



## THE SLAUGHTER OF THE *INNOCENCE*

In today's Gospel for Holy Mass, we hear how true Wisdom inspired gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to be offered to the *little Child of Bethlehem*: the Christ Child. These gifts manifest a Gentile world's recognition of His royalty, His Divinity, and His humanity and are left behind by the Magi for the Holy Family to do with them what they will! Such is the meaning and the purity of the offering that the Church remembers on *little Christmas*/the Epiphany.



Today, in 2017, believers have the opportunity to generously offer a trinity of other gifts to Our Holy Redeemer; gifts that speak no less however, of their belief in Him as the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. We can offer Him our *time* on Sunday and keep it Holy not only because the Third Commandment and the Words of Institution oblige us to do so, but because our remembrance of the past with gratitude will encourage us to look forward to the future with confidence, and live the present with enthusiasm. We can offer Him our *talent* on Sunday as we sing in the choir (call Mr. Michael Crouse at (516) 526-9184), proclaim the Word from the pulpit (call Mr. Charles Shields at (516) 546-1894), serve at the Altar (call Father Alessandro at (516) 378 – 0665), greet people at the doors (call Mrs. Judy Germaine at (516) 580-3160), and instruct children in their Catechism (call Mrs. Joanne Stuhlinger at (516) 546-1057) not because our reward will be great on earth, but because we have been told to *store up treasure in Heaven* (cf. Saint Matthew VI:20). We can offer Him our *treasure* on Sunday so that all throughout the week the sick can be cared for, the imprisoned can be visited, the hungry can be fed, the thirsty can be given drink, and the naked can be clothed (call Mr. Alfonso Martinez at (516) 868-8289), because we know that “whatever (we) do for one of these the least of His brethren (we) do for Him” (Saint Matthew XXV:40).

Herodian wisdom was not pleased with what the Magi did for Our Holy Redeemer two thousand years ago, nor is that temporal spirit pleased with what believers do for Our Holy Redeemer today. And so it is that the slaughter of the innocents continues; or should I say the slaughter of the *innocence* continues: the innocence of belief that inspires us to make an offering. Today we have to beg for Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life because the prevailing wisdom rejects sacrifice and self-denial, while the Wisdom of God says: “Whoever wishes to come after Me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me” (Saint Matthew XVI:24). Today we have to beg people to come to Mass because the prevailing wisdom says that Jesus doesn't care if we go to Mass or not, while the Wisdom of God says: “Do this in memory of Me” (Saint Luke XXII:19). Today we have to beg for volunteers to teach in Religious Education and serve in Parish Outreach because the prevailing wisdom says *ask not what you can do for your Church but rather what can your Church do for you*, while the Wisdom of God says, “If I, therefore, the Master and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do (Saint John XIII:14-15). Please, King Herod slaughtered the innocents two thousand years ago; don't let him slaughter the innocence today. Pray for an increase in faith and true Wisdom. If that combination could inspire people to open their treasures and offer gifts to Our Holy Redeemer in Bethlehem two thousand years ago, it can inspire people in Freeport today to lay down their gifts of time, talent, and treasure for Him who was born to lay down His life for them.

