

## Protect Life

The tapestry scene may not seem to have much to do with the readings, yet it does. Let me explain: This wall-size work of art depicts the murder decreed by Herod of all the children two years and under. It was his desperate effort to extinguish any possibility that the Messiah might eventually contest his throne.

The reading of James could very well be applied to the greedy and avaricious Herod. “You have lived on earth in luxury and pleasure; you have fattened your hearts for the day of [your own] slaughter” (James 5:5). All the wealth, authority, and success he had only led him to be more grasping and insecure. Anyone who sees a threat to his own well-being in the birth of a child reveals his own internal poverty of spirit.

Rather than remove the little ones from our lives, we should do all we can to edify and maintain their faith. Jesus, as well as James, has harsh words for anyone who would lead a little one to sin.

Herod was the first who needed to hear the words of the Messiah he was trying to silence. If anything causes you to sin, even something as precious as a hand or foot, it’s better to cut it off and live physically impaired rather than maintain apparent wholeness while spiritually rotting from within. The life of our souls and that of the little ones is of paramount importance, and no material security should be placed ahead of it.

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC



Piece: *Slaughter of the Innocents*, 1524-1531

Artist: Pieter van Aelst

Location: Vatican Museums

### *For Reflection*

*Do I protect life as a gift from the Father, from conception to natural death?*

*How do I help the little ones in my life come to know Jesus?*

*[Jesus said,] “It is better for you to enter into life maimed than with two hands to go into Gehenna.”*

*Mark 9:43*

## Calendar

### Monday

OCTOBER 1

St. Thérèse of the  
Child Jesus, Virgin and  
Doctor of the Church

Jb 1:6–22

Lk 9:46–50

### Tuesday

OCTOBER 2

Holy Guardian Angels  
Jb 3:1–3, 11–17, 20–23

Mt 18:1–5, 10

### Wednesday

OCTOBER 3

Weekday

Jb 9:1–12, 14–16

Lk 9:57–62

### Thursday

OCTOBER 4

St. Francis of Assisi

Jb 19:21–27

Lk 10:1–12

### Friday

OCTOBER 5

Weekday

Jb 38:1, 12–21; 40:3–5

Lk 10:13–16

### Saturday

OCTOBER 6

Weekday

Jb 42:1–3, 5–6, 12–17

Lk 10:17–24

### Sunday

OCTOBER 7

Twenty-seventh Sunday  
in Ordinary Time

Gn 2:18–24

Heb 2:9–11

Mk 10:2–16 or

Mk 10:2–12

# Dear Padre,

**The older I get, the more distracted I become by crying babies at Mass. Sometimes I leave Mass so irritated that I wonder what benefit is gained in going at all.**

At the movies, the opera, or some other formal live performance, a crying infant is regarded as *persona non grata*. But the Eucharist is a family event, not a theatrical one. Children should feel welcomed at Mass. After all, Jesus said, “Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Mark 10:14).

While small children may belong at Mass, it should also be acknowledged

that certain courtesies apply when crowds gather to pray in the house of the Lord.

Parents may consider sitting at the end of a pew for a quick exit to minimize disruption when a child needs immediate attention. When a child is of a certain age, parents may consider taking advantage of parish nurseries or designated cry rooms in churches on a temporary basis, if available.

By the same token, impatient parishioners (and preachers) should be sensitive to the needs of parents, who admirably desire participation in the family celebration and weekly nourishment by Christ’s word and sacrament—temporary toddler temper tantrums notwithstanding. “Be still and know that I am God!” (Psalm 46:11) is a divine invitation to worshipers of all ages.

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SHUTTERSTOCK



## A Word From Pope Francis

*Every child who, rather than being born, is condemned unjustly to being aborted, bears the face of Jesus Christ, ...And every elderly person, even if he is ill or at the end of his days, bears the face of Christ. They cannot be discarded, as the “culture of waste”*

*suggests! They cannot be thrown away!*

—Address to International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations,  
September 20, 2013