

## **HOLY INNOCENTS REMEMBRANCE**

The Feast of the Holy Innocents (December 28) commemorates the children who died when Herod commanded that all the children in the town of Bethlehem from two years old and under be killed in hopes to eliminate the chance of a Jewish King.

This remembrance is held at all the Sunday Masses, usually when the Feast of the Holy Innocents falls on a Sunday or on the Sunday before/after the Feast no matter where it occurs during the week. This event is very meaningful for those who participate and for those who witness it.

*(It is suggested that an announcement is made the weekend before to let parishioners know that a special remembrance for all who have lost children for any reason will be held during the Masses the following weekend.)*

- Place a long table in the vestibule covered with a nice cloth and have a statue of Blessed Virgin Mary or the Holy Family on it. Surround the statue with vigil lights using tea candles that can be easily changed.
- Set vigil lights on the table and light them before Holy Mass so that people will become aware that something special will take place.
- Place a table in the Sanctuary – can be in front of Manger (which is always set off to the side of the altar) or to the side of the Altar. Place a nice cloth or runner on the table.
- After the homily, the priest announces the event.  
“We now invite parents, siblings and friends that have lost a child, whether through illness, accident, war, murder, miscarriage, abortion, given in adoption or a missing child, to pick up a candle in the vestibule and carry it to the sanctuary in the child’s memory. Your loss does NOT have to be within the past year.”
- While the people are gathering in the vestibule and processing to the Altar, the music ministry can be playing some soft background music or singing an appropriate song.
- The Respect Life Committee members assist at the table in the Vestibule in handing vigil light to the parents/siblings/friends.
- Sometimes the person comes to the back of the church for a vigil light, but then is just too distraught to carry up the candle. A committee member then may offer to carry it up and place it in the sanctuary for them.
- Then, during the prayers of the faithful, prayers are offered for all that have lost a child, whether through illness, accident, war, murder, miscarriage, abortion, given in adoption or a missing child.
- The candle will burn throughout that Holy Mass.
- Vigil lights are removed after each Holy Mass to make room for the next Holy Mass group.