

# *In the beginning was the Word...*

*An Advent & Christmas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney*



## **Justice**

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> December 2023



*Massacre of the Innocents by Léon Cogniet (1824) Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rennes*

### **Scripture: Matthew 2: 13-18**

Now after the Wise Men 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.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

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, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. 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.’

*To reflect.*

The 28<sup>th</sup> December is Holy Innocents, remembering those children killed by Herod as depicted in Matthew 2. Our world is one full of sorrow and the death of children is something that occurs, due to war, strife, starvation and neglect. This is a day that in amidst the rejoicing of the arrival of the Christ child, we remember that the world is not perfect nor a safe or place of justice for all children. Today you're invited to pray for the children for whom justice does not reign this day, whether at home or abroad, to lament, to pray for peace and justice..

*Kyrie Confession (from Times and Seasons, Church of England)*

On this day when we recall the murder of innocent lives,  
let us stand before our just and holy God,  
and remembering the violence and injustice of our world,  
confess our sins in penitence and faith.

You are the God of the weak and the vulnerable.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

You judge the tyrant and the cruel.

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

You wipe away the tears of the broken-hearted.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

*To Pray:*

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, whose children suffered at the hands of Herod: receive, we pray, all innocent victims into the arms of your mercy. By your great might frustrate all evil designs and establish your reign of justice, love and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*To listen*

*Lully, Lulla, Lullay* by Philip Stopford, one version is by Voces8

<https://open.spotify.com/track/1TxWsq2HpaemAECUYb54C3?si=d9e2a1b0676a4800>

*Innocents' Song* (words Charles Causley, music Johnny Coppin) one version is by Show of

Hands <https://open.spotify.com/track/7EYt6gtfvT2tdq1jBGLgsz?si=8775261540c14549>

*...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*