

# Liturgy Alive of HOLY INNOCENTS, Feast

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December 28

## Introduction

Today's celebration shocks us into the realization that the birth of Christ was not all peace and joy. The coming of Jesus was the beginning of a struggle-to-death between the powers of evil and the kingdom of light, a struggle that would have its climax in the passion and death of Jesus. Herod stands here for the forces of evil. Even innocent children are often the victims of this enmity.

The story of the Innocents may very well be a theological illustration of Matthew on this climactic clash between good and evil that began with the birth of Jesus. Often the innocents have to suffer on account of so much evil in the world caused by people.

## Opening Prayer

Lord our God,  
today's innocent martyrs  
bore witness to you  
not by proclaiming your name in words  
but by laying down their lives for you,  
even though they were not aware of it.  
We join to you on their feast  
that we may bear witness to you  
both by the words we speak  
and the way we live what we believe in.  
May we do so in the full awareness  
of what we are doing.

We ask you this through Christ our Lord.

## Liturgy of the Word

## General Intercessions

– That especially children may be spared from suffering, malnutrition and maltreatment, we pray to God our merciful Father:

– That children may not become the victims of unloving parents who do not want them, abandon them or desert them as they separate from each other, we pray:

– That children may have caring parents who help them to grow toward a generous and rich adulthood, we pray:

## Prayer over the Gifts

We bring these our gifts before you, Lord God;  
accept them from your faithful people,  
that we may be strengthened in our faith.  
May they also bring your salvation  
to those whom we sometimes call anonymous Christians,  
those who do not know you,  
yet who seek you with a sincere heart  
by trying to do what is right and good.

We ask you this through Christ our Lord.

**Prayer after Communion**

Lord, God of eternal light,

we all share in the struggle-to-death  
between light and darkness.  
Let the light of your love and peace  
shine among people all over the world,  
that our solidarity in the evil of sin  
may be changed into a new solidarity  
of justice, forgiveness and community  
by the coming among us of your Son,

Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Blessing**

We ask the Lord today that he may bless especially our children, that they may grow up as God's children, as good Christians and good citizens. May almighty God bless them and you all, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.