



Introduction: A Name Above Every Name

In the Catholic tradition, few abbreviations carry as much spiritual weight as JHS. These letters, found on altars, in churches, and on devotional objects, are an abbreviation of the Most Holy Name of Jesus (*Iesus Hominum Salvator*, “Jesus, Savior of men”). This name is not just a collection of letters but an inexhaustible source of grace, protection, and salvation for those who invoke it with faith.

Saint Paul expresses this beautifully in his letter to the Philippians:

“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the Name that is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11).

This passage reveals the greatness of the Name of Jesus and its redemptive power. But what does JHS really mean in the life of a Catholic today? How can we live according to its significance?

The Power of the Name of Jesus: Meaning and Symbolism

Devotion to the Name of Jesus has deep roots in Scripture and in the Tradition of the Church. Jesus is not just a name but a manifestation of the identity and mission of the Son of God.

1. Origin and Meaning of JHS

The abbreviation JHS comes from the Greek ΙΗΣ, representing the first letters of the name of Jesus in Greek (ΙΗΣΟΥΣ, *Iesous*). Over time, in the Latin tradition, this abbreviation was interpreted as *Iesus Hominum Salvator* (Jesus, Savior of Men).

Since the Middle Ages, this devotion has been promoted by great saints such as Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and Saint Bernardine of Siena, who spread the inscription of the JHS monogram on emblems and banners, emphasizing the strength and power of the Name of Jesus to protect and bless believers.



The Name of Jesus in Sacred Scripture

From the announcement of the Archangel Gabriel to the apostolic preaching, the Name of Jesus occupies a central place in the economy of salvation.

- **The Name given by God:** “You will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21).
- **Power to work miracles:** The apostles performed healings and cast out demons in the Name of Jesus (Acts 3:6; Mark 16:17).
- **The Name that grants eternal life:** “For there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12).

The Name of Jesus does not only identify the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, but it is also a channel of power, blessing, and salvation.

JHS in Catholic Spirituality

The use of the JHS monogram in Christian life is not just a devotional practice but a source of spiritual growth.

1. Invoking the Name of Jesus with Faith

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches:

“The Name of Jesus is at the heart of Christian prayer. All liturgical prayers conclude with the formula ‘through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ The Holy Name is the only one that contains the Presence it signifies.” (CCC 2666).

Invoking the Name of Jesus with faith and devotion helps us:

- Receive spiritual protection against temptations and attacks from the evil one.
- Ask for strength and grace in times of distress.
- Atone for sins and gain indulgences (according to tradition, saying “Jesus” with devotion can obtain a partial indulgence).



2. The Devotion to the Holy Name in History

- **Saint Bernardine of Siena** (15th century) spread devotion to the Holy Name and promoted the use of the JHS monogram on banners, calling for conversion and peace.
- **Saint Francis de Sales** advised his followers to engrave the Name of Jesus in their hearts and to repeat it constantly as a short prayer.

Today, we can renew this devotion by carrying the Name of Jesus in our minds, words, and actions.

How to Apply the Devotion to JHS in Daily Life

Beyond its theological significance, devotion to the Name of Jesus should influence our daily lives. Here are some ways to do so:

1. Praying the Jesus Prayer

A simple but powerful prayer is to repeat with devotion:

“Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, have mercy on me.”

This short prayer helps us center our minds on Christ and seek His presence in every moment of the day.

2. Using the Name of Jesus in Spiritual Warfare

When we feel fear, distress, or temptation, simply invoking the Name of Jesus with faith is enough to find strength. Saint Paul says:

“Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.” (Colossians 3:17).

3. Placing the JHS Monogram in Our Home

Having an image with JHS at home is a way to remember the centrality of Christ in our family and to ask for His blessing over our household.



4. Meditating on the Name of Jesus Throughout the Day

Like the ancient monks and great saints, we can silently repeat the Name of Jesus while we work, travel, or face difficulties.

Conclusion: A Name that Transforms Lives

The Holy Name of Jesus is a divine gift to humanity. It is not just a title but a living reality that unites us with God, protects us from evil, and grants us access to grace.

Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori said:

“The Name of Jesus in the mouth of a sinner makes him a saint; in the mouth of a saint, it increases his holiness.”

Today more than ever, in a world filled with anxiety and chaos, we can find peace in the Name of Jesus. Let us make JHS the center of our lives, invoking it with love, reverence, and confidence.

And you, how can you begin today to live the devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus?