

very name of God Himself. It is the word *Yahveh*. The name *Jesus* means “God (Yahveh) will save” or “God is salvation.” This Holy Name expresses the reality that Our Savior is the eternal Son of God Himself. Isaias the prophet said: “God Himself will come and save you.” (35:4) St. Paul said that Our Lord came, “...to seek and to save that which was lost.” (1 Timothy 1:15) St. John says: “God sent His son into the world that the world may be saved by Him.” (John 3:17) St. Alphonsus Ligouri reflects on these wondrous things and says, “The name of Jesus is a divine name, announced to Mary on the part of God by St. Gabriel. For that reason it was called a name above all names. It was also called a name in which alone salvation is found, whereby we must be saved.” (*Meditation on the Holy Name*) There is no other Savior. There is no other name by which we can be saved.

The Holy Ghost likens the name of Jesus to precious oil. “Thy name is as oil poured out,” says the Canticle of Canticles (1:2) The reason the name of Jesus is like to precious oil is because as oil is used for light, for food and for medicine, so the name of Jesus is the light of the mind, the food of the heart and the medicine of the soul. When Our Lord was born, the world was in darkness. He came as a light into the world. He came to enlighten the minds of men with the truth of God. All is darkness without this light.

Our Lord is also the food of hearts. The nourishment that the human heart needs is love. The human heart longs to love and to be loved. It longs to give and receive this love in a perfect fashion. It cannot be satisfied with less; it cannot be satisfied with a love that it will no longer possess after death. The human heart wants more than a passing, insecure love which must fade at death. Our souls are immortal and we yearn for an everlasting life and love which cannot be destroyed. That is the bread our souls long for. Where can this bread be found? What can perfectly satisfy all the longings of the human heart for all eternity? Only the Bread of Life can do this. Thus, Our Lord called Himself the Bread of Life that has come down from heaven. “Labor not for bread that perishes,” He said, “but for that which endures unto everlasting life.” (John 6:27) “I am the Bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eat this bread, he will live forever.” (John 6:51)

But not only is the Holy Name of Jesus the source of our light and the food of our souls. The Holy Name is also the medicine of our souls. The Holy Name of Jesus heals us and gives us strength against temptation. St. Alphonsus says: “This name consoles us in tribulation, gives us strength to walk along the way of salvation, supplies us with courage in difficulties, and inflames us to love our Redeemer, when we remember what He has suffered for our salvation.” (*Ascetical Works*, Vol. 4, p. 256) The demons tremble and fly from the sound of the name of Jesus, while the angels rush to aid us when they hear the Holy Name on our lips spoken with reverence. “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.” (Phil. 2:10) If we call upon the Holy Name of Jesus in temptation we shall not fail to save our souls. He who constantly invokes the Holy Name of Jesus cannot be lost. David said, “Praising, I will call upon the Lord; and I shall be saved from my enemies.” (Ps 17:4) “Who was ever lost, [asks St. Alphonsus] who, when he was tempted, invoked Jesus? He alone is lost who does not invoke His aid, or who, whilst the temptation continues, ceases to invoke Him.” (ibid., p. 257)

The Holy Name of Jesus is then the light of our minds, the food of our hearts and the medicine of our souls. Let us never use this Holy Name except with reverence and respect. Nor should this Holy Name be used carelessly in ordinary conversation. If every knee in heaven, on earth and under the earth should bend at the sound of the Holy Name of Jesus, then it should not be too much for us to bow our heads when we hear that name. Never fail to call upon the Holy Name in time of trial, temptation, sickness and death. May it be always on our lips in prayer and in our hearts. We pray to Our Lady that we may love this Name of Jesus, in the words of St. Alphonsus: “O Mary, if thou lovest me, this is the grace I beg of thee to obtain for me, the grace constantly to invoke thy name and that of thy Son; obtain for me that these most sweet names may be the breath of my soul, and that I may always repeat them during my life, in order to repeat them at my death with my last breath. Jesus and Mary, help me; Jesus and Mary, I love you; Jesus and Mary, I recommend my soul to you.” (*Meditation on the Name of Jesus*)