

Reflections on the Holy Innocents

This year the Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 28, was doubtless the occasion for many priests to mention the crime of abortion in the course of their sermons. There are many similarities between Herod's slaughter of the Holy Innocents, and the ongoing killing of babies in the wombs of their mothers. But there is one tremendous difference. The Holy Innocents were all circumcised little Jewish boys who went to the Limbo of the Just, and on Ascension Thursday, Our Lord brought them with Him to Heaven, where they now enjoy the Beatific Vision. The babies that are being killed in today's slaughter of the holy innocents, will never see the Face of God. They go to the Limbo of the Children, a place of natural happiness.

Abortion is a crime against the natural law, but more importantly, it is also a crime against the supernatural law. By depriving these children of the sacrament of Baptism, they are being deprived of their only chance for the Beatific Vision. This probably explains the failure of the "Right to Life" Movement. They are making it just a natural movement. It should be the "Right to Supernatural Life." The reason the Magisterium has not raised the movement from the natural to the supernatural level, is because they would have to say that the sacrament of Baptism is necessary for salvation, and this they have been unwilling to do.

When this aspect of the abortion issue is mentioned, we usually hear: "But the *Catechism* says we can "hope" for the salvation of these unbaptized children" (CCC 1261). This is just speculation, and poor speculation at that. The *Catechism* itself says: "The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude." (CCC 1257). So everything that follows, on "baptism of desire," etc. is just speculation, and has no authority.

The necessity of Baptism for salvation is crystal clear in Holy Scripture from Our Lord's own words: "And He said to them: Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15,16). And again: "Jesus answered: Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

It is also the clear teaching of the Solemn Magisterium of the Church that the sacrament of Baptism is necessary for salvation: "All the faithful must confess only one Baptism, which regenerates in Christ all the baptized, just as there is one God and one faith. We believe that this sacrament celebrated in water and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is necessary for children and grown-up people alike for the perfect remedy of salvation." Council of Vienne (*Denzinger* 482). And again: "If anyone says that Baptism is optional, that is not necessary for salvation: let him be anathema." Council of Trent (*Denzinger* 691).

Until the hierarchy preach against the supernatural crime of abortion, the depriving the unborn child of the sacrament of Baptism, thus depriving him of his chance for the Beatific Vision, the slaughter of the innocents will continue.

Thomas Mary Sennott
