

**Addresses
for
Morning and Evening Prayer**

**according to the
1943 Lectionary
of the
USA 1928 Book of Common Prayer**

**Intended for use
by Layreaders
in the absence of a priest**

**by Ed Pacht
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**Holy Innocents
(December 28)**

Morning Prayer

First Lesson: Jer 31:1-6, 15-16

*Here beginneth the thirty-first chapter
of the Prophet Jeremiah.*

1 At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

2 Thus saith the LORD, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.

3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

4 Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry.

5 Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things.

6 For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.

15 Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

16 Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

Here endeth the first lesson.

23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

31 But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

Here endeth the second lesson.

Homily to be written

9 For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

11 O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

12 And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

13 And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

Here endeth the first lesson.

Second Lesson: Mark 10:13-16, 23-31

Here beginneth the thirteenth verse of the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark.

13 And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

14 But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

16 And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Second Lesson: Matt 18:1-14

Here beginneth the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

12 How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

Here endeth the second lesson.

Homily

Words of the prophet Jeremiah:

*“A voice was heard in Ramah,
lamentation, and bitter weeping;
Rachel weeping for her children
refused to be comforted for her children,
because they were not. “*

St. Matthew quoted these words in the passage read as the Gospel in today's Mass.
He applied them to the horrible event that we are remembering today.

Evening Prayer

First Lesson: Isa 54:1-13

*Here beginneth the fifty-fourth chapter
of the Prophet Isaiah.*

1 Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

4 Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

6 For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

*“... it were better for him that a millstone
were hanged about his neck,
and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”*

Children are a gift from the Lord.
When a child is conceived,
when the DNA of a man and a woman
combines into a new genetic pattern,
and begins to grow,
this is a human child,
to be valued,
to be welcomed,
to be received with joy.

Anything less is a direct insult
to the Lord who made us all,
who loves us all,
who calls us all,
and desires to love us forever.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, heavenly Father, who hast blessed
us with the joy and care of children; Give us light
and strength to welcome them, to rejoice in them,
and so to train them, that they may love whatsoever
things are true and pure and lovely and of good
report, following the example of their Saviour
Jesus Christ. Amen.

King Herod,
on hearing of a new-born king in Bethlehem,
in his insecurity and his greed for power,
decided to make sure that such a rival
would never grow up to threaten him
So it was that he had all the baby boys
in that general area slaughtered.
These are the Innocents we remember
so soon after the joy of Christmas.
This is a sinful, rebellious world.
The powers of evil and Fallen mankind
can always be counted on
to oppose God when He shows Himself.
Nothing enrages Satan more than
the evidence of God's love.
Nothing pleases him more
than to answer that love with hatred,
with cruelty, with pain.

And there was weeping.
Imagine the pain of all those mothers.
weep with them.
It's only right that we should.

Yet, in this same passage we hear
some of the most comforting words ever spoken:

*“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me,
saying,
Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love:
therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”*

In the midst of evils,
 God calls us to remember that He is with us,
 that He has always loved us,
 that He spoke our names
 at the beginning of creation,
 always reaches His hand toward us,
 and always calls us to Himself.
 His love is everlasting

But yet, the evil that fills this world
 is always present, always working,
 and will be until the end of the age.
 And one of the messages of this day
 is that it is so often the children that pay.
 It may be that it is the very existence
 of innocence
 that so enrages the servants of evil,
 and so often leads to such horrors.

Jesus certainly valued the children.
 More than once he held them up
 as an example of the very things He preached,
 as He did in today's second lesson,
 from St. Matthew,
 when he set a child in the midst of his men,
 and said:

*"Except ye be converted,
 and become as little children,
 ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.
 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself
 as this little child,
 the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
 And whoso shall receive one such little child
 in my name -- receiveth me."*

Learn from the children.
 Value the children.
 Receive the children,
 and you receive Me.
 That's what Our Lord said,
 and that's what He meant.

And yet ...
 we rebellious humans so often,
 so very often,
 see children as a nuisance,
 perhaps a danger,
 a plague to be prevented,
 a difficulty to be removed.

We sympathize with those women
 whose babies were taken from them,
 but (speaking of the society we live in),
 we make abortion perfectly legal.
 We suffer the deliberate killing of millions --
 yes, many millions,
 of unborn children,
 and tell the mothers to be glad,
 to feel relief,
 that they are freed from a burden.
 And we discard the unborn
 as though they were never part of humanity,
 as though they were not children of God.

But hear what else Our Lord said:

"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones ..."

And what greater offense than this?
 He continued: