

The Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ

January 1, 2014

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## **“...worshiped, trusted, and adored.”**

*Alleluia. Unto us a child is born.*

Words are so very important to us during this Christmas season when we celebrate “*the Word made flesh*,” dwelling among us; God coming to us in the birth and life of Jesus. By the ninth century in Rome, Christians began adding this day to their Christmas celebrations; observing St. Luke’s report that eight days after his birth, following Jewish tradition, Jesus was circumcised and given his name, meaning Savior.

Since the earliest days of the Church, after the Holy Spirit filled the disciples with new life at Pentecost, the name, Jesus, has carried power to heal, to transform, to unite, to save. How amazing that we begin this new calendar year, 2014, honoring the name of Jesus and giving thanks, once more, for his birth as our Savior. Jesus saves us from sin and evil; ultimately, Jesus saves us from death, from nothingness.

Our celebration this day includes singing two of the greatest hymns we come to know as we grow in the tradition of our faith, “At the Name of Jesus” and “All hail the power of Jesus’ Name.”

I’m especially drawn to the words in verse 4 of “At the Name of Jesus.”

*Name him, Christians, name him, with love strong as death,  
name him with awe and wonder and with bated breath;  
he is God the Savior, he is Christ the Lord,  
ever to be worshiped, trusted, and adored.*

This hymn was written by a woman named Caroline Noel who lived in England from 1817-1877. She was the daughter of an Anglican priest and started writing hymns at the age of 17. She stopped a few years later and did not compose a hymn for more than 20 years.

Under the stress of illness and great suffering in her 40’s, she began writing again. Her hymns were published in England in 1861 under the title *In the Name of Jesus, and Other Verses for the Sick and Lonely*. Caroline Noel, sick and lonely, knew the power of Jesus’ name. She knew her savior with awe and wonder. She worshiped Jesus. She trusted Jesus. She adored Jesus.

Of course, the first verse of this hymn is almost a direct quote from St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians, Chapter 2:9-10. Paul also came to worship, to trust, to adore Jesus. We see this in his letters, most especially Philippians, often called “Paul’s letter from death row.”

So on this eighth day of Christmas, on this Feast of the Holy Name, this New Year’s Day, we can ask ourselves, how do we worship Jesus? How do we trust Jesus? How do we adore Jesus? Perhaps some New Year’s resolutions might include worship, trust, and adoration.

If we are blessed, we first come to worship Jesus when our parents bring us to church as children. Faith is passed on, generation to generation. Someone teaches us, encourages us, to worship.

As we mature and go through the stages of life, we come to trust Jesus as our Lord and Savior. This may come after a period of questioning, of doubting what we thought we believed. It may take an illness, a change in life, some heart-breaking event, to lead us to really trust in Jesus' love and presence in our life.

Lastly, we hope to adore Jesus before we leave this earth! Adore him in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist as we receive this body and blood. Adore him in the mission and life of the Church. Adore Jesus in our hope for heaven. Adore Jesus in the love shared among us.

We hope that we can come to know that Jesus and only Jesus can save us, and that we do need help, we do need saving. We cannot save ourselves. If we could, God would not have been born among us, as one of us, as a baby who grows up, shares love, and faces death just 30 years later. So,

*In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue  
all that is not holy, all that is not true;  
crown him as you Captain in temptations hour;  
let his will enfold you in its light and power.*

(“At the Name of Jesus”, verse 5)

*Alleluia. Unto us a child is born.*

Numbers 6:22-27  
Psalm 8  
Galatians 4:4-7  
Luke 2:15-21