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The Festival of the Holy Innocents *Its Value for Today*

Michael R. Gilstrap

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they were no more."

St. Matthew 2:16-18 NKJV

In conversation with a friend last evening, he remarked that a church he recently visited was 100 years old! I overheard a similar conversation recently where it was related that the oldest building in Pasadena, CA was over 90 years old! On the East coast, the oldest buildings are said to be over 200 years old! Institutions and landmarks in our country which stretch back 250 plus years are considered ancient. All of that is to say we live in a very young nation. When one considers the antiquity of mankind's history, the history of this nation is but a drop in the bucket.

It is, therefore, understandable that when we look for an event to focus our attention upon the greatest, most insidious holocaust in the history of the world (with the exception of the crucifixion of Christ), we turn to a relatively recent event, the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision *Roe v. Wade*, that decision which seventeen years ago paved the way for the merciless slaughter of 20 million preborn infants. And the figure continues to rise.

But history did not begin in 1776. While it is

entirely appropriate to memorialize the murdered victims of abortion on January 22nd each year, the Church of Christ, almost from her inception, has celebrated the martyrdom of another group of infants, the earliest of Christian martyrs, on December 28th of each year (or December 29 in the East). The Feast of the Holy Innocents, commemorating those children slaughtered by Herod because of the Christ Child, is of the most ancient antiquity. And it is to a consideration of that Feast and the events which lie behind it that I wish to turn in this essay. There are a number of parallels and applications that we can draw from this event during Christ's nativity that are important considerations for Christians today as we battle the malevolent evil of abortion-on-demand.

The Massacre of the Innocents

When the Magi visited Herod, they related to him the appearance of the star in the East and its meaning. As he sent them to Bethlehem, he in-

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strutted them, "Go and search diligently for the young Child, and when you have found him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also" (St. Matthew 2:8 NKJV). The Magi were then warned in a vision *not* to go back to Herod, and therefore, returned home by a different route.

In all probability, it didn't take Herod long to figure out his plan had gone awry. It wasn't *that* far to Bethlehem. Convinced that he had been deceived by the Magi, he flew into a rage. It is interesting to note that the word used for "deceived" has a double meaning. Throughout the Gospels, the word translated usually has the sense "to mock, poke fun of, or ridicule." There is, however, an example in the **Septuagint** where the word is best translated "de-lude" (Jeremiah 10:15 – "idols of delusion"). Both ideas surface here in Matthew 2. Reminiscent of **Pharaoh**, Herod was indeed "deluded," his heart was hard. But he is also mocked and made fun of by the Magi. To think that this petty King would venture to con these Great Kings during their mission to do homage to the Christ Child is an act worthy of ridicule!

Not one to control his emotions, Herod's rage results in his order to slaughter all the male infants 2 years old and younger in Bethlehem and the surrounding **area**. This savagery fits perfectly with what we know of Herod's character. He was an extremely brutal, bloodthirsty man. Josephus, the Jewish historian, writes concerning him, "He was brutish, and a stranger to all humanities." This particular massacre was only one, and by no means the greatest of his crimes. One of his earlier "feats" was the murder of his wife and his three sons. Although ultimately frustrated, he planned the slaughter of hundreds of Jewish leaders on the day of his death. Knowing the people would rejoice when he died, his plan was to manufacture a day of

mourning by ordering the murder of hundreds at his death. His sister, however, refused to carry out the order. Even in death, Herod was a murderous butcher.

Unlike his final plan, the massacre of the innocents was carried out. Herod's henchmen entered the homes of Bethlehem and slaughtered all the infant boys two years and younger. Their sharp daggers spilt the blood of many in an effort to end the life of the One. They were, of course, unsuccessful. Joseph was instructed by the Angel of the Lord in a dream to take the Child and his mother to Egypt until the death of Herod.

Estimates of the number of victims range from 20-30 to as high as 60-70. Bethlehem and the surrounding area were not heavily populated. Early Christian writers tossed about the numbers 3,000 and 144,000 (cf. Revelation 7:4; 14: 1), but there is no independent support for such large figures. Regardless of the precise number murdered, this effort by Herod was obviously a Satanic attack on the Christ Child, and the Church has always viewed it as such. Hence, the early celebration of the festival.

