

December 28

The Holy Innocents

The liturgy of the day of the Holy Innocents has an ambiguous nature in the Roman liturgy. On the one hand the Church mourns with their mothers – hence traditionally purple vestments and a penitential TRACT are used unless it is a Sunday – on the other hand, she celebrates the Innocents as the first martyrs of the Faith. In medieval England this was a special feast day for the boys who were pupils or choristers in Cathedrals, and traditions like the election of a ‘Boy Bishop’ go back to this time. The beginning of the ancient SEQUENCE refers to this, sometimes raucous, celebration.

Station at St Paul’s

Red or Purple

2 Cl. (Duplex 2 Cl.)

INTROIT: Ps. 8:3

Ex ore infantium, Deus, et lactentium perfecisti laudem propter inimicos tuos. Ps. *ibid.* 2: Domine, Dominus noster, quam admirabile est nomen tuum in universa terra. *℟.* Gloria.

*Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings thou hast perfected praise because of thy enemies. Ps. *ibid.* 2: O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is thy name in the whole earth. *℟.* Glory.*

COLLECTS

Deus, cujus hodierna die præconium Innocentes Martyres non loquendo, sed moriendo confessi sunt : omnia in nobis vitiorum mala mortifica : ut fidem tuam, quam lingua nostra loquitur, etiam moribus vita fateatur. Per Dominum.

O God, whose praise the martyred Innocents confessed this day, not in speech, but in their death : destroy in us the evil of every vice, that our lives may show forth in act that faith in thee which our lips profess. Through our Lord.

For the Octave of Christmas:

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus : ut nos Unigeniti tui nova per carnem nativitas liberet, quos sub peccati jugo vetusta servitus tenet. Per eundem Dominum.

Grant, we beseech thee, almighty God, that the new birth, in the flesh, of thine only-begotten Son may set us free, whom the old bondage doth hold under the yoke of sin. Through the same Lord.

LESSON: *Apoc.* 14:1-5

Lectio libri Apocalypsis beati Joannis Apostoli.

A lesson from the Book of the Apocalypse of St John the Apostle.

In diebus illis : Vidi supra montem Sion Agnum stantem, et cum eo centum quadraginta quatuor millia, habentes nomen ejus, et nomen Patris ejus scriptum in frontibus suis. Et audivi vocem de cælo, tamquam vocem aquarum multarum, et tamquam vocem tonitruï magni : et vocem quam audivi, sicut citharædorum citharizantium in citharis suis. Et cantabant quasi canticum novum ante sedem, et ante

In those days: I saw upon mount Sion a Lamb standing, and with him an hundred forty-four thousand having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads. And I heard a noise from heaven, as the noise of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder; and the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps. And they sang as it were a new canticle, before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the ancients;

quatuor animalia, et seniores : et nemo poterat dicere canticum, nisi illa centum quadraginta quatuor millia, qui empti sunt de terra. Hi sunt, qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati : virgines enim sunt. Hi sequuntur Agnum quocumque ierit. Hi empti sunt ex hominibus primitiæ Deo et Agno : et in ore eorum non est inventum mendacium : sine macula enim sunt ante thronum Dei.

and no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand who were purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb : and in their mouth there was found no lie : for they are without spot before the throne of God.

GRADUAL: Ps. 123:7-8

Anima nostra, sicut passer, erepta est de laqueo venantium. ¶ Laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus : adiutorium nostrum in nomine Domini, qui fecit cælum et terram.

Our soul hath been delivered, as a sparrow, out of the snare of the fowlers. ¶ The snare is broken, and we are delivered; our help is in the name of the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth.

ALLELUIA: Ps. 112:1

Laudate, pueri, Dominum : laudate nomen Domini.

Praise the Lord, ye children : praise the name of the Lord.

If Holy Innocents' Day falls not on a Sunday, the following Tract can be sung instead of the Alleluia.

TRACT: Ps. 78:3, 10

Effuderunt sanguinem sanctorum, velut aquam, in circuitu Jerusalem. ¶ Et non erat qui sepe- loret. ¶ Vindica, Domine, sanguinem sanctorum tuorum, qui effusus est super terram.

