

Most Holy Name of Mary

SAINT OF THE DAY

12_09_2023



Illuminatrix, first seasonal rain, lady, drop or star of the sea. Also, bitter sea (with reference to the pains endured for the co-redemption of humanity, in union with and in service of the work of the divine Son), loved by God, or she who loves God. These are just some of the dozens and dozens of interpretations - based on the Jewish, Egyptian or Syriac origin of the name and its simple or compound form - that have been given over time to the Most Holy Name of Mary. In the light of faith, it seems that Divine Providence wished to make elusive the exact meaning of the name of its supreme creature - chosen

from all eternity to become the Mother of God - and that the many meanings are accompanied by many graces. This is why St Louis-Marie de Montfort, echoing an exegesis of the Benedictine Peter of Celle, writes: "God the Father has gathered all the waters and called them sea, he has gathered all the graces and called them Mary".

However, the different interpretations converge in the single and most important meaning of Mary's name: for those who invoke it with devotion, it is a source of salvation. It helps to overcome temptations; it is very powerful in spiritual combat, a safe haven for sinners. "Blessed is he who in battles with Hell always invokes the beautiful name of Mary!", says St Alphonsus Maria de' Liguori. For St Bridget "Mary's name is sweet for angels and terrible for demons". For St Bonaventure it is like a pillar of fire because "just as wax melts before fire, so demons lose their strength before those souls who often remember Mary's name, devoutly invoke her and diligently try to imitate her". In her name, irrespective of their specificities, the Mother is intimately linked to her Son and His plan, which is fully revealed in the **Most Holy Name of Jesus**, that is, "God saves", fulfilment of the gradual revelations and promises of the Old Covenant.

Venerable Mary of Agreda, in the *Mystical City of God*, thus describes the visions she had about the birth of Our Lady: "... the three divine Persons had decreed and formulated, since eternity, the sweetest names of Jesus and Mary for the Son and the Mother; and they were pleased with them, keeping them sculpted in their eternal mind, and present in all the things to which they had given existence, since for their service they had created them. As the holy angels came to know these and other mysteries, they heard a voice from the throne, which, in the person of the eternal Father, said: *"Our chosen one shall be called Mary and this name is to be powerful and magnificent. Those that shall invoke it with devout affection shall receive the most abundant graces. Those that shall honour and pronounce it with reverence shall be consoled and vivified and will find in it the remedy of their evils, the treasures for their enrichment, the light that will guide them to Heaven. It shall be terrible against the powers of hell. It will crush the head of the serpent and it shall win glorious victories over the princes of hell"*.

Regarding the liturgical feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary, in 1513 Julius II authorised the Spanish diocese of Cuenca to celebrate it. It was Blessed Innocent XI who extended it to the whole Church (the same Pope prescribed the reading of the already mentioned *Mystical City of God*); he also moved it to the Sunday during the Octave of the Nativity of Mary, to thank Heaven for the victory of 12 September 1683 in the Battle of Vienna (preceded by a Mass celebrated at dawn that day by Blessed Mark of Aviano), where the forces led by John III Sobieski, King of Poland, defeated the Turkish invaders

who threatened Christianity. After the various changes, including the 1969 reform that eliminated it from the General Roman Calendar, it was finally St John Paul II who reintroduced it as a memorial and reinstated the date of 12 September.