

\*\*\*\* The name of Jesus is an integral part of the Feast of the Circumcision. During the middle ages various attempts were made to establish a separate feast day for the name of Jesus. This emphasis is seen in the preaching of St. Bernardino of Siena, who wanted this de-coupling from the circumcision. This is reflected in the fact that the Book of Common Prayer calls January 1, the Circumcision but has a festival “The Name of Jesus” to be observed on August 7. The ASB and Common Worship lectionaries re-unite the feasts on January 1, but the General Roman Calendar keeps January 1, as the octave of the Nativity and the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, while the Name of Jesus is celebrated on January 3 by Catholics following the General Roman Calendar of 1969, or on the Sunday between the Octave of Christmas and Epiphany (or January 2), if the provision of the 1962 Calendar is still being followed. Reference to the Circumcision seems to have fallen out of the title of both feasts.

Since circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham ‘and his children for ever,’ the theme of the day also picks Jesus’ keeping of the Law, and the idea that it was the first occasion on which Christ shed his blood and reflects on the New Covenant made in that blood. This bloodshed allowed theologians to emphasize the humanity of Christ at times when the recognition of his humanity was under threat. That Christ’s name in Hebrew means “Yahweh saves” completes the circle of meditation.

\*\*\*\*(excerpted from: bpdtd.wordpress.com)

### *Collect*

Almighty God, who made thy blessed Son to be circumcised, and obedient to the law for man; Grant us the true Circumcision of the spirit; that, our hearts, and all our members, being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things obey Thy Blessed Will; this we ask, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord and your Son who lives and reigns with You, world without end. Amen.



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## *The Circumcision of Jesus*



The Circumcision calls me to a life of union with God;

***"Abide in Me and I in you!"***

***Jesus receives His name in a Baptism of Blood.***

***He shares in our human life,***

***that we might share in His Divine Life.***

## The Circumcision of Jesus

*\*In Genesis 17:12, it is related that: and when eight days were fulfilled for circumcision, Jesus was “made like unto his brethren” (Hebrew 2:16-17), that is, he became a member of the covenant nation, and became a debtor to the law (Galatians 5:3), his name was called Jesus (Luke 1:59), which was so called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb (Luke 1:31).*

*\*(excerpted from: biblestudytools.com)*

*\*\*Throughout Jewish history, circumcision has been an essential sign of the covenant between God and the Jewish people and one of the most widely practiced rituals. While the Church retained a feast commemorating Jesus’ circumcision, it had abandoned that requirement in an effort to attract gentiles, who around the time of Jesus viewed the body as perfect and any alteration as unacceptable.*

*Only one of the four gospels writers mentions this important event in Jesus’ life. The Feast of the Circumcision was a relatively late addition to the liturgical calendar of the Church. It first developed in France in the 7th century and only became part of the Roman liturgy in the 9th century. The Church’s reluctance to observe this feast day was due to its attitude toward circumcision, but more importantly to the secular New Year celebration in the Roman Empire.*

*St Augustine, for example, reports that Christians in his day fasted and prayed for the pagans who celebrated the New Year with great revelry. Eventually, however, the Church adapted to the festive mood and established January 1, as an official liturgical feast. It not only celebrated Jesus’ circumcision, but also the “Octave (Eight) Day” of Christmas and the Feast of Mary. In the middle Ages, special prayers honoring the name of Jesus became part of the observance, reflecting the fact that Jesus would have received his name at his circumcision.*

*The correlation of Jesus’ circumcision with January 1, depends on Christmas, the day of His birth, being identified with December 25. This date, however was not officially confirmed by the Church until the fourth century. While the Church Father’s claimed that this was indeed the date of His birth based on Roman census records, but no such records exists. It is a fact, that the celebration of His birth was originally held in many places on January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany. It should be noted that celebrating the birth date of leaders was not a Jewish practice, but a custom in the Roman empire. Since the actual birth dates were unknown, a suitable date was often chosen.*

*Church leaders had concerns in choosing December 25 to celebrate Jesus’ birth because it was a Roman feast, the birthday of the sun. The leaders hoped to turn a pagan observance into a religious festival celebrating the birth of their Lord and Savior. Perhaps not so coincidentally, Hanukkah begins on the 25th day of the Jewish month of Kislev. Light plays a central role in both Hanukkah and Christmas celebrations, reflecting the adaptation of pagan rituals of light held at the Winter Solstice.*

*Once December 25 was established as Jesus’ birthday, his circumcision became identified with January 1. Although the theme of the day in Catholic churches focus on Mary. The liturgical readings for the day remind worshippers of an important event in the life of Jesus: his ritual circumcision, which marked his entry into the covenant between God and the Jewish people.*

*\*\* (excerpted from: www.interfaithfamily.com)*

*\*\*\* To Jews, circumcision was a spiritual act. The cutting of the flesh reminded the person that from then on he was in a solemn covenant with God. For what purpose was Jesus circumcised. He is God himself. This is the one to whom sacrifices are offered, he did not have to have his blood shed. Yet, his parents took him to the temple to be circumcised in the flesh. What Jesus did was that he underwent the rite of circumcision, and later when on the 40th day he allowed himself to be offered in the temple and redeemed by his parents, in order to take unto himself the old covenant. Jesus became not only the author of the Old Testament, he also became the Old Testament itself. So when we were baptized into him, we were baptized into the Old Testament and the New alike. There remained one covenant– the new covenant. This covenant is not without circumcision either. But it is not the circumcision of the flesh but of the heart.*

*As St Paul relates, that by the finger of God our stony hearts have been cut around, circumcised, and made into fleshy hearts, into a nous (having the common sense) capable of receiving the light and knowledge of God. Speaking of himself, Paul says that the marks of circumcision which the Jews boasted in, “Let no man trouble me for I bear in my body, not the mark of circumcision, but the marks of the Lord Jesus, the marks of His Crucifixion.” We honor God’s extreme humility when we honor his circumcision. This is the same humility that led Him to Golgotha. The humility that allowed him to be borne as a child into the temple, to have himself a victim of a sacrifice offered to God, and in so doing, the one who closed the door on the old covenant and opened to us the Kingdom of God. He suffered circumcision of the flesh for our salvation.*

*\*\*\* (excerpted from: //transfigcathedral.blogspot.com)*