They have poured out the blood of the saints, as water, round about Jerusalem. ¶ And there was none to bury them. ¶ Revenge, O Lord, the blood of thy saints, which hath been poured out upon the earth.

ad libitum: SEQUENCE

Celsa pueri concrepent melodia,

Let the [choir-]boys now intone together a solemn melody,

Eja, innocentum canentes tripudia,

Lo, singing for the feasts [literally: the wild dances, an allusion to the boys' festival] of the innocents, Whom the Christ child today drew up to heaven.

Quos infans Christus hodie vexit ad astra.

Hos trucidavit frendens insania
Herodianæ fraudis ob nulla crimina

*Those butchered the raging madness
Of Herod's lies, for no fault of their own.*

In Bethlehem ipsius cuncta et per confinia,
A bimatu et infra juxta nascendi tempora.

*In Bethlehem and throughout all its district,
Those born two years ago or less.*

Herodes rex Christi nati verens infelix imperia,
Infremit totus, et erigit arma superba dextera,

*Hapless King Herod feared the rule of the new-born
Christ, he began to rage fully, and stretched out
weapons with an insolent right hand.*

Quærit lucis et cæli Regem cum mente turbida,
Ut extinguat, qui vitam præstat, per sua jacula.

*With a perturbed mind he searched for the King of
light and heaven,
To extinguish with his spear him, who bringeth life.*

Dum non valent intueri lucem splendidam
 nebulosa quærentis pectora,
 Ita fervet, fraudes auget Herodes sævus, ut
 perdat piorum agmina.

Castra militum dux iniquus aggregat; ferrum
 figit in membra tenera;
 Inter ubera lac effundit, antequam sanguinis
 fierent coagula.

Hostis naturæ natos eviscerat atque jugulat.

Ante prosternit quam ætas parvula sumat
 robora.

Quam beata sunt Innocentium ab Herode cæsa
 corpuscula.
 Quam felices existunt matres, quæ fuderunt
 talia pignora.

O dulces Innocentium acies! O pia lactentium
 pro Christo certamina!
 Parvulorum trucidantur millia, membris ex
 teneris manant lactis flumina.

Cives angelici veniunt in obviam, / mira victo-
 ria vitæ captat præmia turba candidissima.

Te, Christe, petimus mente devotissima / nost-
 ra qui venisti reformare sæcula, innocentium
 gloria

Perfrui nos concedas per æterna.

*Because the heart of him, who searched darkness,
 could not behold the splendid light,
 Savage Herod, boiling of rage, increased his misdeeds,
 to root out the throngs of the pious.*

*The unjust leader assembleth several garrisons and
 fixeth iron into tender limbs.
 He poureth out milk between the paps, before the
 blood congeals.*

*The enemy of nature disembowels and strangles the
 new-born,
 He throws them down before their tender age can
 acquire any strength.*

*How blessed are the small bodies of the Innocents,
 hewn by Herod,
 How happy will the mothers come forth, who had
 given birth to these promises [The Innocents'
 reception into heaven is a promise for us].*

*O sweet battle-line of Innocents, O pious fights of the
 suckling-children for Christ.
 Thousands of small children had been butchered, and
 rivers of milk were flowing from their tender
 limbs.*

*The Angels, their fellow-citizens, came to meet them,
 / in a wondrous victory the most brightly shining
 crowd graspeth the prize of life.*

*Thee, O Christ, we beg with a most pious mind; /
 thou, who hast come to renew our age, grant that
 we may enjoy the glory of the Innocents*

For ever.

GOSPEL: Mt. 2:13-18

Sequentia Sancti Evangelii secundum
 Matthæum.

In illo tempore : Angelus Domini apparuit in
 somnis Joseph, dicens : Surge, et accipe pue-
 rum et matrem ejus, et fuge in Ægyptum, et
 esto ibi usque dum dicam tibi. Futurum est
 enim ut Herodes quærat puerum ad perdendum
 eum. Qui consurgens accepit puerum et mat-
 rem ejus nocte, et secessit in Ægyptum : et erat
 ibi usque ad obitum Herodis; ut adimpleretur
 quod dictum est a Domino per Prophetam

*Continuation of the holy Gospel according to
 St Matthew.*

*At that time: An Angel of the Lord appeared in
 sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the child and
 his mother, and fly into Egypt; and be there until I
 shall tell thee; for it will come to pass that Herod will
 seek the child to destroy him. Who arose, and took
 the child and his mother by night, and retired into
 Egypt : and he was there until the death of Herod;
 that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the
 Prophet, saying: Out of Egypt have I called my Son.*

dicentem : Ex Ægypto vocavi Filium meum. Tunc Herodes, videns quoniam illusus esset a Magis, iratus est valde, et mittens occidit omnes pueros qui erant in Bethlehem et in omnibus finibus ejus, a bimatu et infra, secundum tempus quod exquisierat a Magis. Tunc adimpletum est quod dictum est per Jeremiam Prophetam dicentem : Vox in Rama audita est, ploratus et ululatus multus : Rachel plorans filios suos, et noluit consolari, quia non sunt.

