

Epiphany Retreat 2016

Day 1 – Time of Jesus

MORNING

Prayer:

We remember today, O God, the slaughter of the holy innocents of Bethlehem by King Herod. Receive, we pray, into the arms of your mercy all innocent victims; and by your great might frustrate the designs of evil tyrants and establish your rule of justice, love, and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Reading: *Matthew 2 (1-23)*

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” ... When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under... Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

“A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled,
Because they are no more.”



Herod perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and sending forth killed all the men children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

once a crusade has begun
such consequences are inevitable
once the line is placed in the sand
there is no turning back when crossed:

they play upon the dusty street
heedless that tomorrow may never come
for immorality is the greatest ally of youth
until it faces the brutality of the sanctimonious

a quiet pause the eye of storm
before the shrieks of laughter drown
in a crimson flash which melds with the red
that slowly seeps over the dampening soil

lifeless unclosed eyelids
pale cold outstretched hands
flaccid broken limbs
taut silent ashen lips
undone dreams

and the mothers rush in with tear filled eyes
a chorus of voices unable to comprehend
the instant that shattered their hope and lives

they kneel in the sand
kiss the unending horror
stroke the disheveled hair
clutch the limp bodies
which had held the promise
of a future that disappeared quicker
than their sobbing exhaled breath

only women can create the universe of life
and only they truly understand the meaning
when the candle is snuffed
and no more than darkness remains

Roger Humes





AFTERNOON

Feast of the Holy Innocents:

A Prayer

Holy Innocents, you died before you were old enough to know what life means, pray for all children who die young that God may gather them into His loving arms. **Holy Innocents**, you were killed because one man was filled with hatred, pray for those who hate that God may touch their hearts and fill them with love. **Holy Innocents**, you experi-

enced a violent death, pray for all who are affected by violence that they may find peace and love. **Holy Innocents**, you were murdered at the hands of men who probably felt they were merely following orders, pray for all who act against their consciences that they may turn to God for strength to do what is right. **Holy Innocents**, your parents grieved for you with deep and lasting sorrow, pray for all parents who have lost young children that God may wrap a warm blanket of comfort around them. **Holy Innocents**, those around you certainly felt helpless to prevent your deaths, pray for all who feel helpless in their circumstances that they may cling to God for courage and hope. **Holy Innocents**, you did not know Jesus during your brief lives, but now you praise Him for all eternity, pray for all those who do not know Jesus that they may open their minds to His voice and their hearts to His love. **Holy Innocents**, you died as infants and toddlers, pray for those who are in danger of dying before they are even born through the horrors of abortion that their mothers may recognize the sanctity of all life, turn to God for help, and give their babies a chance to live. **Holy Innocents**, you who are now in Heaven, pray for all of us that one day we may join you there to bask in God's love forever.

HOLY INNOCENTS, PRAY FOR US!

Reading: *Jeremiah 31:15-17*

Thus says the LORD: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. Thus says the LORD: Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for there is a reward for your work, - says the LORD: they shall come back from the land of the enemy; there is hope for your future, says the LORD: your children shall come back to their own country.

Hymn: *On Eagle's Wings* by Michael Joncas

You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,
who abide in His shadow for life,
say to the Lord: "My refuge, my rock in whom I trust!"

Refrain:

**And He will raise you up on eagles' wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of His hand.**

The snare of the fowler will never capture you,
and famine will bring you no fear:
under His wings your refuge, His faithfulness your shield. **Refrain:**

You need not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day;
though thousands fall about you, near you it shall not come. **Refrain:**

For to His angels He's given a command
to guard you in all of your ways;
upon their hands they will bear you up,
lest you dash your foot against a stone. **Refrain:**



Reading: *Revelations 21:1-7*

I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

Reflection: *The Coventry Carol*

The carol is the second of three songs included in the Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors, a nativity play that was one of the Coventry Mystery Plays, originally performed by the city's guilds. The exact date of the text is unknown, though there are references to the Coventry guild pageants from 1392 onwards....Within the pageant, the carol is sung by three women of Bethlehem, who enter on stage with their children immediately after Joseph is warned by an angel to take his family to Egypt:^[6]

Lully, lulla, thou little tiny child
By by, lully, lullay, thou little tiny child
By by, lully lullay

O sisters too, how may we do
For to preserve this day
This poor youngling
For whom we do sing
By by, lully lullay?

