctity itself. To think of Jesus is to think of the great, infinite God Who, having given us His life as an example, has also bestowed the necessary understanding, energy and assistance to enable us to follow and imitate Him, in our thoughts, inclinations, words and actions. If the Name of Jesus reaches the depths of our heart, it leaves heavenly virtue there.*

*Jesus' Name embraces the Christian life. All of us began our journey through faith in Jesus. Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we died with Jesus, were buried with Jesus and were raised as a new creation with Jesus. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to us. We live our faith in Jesus by manifesting love towards our brothers and sisters in Christ. Individual salvation depends entirely on the final judgment of Jesus. Without the Name of Jesus there would be no Sacraments, no being reborn again, no resurrection and no salvation. A world without Jesus would be a world without faith, without hope and without charity.*

Paul writes to the Philipians, "So great is the Most Holy Name of Jesus, that "God highly exalted Him and gave Him the Name that is above every name, so that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bend; in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."