December 28th: Feast of the Holy Innocents, martyrs

Gospel text (*Mt* 2:13-18): 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 (…). 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 (…).

The Holy Innocents, martyrs

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, the shadow of the Cross is already extending over the manger in Bethlehem. It was foretold by the poverty of the stable in which the infant wailed, the prophecy of Simeon concerning the sign that would be opposed and the sword destined to pierce the heart of the Virgin, and Herod's persecution that will cause the death of the Holy Innocent Child-Martyrs and will also make necessary the flight to Egypt.

The Son of God —the eternal Word— has become small enough to fit into a manger. He became a child, so that the Word could be grasped. In this way God teaches us to love the little ones; to love the weak; to have respect for children. The child of Bethlehem directs our gaze towards all children who suffer and are abused in the world, the born and the unborn.

—In all cases, it is the child of Bethlehem who appeals to us. Let us pray these Christmas days, that the brightness of God’s love may enfold all these children.

The Culture of death. Abortion

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Pope Francis)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, children and the unborn are threatened by the selfishness of those who suffer from the shadow of despair in their hearts, the fear-sowing hopelessness that leads to killing.

Also, today, our individualistic culture refuses to be fruitful, it takes refuge in a permissiveness that levels down all things, although the price of this unfruitfulness is innocent blood. We are influenced by a “life-degrading theism” of all that is human; that “void theism” that aims to be a substitute for the great truth (the Word made flesh). The cultural proposal to withdraw into oneself within a selfish individualistic

dimension is built at the expense of the human rights, of the rights of the children. Those are the traits of the modern Herod.

-Jesus, "unborn child", calls us to take courage. We do not want to get degraded in a "legalistic culture" that brings us to nothingness and that always ends up - because it kills little by little - being a culture of death. We want to assert that Christ is already present in the womb of his Mother!