Herod, the king
In his raging
Charged he hath this day
His men of might
In his own sight,
All young children to slay

That woe is me
Poor child for thee!
And ever morn and day,
For thy parting
Neither say nor sing
By by, lully lullay!



Prayer:



O God of silence and peace,
as we stand in your presence,
help us to be still and know that you are God.

We thank you, Father, for showing yourself to us in the life,
death and resurrection of your Son Jesus.

We thank you for all that you have offered us today;
help us to understand your will more fully,
and give us patience and comfort when we fail.

Lord, give us your peace: the world is tormented by war and hatred,
by suffering and injustice; give us the peace that we should give to others,
the peace we should treasure in our hearts, the peace the world cannot give.

May the Lord support us all the day long,
till the shades lengthen and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done.

Then in his mercy, may he give us a safe lodging and holy rest, and peace at last.

**May the Lord bless us,
May he keep us from all evil. Amen
And lead us to life everlasting. Amen.**

Epiphany Retreat 2016

Day 2 – Time of Cornelia

MORNING & AFTERNOON

Prayer:

Compassionate God, as you know each star you have created, so you know the secrets of every heart; in your loving mercy bring to your table all who are fearful and broken, all who are wounded and needy, that our hungers may be satisfied in the city of your peace; through Christ who is our peace.

Reading: *Luke 2: 21-40*

...Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul, too.”

Mary (Peacock) was a witness of the terrible tragedy that befell Cornelia. In the same garden where Cornelia had made her offering, her little two and a half year old son, John Henry, the darling of her eyes, was playing with the dog near a low vat of boiling sugar water. Supposedly either Sally or Phoebe was with him. The circumstances are difficult to imagine. No one could have anticipated that rough and tumble play with the big Newfoundland would end in such a freak accident.

John Henry landed in the boiling liquid and was horribly burned. There was no remedy. Cornelia held him in her arms for forty-three hours until he died. The sun was just rising on the feast of the Presentation of the Infant Jesus in the temple, February 2, when John Henry mercifully breathed his last... He was buried in the cemetery of the Jesuits in the same grave with Mary Magdalene. Today a simple tombstone bears words of Cornelia, “The thought of my children never leaves me.” *Strub, Yes, Lord; Always Yes*



LAUDATE PUERI DOMINUM

JOHN HENRY
MARIE LOUISE
CONNELLY BORN
ST. ALBAN'S DAY
JUNE XXIIND
MDCCCXXXVII
DIED CANDLEMAS DAY
MDCCCXL



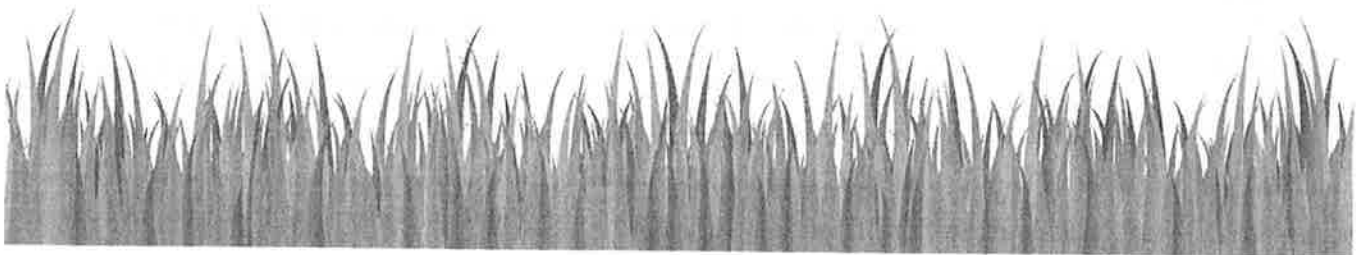
MARIE
MAGDALENE
ELIZABETH JULIA
CONNELLY BORN
ST. MARY MAGDALENE
DAY MDCCCXXXIX
DIED SEP. XTH ST. NIC.
OF TOL. MDCCCXXXIX

