Names are more than just labels. In some way names capture and express the essence of the person. They reveal qualities and characteristics, they about a life and a way of being. Within names are particular actions, values, and beliefs of the person. Names disclose who we are, how we are, where we come from, where we are going.

The Feast of Holy Name is a major feast of the Church. It reflects the significance of the Name, Jesus.

God uses names and name changes to establish relationship, identity, and belonging. Think about God inviting Adam to name the animals and then giving Adam dominion over creation. Adam named Eve for having come from his side. Moses was so named because he was drawn from the water. Abram and Sarai were renamed Abraham and Sarah for their new relationship to God. Jacob wrestled the angel and was named Israel. Saul’s life was transformed and he became Paul.

So, this feast invites us to a continual remembrance and veneration of the Holy Name in order that God might plant in us, and in every heart, the love of him who is the Savior of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus. Yeshua in Hebrew. It means the “Lord will save”, “Lord is salvation”. The name “Jesus” says that God cares about us; God knows what is happening to and with us; God is not indifferent; God is present, acting in the world and in our lives; and that God loves us.

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. The name is, contains, and reveals the fullness of God’s life, love, and longing.

So, maybe we ought to consider our relationship to the name “Jesus.” When do we say that name? Where? How often? Under what circumstances? In whose company? Is it only a name we read in the Bible? A name we speak only in church? How have we misused or even desecrated the name? Do we say it as our prayer? What do we believe about that name, Jesus?

*At the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:10-11).*

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Say it with me. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus…. Let that holy name fill our every thought, echo through our every word, occupy our heart, guide and direct our every step. We take that name into every circumstance of our life, into every relationship we have, to everything we do, to all whom we meet. Let it begin, fill, and end our day. Jesus before us. Jesus behind us. Jesus beside us. Jesus above us. Jesus below us. Jesus around us. Jesus within us. The name “Jesus” is our unceasing prayer. All that needs to be said is said in that one name.

Every time we say “Jesus,” we claim God’s salvation. Every time we say “Jesus,” we acknowledge our need of God and salvation. Every time we say “Jesus,” we open ourselves to God’s mercy, forgiveness, and healing. Every time we say “Jesus,” we remember that God is with us. Every time we say “Jesus,” we renew our relationship with him. Every time we say “Jesus,” his response is always the same, “Here I am.” Amen.