

The Holy Name of Jesus

I take as my text today from the Acts of the Apostles:

.... for there is none other name under heaven given among men. Whereby we must be saved.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in Thy Sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer.

Normally, we would today be celebrating the **Eighth Sunday after Trinity**. That would be our American **1928 Book of Common Prayer** celebration for this Sunday.

However, we — by we, I mean our organist, cantor, and myself — decided instead to follow the **Ordo Calendar** prepared each year for the **ACC** and to celebrate the **Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus**, a feast or festival of the Church that has been retained in the **1662 Book of Common Prayer** as used in England and elsewhere around the world, as is our **Book of Common Prayer**.

While this festival is not found in the **1928 Book of Common Prayer**, it is found in our **American Missal**, which we use on the Altar, as well as the **Anglican Missal** newly printed by the ACC through the *Anglican Parishes Association*. We do have a copy of the new **Anglican Missal**, which will soon replace the Missal currently on the Altar, which is falling apart after many years of use. Indeed, we have two in similar condition, as well as an **Anglican Missal**, also in bad repair. We do hold on to these things!

By the way, **Ordo Calendars** may be purchased through the **Anglican Parishes Association**, and I do order a number each year, as well for those interested. The **Ordo Calendar** is a liturgical calendar following the *Church Year* and providing guidance for clergy and lay readers in regard to the various feasts, festivals, and Saints' days.

You may note that we do commemorate the **Eighth Sunday after Trinity** by using its *Collects* as well.

Now, the significance of what we celebrate today takes us back to the **Feast of the Circumcision of Christ**; indeed, it commemorates that day in which Jesus was not only circumcised but also, importantly, was given his name.

While our Lord, even though an infant, submitted voluntarily to what has been described as a painful and bloody ritual, a rite that symbolized the putting off of the sinful lusts of the flesh and a seal, or mark, that made the person subject to the **Law**, that act of circumcision has a dual significance for us as Christians.

First, Christ, who was without sin, submitted to circumcision to be made subject to the **Law** in order to deliver us from our bondage under the **Law**. It was through this circumcision that our Lord fulfilled the **Law** and made way for a **New Covenant** in his **Blood**.

Circumcision was the first step, for, though Christ had no impurity of nature nor had any need for circumcision of the heart, it was through this physical act that he was brought under the **Law**, and through this physical act, it was made manifest that he assumed true and real flesh while in the womb of the **Virgin Mary**.

In more simple terms, that Jesus was circumcised was proof of his being flesh and blood. It was only by taking upon himself our flesh and blood that he might fulfill the **Law**. He had to be truly human, though he was also truly God, God incarnate.

This Jewish ritual of circumcision prefigured Christ's life of obedience and discipline in following the will of his Father, even to death on the **Cross**.

Through Christ we are now under the **New Covenant** through baptism, circumcision of the flesh having been replaced with Baptism.

So, in the **Circumcision of Christ**, we see the first shedding of his *Redeeming Blood* and a foretaste of the pain of Calvary; in the **Circumcision**, we see Jesus brought under the covenant of Abraham; and, in the act of circumcision, we see Jesus taking on our sinful nature, which he bore on the **Cross** for our salvation.

It is important that we come to an understanding of the significance of the **Circumcision of Christ**, where Jesus fulfilled the old **Law**, paving the way for the new **Law**, that is the **Law of Love**.

Secondly, what we celebrate in the **Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus**, is the reality of that act of **Circumcision** during which the child is named — that reality, which we know from **Scripture**, is that we cannot obtain or procure for ourselves spiritual and eternal salvation by our own means but through the Grace of God **only** are we saved by faith in Jesus Christ.

What we celebrated on the **Feast of the Circumcision of Christ** and what we are celebrating today in the **Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus** is, very simply, that it is in the **Name of Jesus** that we are saved; that we are healed of our sins; that our souls and bodies receive the healing power of the Holy Spirit — only in the **Name of Jesus**.

St. Peter emphasizes this by stating that *there is none other name under heaven given among men. Whereby we must be saved.*

We find this emphatic precept expressed in the prayer used in anointing the sick:

I lay my hand upon thee, and anoint thee with oil, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, beseeching the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all thy pain and sickness of body and spirit being put to flight, the blessing of health may be restored unto thee.

And, again, from the **Healing Service**:

The Almighty Lord, Who is a most strong tower to all those who put their trust in him, to Whom all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, do bow and obey, be now and evermore your defense, and make you know and feel, that there is no other name under heaven given to man, in Whom, and through Whom, ye may receive health and salvation, but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Though we do have a role to play in our own salvation by living our faith in Jesus Christ, it is only through our Lord Jesus, through him alone, that salvation can come about, and we can take comfort that God's Grace empowers us to live our **Faith in Jesus Christ**, his Grace working within us according to our own nature as his adopted children.

I cannot say this too many times — as Christians, we must keep always in the forefront of our minds and in our hearts that it is only in the **Name of Jesus** that we can find salvation. He alone is the way to eternal life. As St. Paul says in his Letter to the Church at Philippi:

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.