This is the setting you must recreate
Convent and lawn (old Quaker school before
The nuns came just about the Civil War).
Facing the house, you think an antiquated
Shrine, but read the names, the double date.
Recall their meaning to the one who bore
These first fruits of a heart's abundant store
Of pain, learning to give, learning to wait.

Behind the small transplanted gravestone, there
Beyond the hedge, across the roadway, see
The flash of other children at their play.
Heed both. The parched roots, the drained cup, the care
For the known will of God, the legacy
Of silence, laughter in the Latter Day.
1963 Mary Anthony Weinig, SHCJ

Reading: *Romans 11:33-36*

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him, to receive a gift in return? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

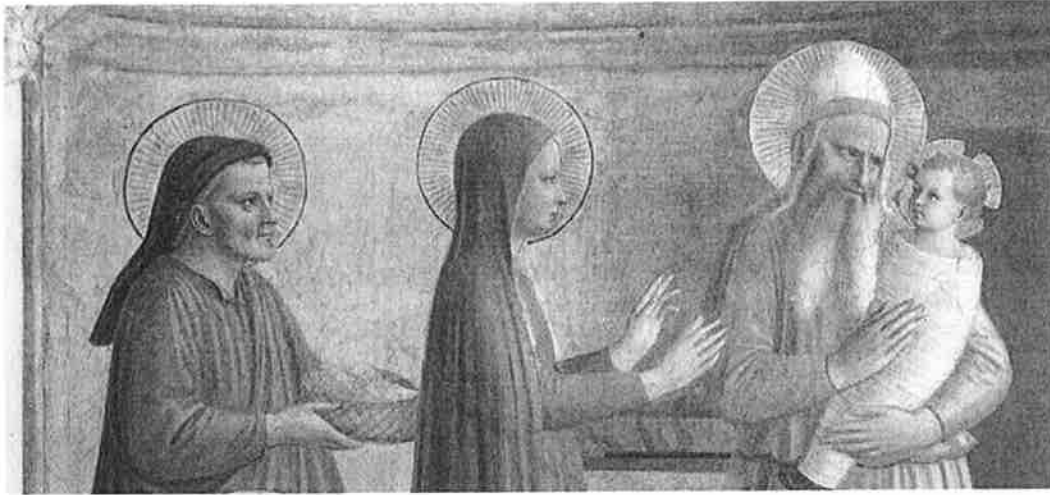


EVENING

Prayer:

Stay with us Lord, Jesus, for it is nearly evening. Be our companion on the road, enkindle our hearts and stir up our hope, so that in the Scripture and in the breaking of bread, we and all people may learn to know you, the everlasting One.

**May the Lord bless us,
May he keep us from evil
And lead us to life everlasting. Amen.**



Litany:

God of all mystery, whose ways are beyond understanding,

lead us, who grieve at this untimely death, to a new and deeper faith in your love, which brought your only Son Jesus through death into resurrection life. We make our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Lord God, from whom human sadness is never hidden,

you know the burden of grief that we feel at the loss of young children. As we mourn their passing from this life, comfort us with the knowledge that they now live in your loving embrace. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God, ever caring and gentle,

we commit to your love these little ones, quickened to life for so short a time. Enfold them in eternal life. We pray for their parents who are saddened by the loss of their child.