Then Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry; and sending, 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.

OFFERTORY: Ps. 123:7, 1-2, 5-6

Anima nostra sicut passer erepta est de laqueo venantium : *laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus. ✠ Nisi quod Dominus erat in nobis, dicat nunc Israel : nisi quia Dominus erat in nobis. *Laqueus. ✠ Torrentem pertransivit anima nostra : forsitan pertransisset anima nostra aquam intolerabilem : benedictus Dominus, qui non dedit nos in captionem dentibus eorum. *Laqueus.

*Our soul hath been delivered, as a sparrow, out of the snare of the fowlers : *the snare is broken, and we are delivered. ✠ If it had not been that the Lord was with us, let Israel now say : if it had not been that the Lord was with us. *The snare. ✠ Our soul hath passed through a torrent : perhaps our soul had passed through a water insupportable : blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us to be a prey to their teeth. *The snare.*

SECRETS

Sanctorum tuorum, Domine, nobis pia non desit oratio, quæ et munera nostra conciliet, et tuam nobis indulgentiam semper obtineat. Per Dominum.

May the devout prayer of thy saints, O Lord, never fail us; may it render our offerings acceptable to thee, and ever obtain for us thy favour. Through our Lord.

For the Octave of Christmas:

Oblata, Domine, munera nova Unigeniti tui nativitate sanctifica : nosque a peccatorum nostrorum maculis emunda. Per eundem Dominum.

Sanctify, O Lord, the gifts we offer by the new birth of thine only-begotten Son, and cleanse us from the stains of our sins. Through the same Lord.

PREFACE

Of Christmas

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, nos tibi semper, et ubique, gratias agere : Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus. Quia per incarnati Verbi mysterium, nova mentis nostræ oculis lux tuæ claritatis infulsit : ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur. Et ideo cum Angelis et Archangelis, cum Thronis et Dominationibus, cumque omni militia cælestis exercitus, hymnum gloriæ tuæ canimus, sine fine dicentes :

It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, eternal God. For by the mystery of the Word made Flesh, the light of thy glory hath shone anew upon the eyes of our mind : so that while we acknowledge him as God seen by men, we may be drawn by him to the love of things unseen. And therefore with the Angels and Archangels, with the Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts of the heavenly army, we sing a hymn to thy glory, evermore saying:

Today, the COMMUNICANTES of the CANON begins as follows

Communicantes, et diem sacratissimum celebrantes, qua beatæ Mariæ intemerata virginitas huic mundo edidit Salvatorem : sed et memoriam venerantes, in primis ejusdem gloriosæ semper Virginis Mariæ, Genitricis ejusdem Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi ...

Communicating, and keeping that most holy day, on which the spotless virginity of the blessed Mary brought forth a Saviour to this world; and also venerating the memory, first of the same glorious Mary, ever a Virgin, Mother of the same our God and Lord Jesus Christ ...

COMMUNION: Mt. 2:18

Vox in Rama audita est, ploratus et ululatus : Rachel plorans filios suos : et noluit consolari, quia non sunt.

A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and mourning : Rachel bewailing her children : and would not be comforted, because they are not.

POST-COMMUNIONS

Votiva, Domine, dona percepimus : quæ Sanctorum nobis precibus, et præsentis, quæsumus, vitæ, pariter et æternæ, tribue conferre subsidium. Per Dominum.

We have partaken, O Lord, of votive offerings; grant that, through the prayers of the saints, they may procure for us aid both in this life and in the life to come. Through our Lord.

For the Octave of Christmas:

Præsta, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus : ut natus hodie Salvator mundi, sicut divinæ nobis generationis est auctor, ita et immortalitatis sit ipse largitor. Qui tecum vivit.

Grant, we beseech thee, O almighty God, that, as the Saviour of the world, who was born this day, procured for us divine sonship, he may also bestow on us immortality. Who liveth.