

Prayer Service of Remembrance For Victims of Abortion
St. Matthew 2:16-18

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Rachel weeps...

Matters of convenience have long trumped life. Throughout the history of the world, whenever it suited the desires and perceived needs of a person, he or she has had no problem taking a life. And the people around them? Well, they have often been complacent or incapable of doing anything different.

History is filled with rulers who took the lives of people that they perceived as threats to their power and authority. Herod is no different. Wise men from the east have arrived in Jerusalem seeking the one who has been born King of the Jews so that they might worship Him. Herod was not born king, but was placed on the throne as a sort of puppet king. When he heard this, he was troubled; so was all of Jerusalem. He inquires where the Christ was supposed to be born. Those are Herod's words—he's the one who called the one born King Christ.

The chief priests, scribes, and people tell Herod that the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. He plots to have the King killed, and when he is betrayed by the wise men, sends his people to Bethlehem to "take care of" all the boys two and younger.

It was a holocaust. No one knows the exact number of young boys killed, but the slaughter of the Bethlehem innocents was uncalled for. The King of the Jews was no threat to Herod's power. "My kingdom is not of this world," the King would one day say to another ruler who feared for his emperor's throne. (cf. John 18:36) It was a tragedy, made all the more horrific in that the defenseless were being slaughtered, and there was nothing their parents could do.

The chief priests, scribes, and people of Jerusalem were also indifferent, or at least comfortable with the powers that were enforced over them. Not a one of them raised a hand to defend the Bethlehem innocents, as far as we're aware. Not one of the chief priests or scribes, knowing that the Christ was in Bethlehem, spoke in opposition to what Herod was doing—complacent, as demonstrated by their lack of accompanying the wise men to worship the Christ, or incapable of doing anything.

All for the sake of convenience, Herod had the Bethlehem innocents killed.

Rachel weeps...

There was a man in Europe who rose to power and prominence. He had plans for his people, or perhaps more accurately, for people like him. Those plans involved the eradication of people not like him. He sought to create a master race, and anyone not of that race was perceived as a threat to his plans.

So, anyone not Aryan or with some defect of deformity was rounded up and shipped off to camps. There, they were tortured, experimented on, and executed. This man's men did many horrible and horrific things. The number of victims was staggering. It was a holocaust; in fact, merely saying the word holocaust brings up images, imagined or real, of this atrocity.

And the people of Germany, if they were aware of what was going on, were indifferent or powerless to do anything. There is a famous picture of the people from a town near one of these camps that have been conscripted to clean up the camp—bury the emaciated bodies and care for those who were still barely alive—punishment for their indifference or complacency. The atrocities were being performed right under their noses—their town surely smelled of the stench of the camp—and they did nothing.

All for the sake of convenience, Hitler had people he deemed undesirable killed.

Rachel weeps...

There is yet another holocaust happening....right under your noses. Oh, surely you are aware of it. There have been an estimated 50-million victims in this country since 1973, though no one knows the exact number thanks to privacy and HIPAA laws. Every year, millions of unwanted children are killed, slaughtered on the altar of convenience. Oh, it sounds gruesome when put that way, so the language is weakened so that the baby is called a fetus and not considered alive until some arbitrary time well past conception. After all, if it's a fetus and not alive, then it's not human and not murder, and there are no moral or ethical dilemmas.

And people stand by, indifferent or powerless to do anything about it.

There are those who claim that they would never have an abortion, but would rather not take that "right" away from someone else. There are men who, having impregnated a woman, would rather she not abort the pregnancy, but do not speak up because it's "her body, her choice." And of course, there are many who simply have no problem with abortion.

And it seems like all the picketing in the world is doing nothing. Maybe one or two who were walking into a Planned Parenthood decide against it thanks to the picketing, but many more may walk away more confused and convinced to have an abortion thanks to the brashness and rudeness of some of the picketers.

Still, the abortions happen. Still, baby parts are being sold on a government sanctioned black market. And all of it being done in the name of convenience. Will it ever stop?

Rachel weeps...

Yet, despite Herod, despite Hitler, despite Roe v. Wade, there was One who suffered all inconvenience in order that you and they might be the righteousness of God in Him. Lives were lost, mutilated, slaughtered, and the Life of the world has come that they might have life, and have it to the fullest.

This is true for Herod, as much as it may pain us to acknowledge. This is true for Hitler, as repulsive as that may sound. This is true for those who have sought, still seek, and perform abortions, as much as we may not want that to be true. And we must also confess, since those aborted are human lives, it is true of them, too.

That's the hope that we look forward to. Relying on God's mercy, we trust that God sent His Son, Jesus, to die for the victims of abortion as much as He has for us. He came that they may have life, and have it to the fullest (cf. John 10:10), an odd thing to say of those whose lives were cut tragically short, but it is no less true.

And it is that truth that all need to hear, from the abortionist to the woman contemplating an abortion to you. Jesus came that all may have life, and He gives that life by giving up his own. He has gone on to the cross as the ransom for sin, shedding His blood and giving His life over to death in order to conquer death and swallow all up into His life.

His is the only death which is of convenience to all. For by His death, all may have life. For it is sin that has sent Jesus to the cross—for which He is the propitiation. But make no mistake, it was inconvenient to Him—He suffered and died, but He did so in order that you would not have to. Yes, sufferings in this life will still come—there will be dictators and despots and crisis pregnancies to come, and many will lose their lives over it—but in Christ, all of that is conquered. And as a surety of that, Jesus made this promise, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." (John 11:25-26) The fullness of life which Jesus came to bring is life in eternity—Paradise—with Him and the Father, a glorious existence which is yours, even now, by faith, because you have been forgiven for all of your sins.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.