

The Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ  
Numbers 6:22-27  
Galatians 4:4-7  
Psalm 8  
Luke 2:15-21

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Luke 2:15-21

Today, the church celebrates the Solemnity of the Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The day in which the little child that was born to Mary and Joseph, on a cold winter's night, in a little stable in Bethlehem, and whom the shepherds found wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, was given the precious name of Jesus.

The naming of a child, in my opinion, is the second greatest gift that any parent can give to a child. The greatest gift, in my opinion, is giving that child unconditional love. The naming of a child gives that child its own identity, and in most cases, fits that child's personality. (Remember, I said in most cases.)

Again, we hear in today's gospel that the shepherds went with haste, to Bethlehem, to see the wonderful thing that had just taken place. They found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in a manger. Mary and Joseph did not quite understand, at that time, what was being told to them, by the shepherds, but Mary, we are told listened intently and carried each word in her heart.

Even though, Mary and Joseph, did not quite understand what was being told to them by the shepherds, at that time, they were both able to give that little child that was born to them, and lying in that manger, unconditional love, and to adhere to what was told them by the angel, after eight days, the child was given the name of Jesus.

Paul writes in his letter to the Philippians, "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."

God gave him the name of Jesus! How wonderful is that! Did you know that as children of God, we are all given a special name that is only known by God, before we were born?

When I was in the first grade, I was asked by my teacher if I knew the history behind my name. I didn't understand the question so naturally I did not know the answer. I was the only one in my class who got homework that night because I didn't know anything about

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my name, except how to spell it.

My mother told me that she wanted to give me her name which was Eugenie, but when she received the copy of my birth certificate, she saw that my name had an 'A' on the end of it instead of an 'E' hence giving me the name Eugenia. My mother said that she had no other choice but to call me Eugenia.

I truly believe that it was through Divine Intervention that an 'A' appeared instead of an 'E' at the end of my name, giving me my own identity.

I was able to very proudly, redeem myself in school the next day by sharing the history of my name to the class. When I was much older, I did further research on my name and found out that there is a Saint Eugenia, and her feast day is celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup>, how precious is that?

Can you just imagine Jesus standing in front of his class and sharing the history of his name? Can you just imagine the astonishment on the faces of his classmates while he describes how the angel came to his mother and told her that she was going to have a son and to name him Jesus?

Can you just imagine the astonishment on the faces of the class when another little boy stood up and says, 'Ah that's nothing! My father did not believe the angel when the angel told him that he was going to have a son, and my father could not speak from that moment until I was born, and he named me John.'

I'm almost sure that every one, here today, could share a story or two about the history of the name that was given to you, by your parents. Some of you may not be to happy with the name that you received, but know that your name is very special to God. Remember, the name that was given to you identifies who you are, and that name was only meant for you.

Remember, (it may not have been so dramatic as it was with Mary or with Zechariah by an angel) but each one of us was given our names, by God, before we were even conceived in our mother's womb. Also remember that our names has already been written in God's book.

Listen to these words found in Psalm 139:12-15

“For you yourself created my inmost parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

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I will thank you because I am marvelously made;  
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.

My body was not hidden from you,  
while I was being made in secret  
and woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb;  
all of them, were written in your book;  
they were fashioned day by day  
when yet there was none of them.”

I am so glad that God knows each one of us by our names because I am so terrible remembering names. As some one said to me some years ago, “Thank God for God, for if it was left up to me to remember every one's names, we all would be in some big trouble.”

God not only remembers our names, God also calls us by our names. The bible tells of several occasions where God called that person by their name, first to get their attention, and second to deliver a message to that person.

God called Mary, the mother of Jesus by her name. God called Zechariah by his name, unfortunately, he did not believe the message that the angel brought to him, and so he became mute until he saw and then came to believed. God called Saul by his name and asked him why was he persecuting him. God calls all of us by our name.

I remember my first day of school. I sat in the auditorium with my mother anxiously waiting to meet my teacher, and begin school. The principal was calling names and each child was being introduced to the teacher. I'm guessing to see how that child would react to the teacher. My mother told me to listen for my name to be called. When I heard my name being called, without any hesitation, I got up and met my teacher for the first time, and thus began my school career.

“Listen For Your Name To Be Called,” unbeknown to me, at that time, my mother's words were words of Great Wisdom. “Listen For Your Name To Be Called.”

When I took the time to listen and heard my name being called things went well within my soul. When I did not take the time to listen for my name to be called, and did what I wanted to do, all was not well within my soul.

We are all God's children, and as God's children, God speaks to us all the time. Each day

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God, calls each of us, by our names and brings us all a wonderful message.

Today, the church celebrates the Solemnity of the Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The day in which the little baby boy that was born to Mary and Joseph, eight days ago, on a cold winter's night, in a little stable in Bethlehem, and whom, eight days ago, the shepherds found wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, was given the name of Jesus, the name that is above every name, and the name that was given to him, by God.

Let this be the day, and every day, of this new year, in which you take some time to be still, and listen to hear God, our Heavenly Father, calling you, by our name.

Let this be the day, and every day, of this new year, in which you take some time to be still and listen, for that wonderful message of LOVE, that God, our Heavenly Father, brings to you, every moment, of every day.