

Pastor's Greetings
January 9, 2022

Shortly after Christmas, on December 28th, we celebrated our patronal feast day, the Feast of the Holy Innocents. As you know, our parish is named after the infants mentioned in the Gospel of St. Matthew: *When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi.*

What a dark moment in the Gospel. What a violent and terrible event.

Which leads to the question: *What does it mean for a parish to be named after the Holy Innocents? What are we called to as a community that has these infant-martyrs for our patrons?*

First, I believe it means our parish is called to be a home for “little ones” – for all who are little in spirit, and particularly for children. How fitting, then, that we have a large and vibrant religious education program that leads many children (414 this school year) into the riches of our Faith each year. I’m so grateful for the work of Roxanne, Roseann, and the many volunteer catechists who assist in this great work. That said, we have yet more work to do. I am always asking myself, *How can we see more children in our pews each Sunday? How do we impart to Catholic parents a love for the Eucharist such that they desire to bring their children to Mass every weekend?* I invite you to ask that question with me and to join me in praying about it – to pray that we be a true home for children, that they would fill this church every weekend.

Second, a parish that has these slain infants as its patron is called, I believe, to be especially attentive to and sensitive to the evil of abortion. While there are many ills in our society that need correcting, the modern-day massacre of the innocents that continues in our midst surely calls out for the attention of a community named after the infant-martyrs of Bethlehem. Let us ask ourselves, *How are we called to be defenders of the holy innocents of our own day? How can we assist those in our society who are most vulnerable to feeling pressured into having an abortion? How can we bring healing and hope to those who have been hurt by abortion?*

Third, the Feast of the Holy Innocents is a witness to hope amid even the darkest tragedy. To believe that a mysterious glory hides beneath the horror of that day is to testify to the power of God to bring goodness out of even the worst circumstances. A people who take the Holy Innocents as their patron are called to experience in their own lives what the prophet Isaiah speaks of: *A shoot will sprout from the stump of Jesse!* Again, let us ask ourselves, *What darkness, wounds, or tragedy am I invited to bring before the altar of Christ, to let the shoot of Christ’s life sprout from the stump of suffering? How can I do this for my neighbor? For my community?*

Finally, I would ask you: *How have you felt the support and guidance of the Holy Innocents in your own life? Where do you sense them beckoning us today?*

Fr. Luke