The Feast of the Holy Innocents

As noted earlier, the Feast of the Holy Innocents was celebrated as early as the 2nd Century. Although some modern writers object to the idea of referring to them as martyrs, the ancient writers never speak of them in any other way. St. Cyprian, writing in A.D. 252, says, "The nativity of Christ witnessed at once the martyrdom of infants, so that they who were two years old and under were slain for His name's sake. An age not yet fitted for battle appeared fit for the crown. That it might be manifest that the y who are slain for Christ's sake are innocent, innocent infancy was put to death for His name's sake. It is shown that none is free from the peril of persecution, when even these accomplished martyrdom" (Epistle LV). Along the same line, St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, writes, "Bethlehem flowed with the blood of martyrs, and that they were advanced to eternity by the glory of martyrdom" (Commentary on Matthew).

St. Augustine, in many respects the greatest of the Church Fathers, remarks in his commentary on the Psalter, "These infants died for Christ, not knowing it. Their parents bewailed them, dying martyrs. They could not yet speak, and yet for all that, they confessed Christ. Christ granted them the honor to die for his name, and then vouchsafed them the benefit of being washed from original sin by their



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own blood." St. Prudentius, an early hymn writer, sets forth their praises in this manner:

*Hail, ye flowers of martyrs,
Whom the enemies of Christ cut off
In your first entrance upon the light,
As men do roses when they first appear.
Ye proto-victims of Christ,
Ye tender flock of sacrifices,
Play innocently with your crowns
And garlands before the very altar.*

Writing in approximately A.D. 380, St. Chrysostom echoed the **aforegoing** sentiments when he said, "These infants received no harm by their death; it only translated them so much the sooner to the port and haven of rest and tranquility y" (Homily IX on Matthew) In another place he commented on Herod's cruelty by saying, "He gave all the infants eternal life for the sake of one." To put it another way, Herod made them all martyrs for the sake of Christ, whom he thought to have slain among them.

One of the earliest testimonies comes from St. Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, who in turn was the disciple of St. John the Apostle. Writing about A.D. 185, he says, "For this reason also he [the Lord] suddenly removed those children who belonged to the house of David, whose happy lot it was to have been born at that time, that he might send them on ahead into his kingdom. Since he was himself an infant, he so arranged it that human infants should be martyrs, slain, according to the Scriptures, for the sake of Christ, who was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the city of David" (Against Heresies, III.xvi.4). And to sum up, on more than one occasion St. Augustine writes, "That the Church received them to the honor of martyrs." The clear implication is that some peculiar festival was appointed for their commemoration.

It is clear, therefore, that the Festival of the Holy Innocents has been celebrated in the Church from the very beginning. Recognizing that these infants who suffered and died for Christ might rightly be called "martyrs," the Early Church commemorated their deaths by remembering not simply that they had died at the hands of an evil ruler, but that they were martyred so that the Christ Child might escape into Egypt, and eventually give His life for the life of the world. Although a mournful event, it nevertheless was seen as the harbinger of what was to come. . . of what great things His people must suffer for His sake.

A Present Remembrance of the Feast of the Holy Innocents

Because we live in the midst of the Abortion Holocaust, the Feast of the Holy Innocents has especial significance for us. We see in the attempt by Herod to destroy the **Christ Child**, an expression of Satan's drive to crush the Seed before the Seed crushes him. From the Temptation to the Crucifixion, Satan's drive to perpetuate the power of Hell is evidenced at every turn. The dragon's intention to destroy the Child through his servant Herod by massacring the infants of Bethlehem is but one instance of this malignant strategy.

But what is the power or authority of Hell and of Satan? To what did Jesus refer when He said that "the **powers** of hell" would not **prevail** against the Church (St. Matthew 16: 18)?

The power of hell is the power of death. What drove Herod was the power of hell, the power of death. In his wake, Herod left nothing but death. Similarly, Satan leaves nothing but death. His temptation of Adam was his successful attempt to bring death into the world. His temptation of Christ was his unsuccessful attempt to keep death in the world. The "blood bath of Bethlehem" is an everlasting testimony to us of the power of **hell**.

