



Society of the Holy Name

(Confraternity of the Most Holy Name of God and Jesus).

Mater Dei H.N.S. Chapter Meets Monthly

after 9 a.m. Mass, 2nd Saturday of each month

What is the Holy Name Society?

An [indulged](#) confraternity in the [Catholic Church](#). The primary object of the [society](#) is to beget due [love](#) and reverence for the Holy Name of [God](#) and Jesus Christ. The secondary object is to suppress [blasphemy](#), [perjury](#), [oaths](#) of any character that are forbidden, profanity, unlawful swearing improper language, and, as far as the members can, to prevent those vices in others ([Pius IV](#), 13 April 1564). It had its origin in the Council of Lyons, 1274, which prescribed that the faithful should have a special devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, that reparation might be made for insults offered to it by [Albigenses](#) and other blasphemers. The [Friars Preachers](#) were preaching everywhere with the Zeal of St. Dominic; it was natural, then, that [Gregory X](#) selected the [Dominicans](#) to preach the devotion, which he did by a letter to Blessed John of [Vercelli](#), master general of the order, 20 September 1274 (Constit. "Nuper in"). The master general immediately wrote to all the [provincials](#) of the order, expressing the [pope's](#) wish, and enjoining upon all the [duty](#) of labouring for its fulfilment (Litterae Encyclicae Mag. Gen Ord. Praed., Reichert, 1900). The brethren gave their best energies in executing the command, preaching everywhere the power and glory of the Holy Name of Jesus; and to give permanency to the devotion excited in the hearts of the people, it was [ordained](#) that in every [Dominican](#) church an altar of the Holy Name should be erected, and that [societies](#) or confraternities under the title and invocation of the Holy Name of Jesus should be established. St. Peter, Martyr (d. 1252); John of [Vercelli](#), a contemporary of St. Dominic; [Blessed Ambrose of Siena](#) (d. 1286) are said to have been great propagators of the devotion. In the fourteenth century [Blessed Henry Suso](#) (d. 1365) is the most notable apostle of devotion to the Holy Name.

The history of the [society](#) in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries is somewhat obscure, but that it continued to exist is certain from [papal Bulls](#) addressed to the [Order of St. Dominic](#). [Boniface IX](#) in his Constitution "Hodie" 31 October, 1401, granted [indulgences](#) to those visiting the altar of the confraternity in the [Dominican monastery](#) at Schusen, [Diocese of Werden](#), Saxony. In 1432 at [Lisbon](#) the devotion preached by a retired [Dominican bishop](#), Andrea Diaz, was a means of stopping the ravages of a plague that was then afflicting that city. In gratitude for their deliverance, the people of all classes in [Lisbon](#) held, on 1 Jan., 1433, what was probably the first procession in [honour](#) of the Holy Name of Jesus. At this period [St. Bernardine of Siena](#), an Italian [Franciscan](#) gained great renown as a promoter of the devotion in [Italy](#). In the sixteenth century [Emperor Charles V](#) and King Philip II, moved by the prevalence of [blasphemy](#) and sacrilege, exhorted and encouraged the [Dominicans](#) to spread the devotion and to establish the [society](#) throughout their dominions. Among the preachers engaged in this apostolate, the most celebrated was the [Spanish Dominican](#), Didacus of [Victoria](#) (d. 1450), who may be properly called the great preacher of the devotion of the Holy Name of [God](#). He founded a confraternity known as the Society of the Holy Name of [God](#), of which the special object was to suppress the horrible profanation of the Divine Name by blasphemers, [perjurers](#), and by men in their ordinary conversation, and to this end he drew up a rule and constitution for its government.

His confraternity was approved by [Pope Pius IV](#) 13 April, 1564, who richly endowed it with [indulgences](#), commanded all [ecclesiastical authorities](#) to favour it with all their power, and, in a special letter, recommended it to the [laity](#) (Bullarium Ord. Praed., tom. I, v). Later, this confraternity was merged into the Society of the Holy Name of Jesus. Thereafter the [society](#) was called by both titles. It also bore the title of "Confraternity against Oaths". Following the example of [Pius IV](#), the [popes](#) of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, notably [Innocent XI](#), made the [society](#) an object of special solicitude, encouraging its promotion, granting [indulgences](#), and regulating its organization. [St. Pius V](#), in the Motu Proprio "Decet Romanum", 21 June, 1571, absolutely restricted the canonical erection of the [society](#) to the [Dominican order](#). Letters patent from the master general of the [Dominicans](#) are required for the canonical establishment of the [society](#) (for the [United States](#) these letters are issued through the bureau of the Holy Name Society, New York). In missionary countries special provision is made for the establishment of the [society](#).

The acts of the general chapters of the order held since 1571 contain numerous regulations and admonitions insisting upon [zeal](#) in propagating the confraternity. Great encouragement to the development of the [society](#) was given at the close of the nineteenth century by [Pope Leo XIII](#), who decreed through the Congregation of Indulgences, 20 May, 1896, that the [bishops](#) may dispense from the Clementine [decree](#) "Quaecumque", requiring that there should be only one confraternity in a town or city. Before this the [society](#) had existed in many [churches](#) of various cities of the [United States](#), by virtue of the [dispensations](#) obtained from [Rome](#). Since then branches of the [society](#) have multiplied very rapidly and in several [dioceses](#); following the example set in the Archdiocese of New York, 21 May, 1882, they have been formed into [diocesan](#) unions under a director general appointed by the ordinary. Being thus united, the men of the [society](#) in the [United States](#) (they number about 500,000) are able to accomplish great good by public yearly processions of many thousands professing reverence for the Name of Jesus Christ, and abhorrence of [blasphemy](#), profanity, and immorality. They are required to receive [Holy Communion](#) in a body at least once every three months; in most places the rule prescribes

Communion on the second [Sunday](#) of every month, when they may gain plenary and partial [indulgences](#) granted by [Gregory XIII](#). A complete list of [indulgences](#), all of which may be applied to the [souls](#) in [purgatory](#), is contained in the "Pocket Manual of the Holy Name Society" (new edition, New York, 1909), by the [Dominican](#), Father McKenna, who for many years has been recognized as the apostle of the Holy Name in the [United States](#). In 1907 the monthly publication of "The Holy Name Journal" (New York) was begun by the [Dominican](#) Fathers.

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