Give them courage and help them in their pain and grief. May they all meet one day in the joy and peace of your kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn:

In paradisum deducant te Angeli; in tuo adventu suscipiant te martyres, et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Ierusalem. Chorus angelorum te suscipiat, et cum Lazaro quondam paupere æternam habeas requiem.

“May the angels lead you into paradise; may the martyrs receive you at your arrival and lead you to the holy city Jerusalem. May choirs of angels receive you and with Lazarus, once (a) poor (man), may you have eternal rest.”

Prayer:

May the Lord support us all the day long, till the shades lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in his mercy, may he give us a safe lodging and holy rest, and peace at last.

May the Lord bless us,
May he keep us from all evil
And lead us to life everlasting. Amen.



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Day 3 – In Our Day

MORNING

Reading: *Wisdom 3:1-9*

The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction.

But they are in peace... They shall be greatly blessed because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings He took them to himself.



Reading: *Matthew 2:13-18*

When the wise men had departed, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod.



A Prayer for Refugees:

Merciful God, your Son Jesus became a refugee and had no place to lay his head. Open our hearts with compassion for those who are fleeing from danger or who are homeless. Bless those who provide comfort and care. Inspire and deepen our desire to meet the needs of the refugees with a love full of action. Amen.

AFTERNOON

Reading: "Aylan's Story," *Washington Post*, Sept 3, 2015



The first disturbing photo shows a small boy. He is wearing a red T-shirt and long shorts that stop below the knee. His shirt is hiked above his waist, exposing his midriff. He is wearing black sneakers with no socks. And he is dead, face down in the rocky surf. In the second photo, the boy is being carried away by a policeman. The policeman is wearing latex gloves. The boy's tiny feet dangle below the policeman's waist; we see

that one of the Velcro straps on his sneakers has come undone. And though we can't know what the policeman is thinking as he carries a dead child from the ocean, one thing is clear: He is looking away. The Kurdish boy who washed up on the beach was identified by Turkish officials as 3-year-old Aylan Kurdi in news reports. He was in one of two boats, Reuters reported, carrying a total of 23 people that set off separately from the Akyarlar area of Turkey's Bodrum peninsula, apparently headed to the Greek island of Kos, where they could have attempted to enter the European Union. Reports suggested that their ultimate destination was Canada. Instead, officials said, the boat capsized, and Aylan washed up a few miles to the northeast in Turkey, not far from a beach resort. The dead included five children — among them Aylan's 5-year-old brother — and one woman. According to the *Independent*, the woman was the boys' mother, Rihan, 35. Seven were rescued, and two reached the shore in life jackets. According to the *Ottawa Citizen*, the boy's father, Abdullah, survived. The family may have been trying to reach Canada. In June, the paper said, Aylan's family "desperately" tried to get permission to emigrate to Canada — where Abdullah's sister, Teema Kurdi, lives in Vancouver — but their refugee application was rejected by Canadian authorities.



Prayer: Anselm of Canterbury

God of love, whose compassion never fails, we bring you the griefs and perils of people and nations, the pains of the sick and injured, the sighing of prisoners and captives, the sorrows of the bereaved, the necessities of the homeless, the helplessness of the weak, the despair of the weary, the failing powers of the aged. Comfort and relieve them, O merciful Lord. Amen

EVENING

Prayer:

They will walk with me clothed in white garments, says the Lord, because they are worthy. The children sing praise to God; in death they preach what their young mouths could not utter. On the lips of children and of babes you have found praise to foil your enemy. These were saints of God. They will live forever. The Lord himself is their reward.

**Lord God, the Holy Innocents bore witness to you not by speaking but by dying:
Grant that the faith we proclaim in words, may be borne out by deeds.
We make this prayer through our Lord, Jesus.**

Reading:



Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. He said: **Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.**

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.



Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.



Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say



all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Prayer:

May the Lord support us all the day long, till the shades lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in his mercy, may he give us a safe lodging and holy rest, and peace at last. May the Lord bless us, and lead us to life everlasting. Amen.