But as the early Fathers understood, that is not the end of the story. Just as the Lord promised Adam, Satan will never ultimately triumph. Although in the Massacre of the Innocents, many were slaughtered by the Dragon, the One against Whom the evil deed was perpetrated escaped. *The power of hell is never enough against the Deliverer.* The Christ Child escaped into Egypt. Herod's designs were frustrated; the power of death was once more shown to be inadequate.

Life always triumphs over death in the final analysis. The benefits of redemption — the blessing of life — always prevails against the curse of death. Death, Hell, and Satan will never stand before Christ and the Life He gives to the world. This is the message of the Festival of the Holy Innocents.

And this day must once again be made a cause of rejoicing for the Church. The perpetuation of the ethics of Death, as seen in the modern Abortion movement, is a lost cause. Ultimately, life will triumph. The strategy of the Enemy will once again be frustrated. The Christ has returned from Egypt, and He will accomplish inexorably His mission to bring life to the world.

The Festival of Holy Innocents must become for

The Establishment of the Kingdom

Peter J. Leithart

In his classic study of early Christian doctrine, **J.N.D. Kelly** claims that "wherever religion was alive and healthy, the primitive conviction of enjoying already the benefits of the age to come was kept vividly before the believer's consciousness." The detailed and profound studies of New Testament theology by **Geehardus Vos** and **Herman Ridderbos** (among many, many others) make the same claim: It is essential to the New Testament's message that the **eschatological** age is both *already* present among God's people and *not yet* fully realized.

Everywhere in the New Testament, we **find** the same emphasis: We have already tasted the powers of the age to come; we already feast with and on Christ, in **proleptic** enjoyment of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb; we already participate in the holiness that will be perfected in our resurrection; we have already received the verdict of justification, which **shall** be publicized at the final judgment; we are already citizens of heaven, our lives already hidden with Christ in God, already ascended to the heavenly Jerusalem, though the creation still groans for our adoption as sons; and so on. The purpose of this essay is to indicate that this same structure applies to the kingdom: The kingdom of God is already established and present among God's people, but it is not yet **fully** consummated.

It is clear from the synoptic gospels that the kingdom of God is the major theme of Jesus' preaching and teaching. Each author summarizes Jesus' teaching and ministry under the heading of "the kingdom of God (Mt. 4:17; Mk. 1:14-15; Lk. 4:42-43). Jesus' message about the kingdom was more **specific**, however. The Gospels do not merely say that He taught about the kingdom, but that He taught that the kingdom was *near*. Thus, the imminent coming of the kingdom is the main theme of Jesus' preaching and teaching, as described by the synoptic gospels.

It maybe helpful at this point to recall a point I made in the last essay of this series. In my brief notes on the kingdom in the Old Testament, I said that the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles provide a wealth of often untapped information about the kingdom. In particular, let us focus on 2 Samuel 5-7, the story of David's ascension to the throne of Israel. Those chapters describe a transition from battle to victory to enthronement. David began to rule only

after he had conquered his enemies, and after he had acknowledged the Lord's rule by bringing the ark into Jerusalem. (It is important to note that he continued his conquest of the land after his enthronement as well, 2 Sam. 8). A similar pattern is found in the book of Joshua, a book of conquest.

Jesus, **yeshua**, the Son of David, fulfills the "prophecies" of Joshua and 2 Samuel. From the perspective of the kingdom, we may think of Christ's earthly ministry as a conquest, leading up to the decisive battle on Calvary (Col. 2: 15). Evidence that Christ's earthly activity can be viewed in military terms is found in the Gospels themselves. Mary's son, a reflection of the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2), describes Christ as a Mighty Man who will scatter the proud, cast rulers from their thrones, and exalt the humble (Lk. 1:49-52). Jesus' sermon in Nazareth was a commentary on Isaiah's prediction of a cosmic Jubilee in which liberty and vengeance will be proclaimed and realized (Lk. 4: 16ff; Is. 61:1ff.). In Luke 11:14-26, Jesus describes Himself as a strong man who plunders His powerful enemy and distributes the booty (vv. 21-22). The legion of demons in the demoniac begged Jesus not to torment them (Lk. 8:28). Christ's healings, exorcisms, and teaching thus can be seen as a military campaign against the occupying forces of Satan, intended to liberate His people from bondage. This was not the kind of campaign that the Jews had been taught to expect from their Messiah. They had hoped for a military captain who would deliver them from the bondage of Rome. Jesus came, however, to redeem His people from the far more debilitating bondage of Satan and sin.

Thus, we might say that Jesus' entire ministry was an exorcism of heaven and earth. Satan, who once was admitted to the council of the Lord (Job 1-2), was cast out, and His position was given to Christ and those united to Him (Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6). It is significant to notice that the disciples participated in this conquest/exorcism (Mt. 10:1; Lk. 9: 1). Even at this early stage in the coming of the kingdom, Christ was sharing His authority and power with His faithful followers. As we saw in an earlier essay, the rule of the saints is intimately linked with the rule of Christ. We must keep in mind, as Calvin often said, the intimacy of the union between Christ and His Church means that the same power and authority can be attributed to each. The disciples did not engage in conquest apart from Christ, but in union with Him.

Following the pattern of 2 Samuel 5-7, we find

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The Legacy of Morality:

Words and Values

Gary R. Hafer

Sometimes words change meaning when the values of a culture change. The English word *nice*, for example, meant "foolish," "stupid," and "senseless" in the fourteenth century in certain situations, while in others it meant "lascivious" and "wanton." Interestingly, the medieval mind found no contradiction between these two definitions: to be wanton was to be senseless. Today, *nice* means "pleasing" or "agreeable"; one could almost conclude that what was once lasciviousness (or *nice*) is now agreeable.

Perhaps more insidious, though, is not the change in dictionary definition, but rather, how *value-laden* words have become attached to offensive acts and ungodly people. A promiscuous mother who aborts her baby is called *courageous*. The husband who deserts his wife and children for an adulterous affair with another woman is said to be *true to himself*. The social worker who hands out disposable needles to drug addicts is called *compassionate*. As one pastor declared, we live in an age of the great reversal, where values are turned upside down and emptied of meaning.

Witness the popularity of the recent film, *Dirty Dancing*. Almost **all** the critical opinion I've seen regarding the film describes it as a dance movie with *apoignant* love story. Dancing is only a cosmetic for the more substantive message underneath, one about the New Heroism: how a young, high school **graduate** on summer vacation in the early 1960's America provides the money and the opportunity for another girl to have an abortion. When the plan fails, the fault is placed with the "back alley" doctor who severely injures the girl and the "repressive" society that limits her "freedom" to kill safely her baby. It is only through the reluctant help of the **high-schooler's** father that the aborted woman survives. The resounding message is clear: *heroism* is **providing and financing** others to sin.

Then there's the modern academic scene where value-laden words are systematically decapitated. A large midwestern university newspaper has begun running ads for the off-campus Planned Parenthood campaign. Entitled "Mr. Condom," the ads feature a cartoon prophylactic announcing his message of *responsibility* to one's self and one's "mate." One ad proudly proclaims that condoms are available free of charge, and in the school's colors! How's that for school spirit?

Then there's the media-moguls. Jessica Hawn is a *spokeswoman* for Christianity and hypocrisy within the Church. The New York disc jockey Howard Stern has become the *defender* of free speech. Actresses and actors testify as *expert* witnesses before congressional committees on national problems. Anti-heroism is now called heroism; baby-murder is now called courage; adultery is now called truth; fornication is now called responsibility. Value-laden words have depreciated, lost all their formal value when placed against today's immorality.

In the short essay, "Meditation in a Toolshed," C.S. Lewis describes a sunbeam streaming through a crack in his workroom. When he looks *at* the sunbeam, Lewis declares, he sees all the particles of dust in the air, yet without seeing the beam illuminate anything in the room itself. But when he looks directly *along* the beam, he sees only the brilliance of the sun and the leaves of the tree it illumines. Lewis then demonstrates that *looking along* is just as important as looking *at*; that is, looking from the "inside" is just as important as examining from the outside.

Our culture is the outsider, the at-looker. It doesn't know the God of all creation who invests all of life with His law and ethics, which includes language. Christians see both *at* and *along*: they are both sinners and saints. By grace, they see the world and its language beneath the media hype, the false labels, and the value-emptied words. For they see the world for what it is: fallen, and desperately in need of the redemption of Christ.

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that after Christ had conquered His enemies, He ascended to His throne, which, strictly speaking, inaugurates His rule. The power, life, and blessing of the kingdom was given to the disciples on Pentecost through the Holy Spirit of Christ, by which Christ Himself is present in His Church. The destruction of Jerusalem in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy was a further act in the establishment of his reign over all things (Lk. 21:28, 31; cf. 2 Sam. 8). Finally, in fulfillment of Daniel 7:23-28, the Roman empire was judged and destroyed, and the dominion over all the nations that had been given to the saints of the most high God was made more apparent.

The situation since A.D. 70, then, has been this: The kingdom is established, both in heaven and on earth. First, in a transcendent sense, the kingdom is

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BOOKS

Walker Percy and the Secular Inquisition

Gary R. Hafer

Name a contemporary American novel that fences with the liberal politics of Norman Lear, bemoans the behaviorism of B. F. Skinner, exposes the true aims of scientific humanitarianism, and sarcastically comments on the spread of the AIDS plague. If that isn't a tough enough bill to fill, tack on the following two: its humor is at the expense of the humanist instead of the Christian worldview, and it's a best-selling title.

Such a seemingly impossible criteria is met in Walker Percy's *Thanatos Syndrome*, the story of Dr. Tom More, who has recently been released from prison for a minor offense and entrusted to the care of former colleagues, Drs. Bob Comeaux and Max Gottlieb. Presently, he resumes his psychological practice in his hometown of Feliciana, Louisiana, and soon stumbles, quite **accidentally**, upon the peculiar behavior of his patients. They seem to have lost all sense of sexual responsibility and inhibition, exhibiting the most outlandish behavior, even in the examining room. In addition, Dr. More discovers that their minds sort numbers and perform calculations instantly, as instantly as a computer does; they are also able to specify geographic locations and distances with pinpoint accuracy.

But this uncanny behavior extends not only to More's patients, but to his own wife, Ellen. He notices a behavioral change in her also, though in less dramatic ways. She has developed a penchant for bridge-playing, a previously slighted recreation, and moreover, has become consummate in her bidding strategies. She has also acquired the company of the mysterious Dr. John van Dom, who is, at the very least, her "close" bridge partner.

More soon realizes that there is a conspiracy underfoot, one that leads him into strange and powerful quarters. On his rocky journey there, he encounters Father Simon Smith, whose fanatical zeal becomes the subject of his intense study and an important link in understanding [his "syndrome." A similarity of aims is established between the terrible humanness of the covert eugenics order and the Nazi medical experiments of World War II; in both cases,

it is the "tenderhearted" who refuse to stand against moral evil, thus ushering in the "gas chambers."

More is then joined by Dr. Lucy Lipscomb, an epidemiologist, who **later** identifies the causes for the syndrome in the concentration of sodium in the water supply. At one point, Lipscomb and More can visually discern the sodium concentration in the human body by using medial instruments; what they see are pillars of salt (an allusion to Lot's wife), and so the malevolence of this conspiracy is implicitly symbolized.

In due course, More and Lipscomb find that the whole region has been subjected to a medial **experiment**, whose purpose is utopian and humanistic to the core. With that humanism, of course, there are great dangers, and even the agnostic presuppositions of Dr. More are twisted—his values questions in uncovering an experiment he knows to be wrong and yet cannot quite put his finger on the nature of its evil. The conversation that More has with Dr. Comeaux in his car is priceless in its insight into supposed humanitarian-but in reality, **anti-human-thought**.

Although the novel has dramatic tension and a complexity of plot, it is incredibly easy reading. What's more, it's funny. More is the narrator-persona of the novel, and even in his state of sin, shows the workings of "grace" through his **scornful** insight into "local village atheists, professor-philosophers, ACLU zealots, educated Episcopal-type unbelievers, media types, NBC anchormen, New York Times pundits, and **show-biz** gurus." The sodium-seduced priest, Father Smith, explains "reconstruction"—a relativistic philosophy current in modern university English department—when he articulates (paradoxically) an ideology in which words signify nothing, since meaning is emptied of significance in this system; the conclusion formed is that preaching is useless, because it signifies no propositional truth (reconstructing the self?). More, unlike his **ancestral** counterpart of Thomas More, is no "saint," but his perceptions are continually reforming through the course of the novel, becoming sharper and more exacting.

