

Holy Name; January 1, 2012
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 Numbers 6:22-27
 Psalm 8
 Galatians 4:4-7
 Luke 2:15-21

Today is called Holy Name Sunday. Eight days after Christmas is the Feast of the Holy Name, because on that day Jewish law as written in Leviticus says that the first born boy will be dedicated to God at the temple, circumcised, and named. The focus for this day is the naming of Jesus.

This observance of the naming of Jesus began in the sixth century. This day was observed regularly by the Franciscans starting in 1530, which led to adoption by the entire RC church by Pope Innocent XIII in 1721.

When this feast day falls on a Sunday, it supersedes normal Sunday observances. So every seven years is Holy Name Sunday. What's so special about this name Jesus, that the church would celebrate that event?

First, I found the etymology of the name Jesus interesting;
 Hebrew Yeshua or Joshua, or Yehoshua, meaning 'Yahweh is salvation'
 Greek Iesous
 NT was written in Greek; no sh sound, so substituted sh with the S sound. Then to make the name masculine, they added an S sound at the end; Yeshua became Yesus in Greek. The letter J came along much later. The J sound did not exist in Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek or Latin. Even in English, there was no distinction between J and I until the mid-17th century. The 1611 KJV Bible refers to Jesus as Iesus, and his father as Ioseph. It is believed that the J sound came from Switzerland, where J sounds like English Y. When the English Protestants fled to Switzerland during the reign of Queen Mary I, they drafted the Geneva Bible. The English translation of the Geneva Bible in 1769 adopted the Geneva spelling of Jesus.

Also; Jesus did not have the last name 'Christ'. Christ is the transliteration of the Greek word Cristos, meaning 'anointed one'. He would have been called Yeshua Bar Yehsef, or Jesus son of Joseph. To the world into which this eight day-old infant was born, it was one of the most ordinary and common of names—like John, or Joe.

Russian Yehsoos
 Arabic Isa (eesa)
 German Jesu (Yay soo)
 Japanese Jisusu
 Chinese Yesu (ye su)
 Italian Gesù

So the pronunciation 'Jesus' is not the sound that God directed his Son to be called. This observance of his name is not about the sound, or the letters used to make up his name.

By any of these pronunciations, the Name of Jesus connects us to the blessings we receive through him.

Jesus said (Jn 16:23) “If you ask the Father anything in my name he will give it you.” So most of our prayers end with the words, “in Christ’s name we pray.”

In Phil 2:10, Paul says, “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.”

As you and I invoke Jesus’ Name, we are voicing the belief that he embodies all that God intends for us. Using Jesus’ name denotes our respect for his character and authority. We express reverence for him. We express confidence in him. God would not allow Himself to be named. When Moses asked for His name, the answer was ‘I am who I am’. Hebrew scripture calls God YHWH; our guess is that this means Yahweh, but that is only a guess. The name of God was considered too holy to be spoken. But when God sent his son to the earth, God wanted him to have a name; and the name God chose was Jesus – meaning God saves.

When we invoke the name of Jesus, we are giving voice to the honor, confidence, and love that we hold for God the Son. Invoking the name of Jesus is about claiming boldness of faith in the goals we set for ourselves and for this faith family. This has nothing to do with a New Year’s resolution to cut back on chocolate, or to walk more. This invocation of the name of Jesus is about asking for his humility, his love and compassion, and his divinity to be in our prayers, in our mood, in our character, and in our responses to what each new day brings.

We hear and feel the power that exists in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What will this faith family do in 2012 in the name of Jesus?

What will you do in 2012 in the name of Jesus?

The possibilities are exciting; breathtaking.

What can we dare to do because we do it in Jesus’ Name?

In his name we uncover our heads; we bow and bend our knees.

In his name the Apostles gave strength to the lame. (Acts 3:6; 9:34)

In his name they gave life back to the dead. (Acts 9:40)

In his name they baptized.

His name gives us comfort in our spiritual struggles.

His name protects us against Satan and his works in the world.

Phil 2:10-11, At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow... and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord.

What will SS do in 2012 in the name of Jesus?

What will you do in 2012 in the name of Jesus?

Amen.