

The Anglican Church of Canada



L'Église anglicane du Canada

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**'Holy Innocents'**

At Morning Prayer today in the crypt chapel at Lambeth Palace in London, England, Archdeacon Paul Feholey and I joined Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and the religious community housed at Lambeth in remembering the 132 schoolchildren and nine staff massacred in yesterday's vicious attack by the Taliban in Peshawar, Pakistan. As the world watches the anguish of grieving parents burying their children, we are left wondering how such evil intent to kill innocent children continues to stalk the earth.

In light of this tragedy it is hard not to remember that the birth of the Christ Child prompted Herod to order the slaughter of innocent children. It is a part of the Christmas story that is not widely told, but it reminds us that from his earliest days Our Lord would have been acquainted with grief and that ancient image of Rachel weeping for her children. (Matthew 2:13-18)

Our Lord is known for having taken children in his arms, blessing them and upholding their awe and wonder in the love and trust of those who care for them.

In his dear name let us pray for the Holy Innocents of Pakistan and the death they suffered. Let us pray for their parents and the pain they bear and for all who reach out to comfort them.

As we remember this horrific crime against humanity let us pray for all the children who have been the innocent victims of the terrorist activities that have marred this entire year. Let us look and labour for that day when among all people it can be said, "Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets." (Zechariah 8:4-5)

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