If *Thanatos Syndrome* could be said to have some thesis without all the "preachy" connotations that go along with that term, then it would certainly be [his: that the sentimentalizing medical and scientific community's use of terms like "abortion" and "sanctity of life" are mere euphemisms—as in the scientific community's babble about improving the quality of life in this southern parish—for a secret agenda they all covertly foster. Walker Percy said in

an interview last year that the biological and social science mindset in contemporary society prides itself in supposed free thought and inquiry, but in reality, displays neither. For behind the parlor talk are the concealed dogmas of this "Secular Inquisition," all the seeds of God-denial that eventually grow into the medial experiments of the **Weimar** doctors and bear **fruit** in the chambers of Auschwitz.

Percy's *Thanatos Syndrome* is not for the squeamish, however. Although it deliberately avoids the pornography that some modern literature exudes-Percy disdains such links-it nevertheless portrays sinners as sinners, and their speech frequently "speaks" to that sin. But their sin is never glorified, and it is always placed within that context; the loss of sexual inhibition, for example, does not prove to have the liberating effect that the social engineers envisioned. (This technique has been used by Evelyn Waugh and Flannery O'Connor in their fiction.)

Perhaps Percy's novel could be said to be an anthropological study in fiction. Man bent on denying the truth of human existence develops a moral **blindness**—a syndrome of death (*thanatos* is the Greek word for death). But the novel also defines how this moral blindness extends to modern man's perception of himself, through the deceptive vision of enlightened **scientific** inquiry. Percy concludes that the best study of man is found in the Scriptures and not in the "Office of the Secular Inquisition."

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established in that Christ has ascended to the true heavenly throne of David to rule over all things. Second, Christ rules a heavenly realm of blessedness of which we are already citizens. Third, the power and blessing of the heavenly kingdom is immanent, present in the world through the Spirit-filled Church, its witness, sacraments, and service, like leaven hidden until the whole lump is leavened.

In short, the kingdom and its power is incarnated in the Person of Jesus Christ. He was, as Origen put it, *autobasileia*, "Himself the Kingdom." Wherever He is present, there the power of His kingdom is present. And, as Paul tells us, He now fills all things through His Spirit; thus, the universal kingdom of

Christ **has** been established. The work of the Church is therefore not to establish the kingdom of God; Christ alone can do and has done **that**. The work of the Church is to transform this rebellious **world**, through the power of the Spirit, into an image of the heavenly kingdom where Christ's rule is **already** perfected.

Gilstrap, continued from page 3

us a symbol of what it once was in the Catholic (Universal) Church. "Rachel" is indeed now weeping. These children, murdered at the hands of abortionists, are no more. This time the worldly power that destroyed them is not Assyria or Babylon, as in the days of Jeremiah. Nor is it the cruel hand of the tyrant Herod. Rather it is the blood-stained hands of the modern merchants of death, who murder thousands of infants each day.

But what was **future** for those weeping in Bethlehem and Ramah, is a present reality for us today. The Deliverer came out of Egypt. The "branch of righteousness" has been brought forth, and He is executing justice and righteousness in the land (Jeremiah 33:14,15). Life has triumphed over death. He is presently putting an end to all rule, power, and authority (1 Corinthians 15:23).

Just as Christ triumphed over Herod, so shall He triumph over the abortionists. The Pro-Life movement **will** prevail because Life always ultimately triumphs over death. There is, then, cause for great hope.

Our hope is not, ultimately, a reversal of Roe v. Wade or a *Human Life Amendment*, even though the Lord may use these events to accomplish His purpose. Our hope rests squarely on the shoulders of Him Who died and rose again, bringing the power of the resurrection — the power of life — into the world.

Let us at this season, then, renew our efforts against this horrible pall of death that envelopes our nation. Rachel must not be bowed down any longer. The Deliverer has come. He says to all who will listen, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (St. Matthew 11:28 NKJV). He also says, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (St. Matthew 19:14 NKJV).