



When the magi had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child, to destroy him." Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed for Egypt, and stayed there until the death of Herod, so that what he had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my son." 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 that he had ascertained from the magi. Then was fulfilled what had been said through the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; and she would not be consoled, since they were no more."

Introductory Prayer: Father, I come into your holy presence this day aware that you guide my life with love. I believe that nothing happens to me unless you will it. I renew my faith in your promise of heaven, where every tear will be wiped away. Thank you for getting involved in our cruel world in order to heal it with your love.

Petition: Lord, may my presence today be a help to those in need.

1. Angels: We want to cry with these women who have had their children stolen from them in the most defenseless time of their lives. Human cruelty reaches so deep that it desires to maintain power by snuffing out the lives of others! Yet these children silently remind us of another reality. They remind us that there is a place where tyranny does not reign. There is a King who rules by love and whose kingdom cannot be defeated by cruelty. These children are messengers of that kingdom. They have been called to give a

brief but powerful witness of the fight that this King will wage for love. They have gone ahead of him, and their mothers will find them and hold them forever one day in the presence of their King.

2. Prophets: Thy Kingdom Come! This is the cry of these children. One day this new King will reign, but it will happen through a terrible fight with death and cruelty. These children are powerful prophets of the struggle of this King. They are prophets of the drama of human history where everything is at stake. Their cries are powerful prayers that will be heard by the Father, and their cries begin to stir in that special Child the desire to give his life as a ransom for souls. He will reign by pouring out his life as a gift for these children and for many souls.

3. Children: The Church has declared these children martyrs. The first saints of Christ are infants. Infants speak to us at Christmas, and their witness does not go unnoticed. These children inspire the Church and pray for her. A child speaks to us of goodness and innocence. A child reminds us of the attitude we should have before God. Christ always lives with a heart of a child, a heart that trusts completely in his Father. He shows special predilection for children. He knows that often they are his most powerful apostles, inviting others to God's house by the simplicity and intimacy of their love for him. How many parents have been converted or discovered a deeper relationship with Christ through the example of their children!

Conversation with Christ: Jesus, it saddens me so much to see how these children were taken from their mothers and killed. It tears my heart apart to see how today so many children are never given the chance to know their mother's love because of the evil of abortion. I want to be a consolation to your heart, Lord. I want to give the very best of myself to you today in order to offer you some of the love that these children wanted to give. Let my life be a witness of unselfish love. Let me be like you.

Resolution: I will find some way of encouraging a mother of a young child