

December 28, 2020

Good Morning All,

Today is for the children - for the sweet innocence of children - love your children, your grandchildren, "adopted" children of others who you love and accept you as part of their family (even when they are taller than you) and never forget the gifts they have brought into your lives!

1. Today's Readings: [Feast of the Holy Innocents, martyrs | USCCB](#)

2. **The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus:** Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs
The Holy Innocents which we celebrate today are few, in comparison to the genocide of abortion in our day. But even if there had been only one, we recognize the greatest treasure God put on the earth—a human person, destined for eternity and graced by Jesus' death and resurrection.

While today's feast is a sad remembrance, it is also a day to celebrate the blessing of our children, God's gifts to our families. This is a day for parents to bless their children as you can read about in the attached article.

3. Quote of the Day: "These then, whom Herod's cruelty tore as sucklings from their mother's bosom, are justly hailed as "infant martyr flowers"; they were the Church's first blossoms, matured by the frost of persecution during the cold winter of unbelief. *St. Augustine*

Hope you have a great day!

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The Holy Innocents are the children mentioned in the gospel of Matthew 2:16-18.

Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry, and sent his soldiers to kill all male children ages two and under that were in Bethlehem and on the borders, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled the prophesy of Jeremiah: A voice in Rama was heard, of lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailed her children, and would not be comforted, because they were not.

The Greek Liturgy asserts that Herod killed 14,000 boys, the Syrians speak of 64,000, and many medieval authors speak of 144,000, according to Rev. 14:3. Modern writers reduce the number considerably, since Bethlehem was a rather small town. Knabenbauer brings it down to fifteen or twenty (Evang. S. Matt., I, 104), Bisping to ten or twelve (Evang. S. Matt.), and Kellner to about six (Christus and seine Apostel, Freiburg, 1908).

This cruel deed of Herod is not mentioned by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, although he relates quite a number of atrocities committed by the king during the last years of his reign. The number of these children was so small that this crime appeared insignificant amongst the other misdeeds of Herod. Macrobius relates that when Augustus heard that amongst the boys of two years and under Herod's own son also had been massacred, he said: "It is better to be Herod's hog, than his son" alluding to the Jewish law of not eating, and consequently not killing, swine.

The Middle Ages gave faith to this story, and Abelard inserted it in his hymn for the feast of Holy Innocents.

It is impossible to determine the day or the year of the death of the Holy Innocents since the chronology of the birth of Christ and the subsequent Biblical events is most uncertain. All we know is that the infants were slaughtered within two years following the apparition of the star to the Wise Men (Belser, in the Tübingen "Quartalschrift," 1890, p. 361). The Church venerates these children as martyrs (flores martyrum); they are the first buds of the Church killed by the frost of persecution; they died not only for Christ, but in his stead (St. Aug., "Sermo 10us de sanctis").

The Latin Church instituted the feast of the Holy Innocents at a date now unknown, not before the end of the fourth, and not later than the end of the fifth century.

The Roman Station of December 28 is at St. Paul's Outside the Walls, because that church is believed to possess the bodies of several of the Holy Innocents. A portion of these relics was transferred by Sixtus V to Santa Maria Maggiore. The church of St. Justina at Padua, the cathedrals of Lisbon and Milan, and other churches also preserve bodies which they claim to be those of some of the Holy Innocents

Source: catholicnewsagency.com

Catholic Prayer: Holy Innocents or Childermas Day: Parental Blessing of Children

The Feast of the Holy Innocents is a children's feast; this day has also been known as "Childermas." This is a good day to begin the parental blessing of their children. Included here are also verse and Mass prayers to add to the evening Christmas prayers.

Prayer:

Holy Innocents or "Childermas Day" is celebrated on December 28. The Gospel tells the story simply. "Herod sent and slew all the boys in Bethlehem who were two years old or under." He had intended to include the Son of God among the murdered babies. To recall the grief of their mothers the Church wears purple today. In Mass she hushes her joyous *Gloria in Excelsis* and the *Alleluias*.

And yet there is joy in her services. Children sing with the choirs in the great cathedrals; and in ancient times other functions were given to them — hence the name "Childermas" or Children's Mass.

The feast of the Holy Innocents is an excellent time for parents to inaugurate the custom of blessing their children. From the Ritual comes the form which we use on solemn occasions, such as First Communion. But all parents need to do is to sign a cross on the child's forehead with the right thumb dipped in holy water and say:

*May God bless you, and may He be the Guardian of your heart and mind
— the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

As I go from bed to bed at night, I just make the sign of the Cross with my hand over each child while saying: "*May God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit keep you safe this night.*"

The custom of blessing children is easiest to establish with a baby or toddler and it grows with them. For older children, the realization that parental blessings are as old as the human race can be established from reading the Old Testament. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob blessed their children. Before his journey Tobias blessed his son with the words: "May you have a good journey, and God be with you on

your way, and His angels accompany you." I have seen a newly ordained priest kneel for his parents' blessing and then give them his first blessing. It is easy for a child who receives his father's or mother's blessing to see them as God's representatives. Encouraging parental blessings, St. Ambrose says: "You may not be rich; you may be unable to bequeath great possessions to your children; but one thing you can give them — the heritage of your blessing. And it is better to be blessed than to be rich."

We commemorate the spilling of the blood of the Holy Innocents by using a cherry or strawberry sauce, the kind you buy or preserve, poured over a vanilla pudding. A traditional recipe for the day, given in *Cooking for Christ*, is Blanc Mange.

Prayers for Childermas include a versicle and the Collect from the Mass in addition to the original Christmas Evening Prayers. [*Editor's Note: This blessing is from the older version of the Roman Ritual.*]

Father: Enraged, Herod put to death many male children

All: In Bethlehem of Juda, the city of David.

Father: Let us pray. O God, whose praise the martyred Innocents this day proclaimed not by speaking but by dying, put to death all vices within us, that Thy faith which our tongues profess, our lives also by their actions may declare.

All: Amen.

Prayer Source: *Christmas to Candlemas in a Catholic Home* by Helen McLoughlin, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota