

Holy Christmas: 4th Day December 28

Feast of the Holy Innocents

On this 4th day of 12 in Christmas the reality of human life filled with sin, evil and hatred is confronted as the Church observes the Feast of Holy Innocents, remembering the slaughter of innocent children by Herod as the result of Jesus' birth (Matthew 2:13-18).

It is the very real truth that from the beginning - Christ came into this world to confront sin! It is painful today in the midst of all the nostalgic, commercial, and celebrative mood of Christmas that we are reminded in the story of Jesus' birth about evil and hatred. And, even as we live this very day we know of this evil and hatred in this 21st century. Quick to our painful memories are mass killings of innocent children in schools, abused children, orphaned opiate children because of drug addiction, and innocent children in the midst of civil and culture wars. Children in the midst of a pandemic & those who are victim of racial/caste injustice are central in our hearts, minds & souls.

Sr. Judith Sutura, OSB of Atchison, Kansas (Mount Saint Scholastica) helps me to pray today on this Feast of Holy Innocents. In her book, Advent & Christmas: Wisdom from Saint Benedict she writes for this day – “St. Benedict says in The Rule, ‘Although human nature is of itself drawn to feel compassion for these life periods, namely, old age and childhood, still let the decree of the Rule make provision for them. Let their natural weakness be always taken into account. . .’ (RB 37:1-2)

Sr. Judith writes, “. . .commemorating the Holy Innocents. . .They were not martyred for Jesus because of their own proclamation of faith. . .but were the first to die because of Jesus' entry into the world. Write a letter to a legislator, study about an issue, or contribute to a cause that advocates for the needs of innocent children. . .”

She offers this prayer –

+God of the innocent, so many people suffer in our world who are powerless to defend themselves. Help me to be attentive to those who are most vulnerable and to never allow my own power to be used in a harmful way. Bless the children, the frail, and all victims of the rage of others. Amen.” (p.80-81, Sutura)

William H. Wilson (Bill)+