



January 1

Festival: Name of Jesus

The Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus is celebrated by a number of Christian denominations, on varying dates.

The feast has been celebrated in the Roman Catholic calendar of saints, at least at local levels, since the end of the fifteenth century. The veneration of the Holy Name was extended to the entire Roman Catholic Church on 20 December 1721, during the pontificate of Pope Innocent XIII. The celebration has been held on different dates, usually in January, because 1 January, eight days after Christmas, commemorates the circumcision of the child Jesus; as recounted in the Gospel read on that day, "at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb."

Medieval Catholicism, and many other Christian churches to the present day, therefore celebrated both events as the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ, usu-

ally on 1 January. Bernardino of Siena placed great emphasis on the Holy Name, which he associated with the IHS Christogram, and may be responsible for the coupling of the two elements. It is observed on 3 January by Catholics following the present General Roman Calendar, and on the Sunday between the Octave of Christmas and Epiphany (or 2 January) by Catholics following calendars of the 1914-1969 period.

In the Book of Common Prayer of the Anglican Communion since 1979, the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ celebrated on January 1 is now listed as the "Feast of the Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ". Many Eastern Churches celebrate the feast on January 1. In the Lutheran Church, it is observed on 1 January.