

Rev. Fr. Leonard Goffine's
The Church's Year

FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS



(Sunday after the Octave of the Nativity or January 2)

Who instituted this festival?

Pope Innocent XIII in the year 1721 commanded that the most Holy Name of Jesus should be solemnly honored throughout the Catholic world. St. Bernard, with the sanction of the Apostolic See, had established the solemn veneration of this most Holy Name in his order a few centuries before.

In the Introit of this day's Mass, the Church proclaims the glory of this name:

INTROIT In the name of Jesus let every knee bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and let every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:10-11). O Lord our Lord, how wonderful is thy name in the whole earth! (Ps. 8:2). Glory be to the Father.

COLLECT O God, Who didst ordain Thine only-begotten Son to be the Savior of mankind, and didst command that he should be called Jesus: mercifully grant that we may enjoy in heaven the blessed vision of him whose holy name we venerate upon earth. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE (Acts 4:8-12). In those days, Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said: Ye princes of the people and ancients, hear: If we this day are examined concerning the good deed done to the infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by him this man standeth here before you whole. This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders; which is become the head of the corner: neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.

EXPLANATION This Epistle speaks of the omnipotent power of the name of Jesus, through which miracles are not only performed, but also on which our salvation depends. Jesus alone can give us redemption and happiness; He alone under heaven has been given to man by God, that through Him happiness could be reached; He alone can break the fetters of error and sin in which all mankind lies captured. He alone is the truth, He alone, as the Son of God, has power to render perfect satisfaction for sin, and to make us truly good; and the good alone can be saved. Cling, therefore, ever faithfully and firmly to Jesus, and depart not from Him; without Him you can accomplish nothing; with Him, through Him, you can accomplish all things.

[For the *GOSPEL* of this day, see the gospel of New Year's day.]

REMARKS OF ST. BERNARD ON THE SWEET NAME OF JESUS

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. We say, therefore, with our great

master, St. Paul the Apostle: If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema (I Cor. 16:22).