***The Fourth Day of Christmas is Confusing***

While people are busily returning ill-fitting Christmas gifts today, there are probably a few people humming “The Twelve Days of Christmas” trying to figure out what a “calling bird” is. Like all hymns and songs and carols there is often more to the story than what the final or common version may be, so for starters there are at least four different descriptions of the type of bird imagined in our song. Frankly what I like about the Song is that it may be the only thing left to remind the secular world that their view of Christmas starting with Halloween and ending on December 25 is too recent a view to even register in the history books, and that if you want to have a “count down” to Christmas buy an Advent Calendar rather than celebrate the modern back dating to Twelve Days before Christmas Day. So for those who enjoy history, “Four Calling Birds” could keep you busy today.

BUT the real issue today is that our traditional “Fourth Day of Christmas” - Holy Innocents today is not even on the radar screen for the secularists and the modern churches that are only several hundred years old who have junked Holy Days. Anglicans should know better - simply looking at the Church Kalendar could help - but alas...even some of our own churches ignore today. Even this Solemnity/Feast Day has an interesting past as it relates to the three largest Communions in Christendom, but instead of arguing about whose research is most authentic, let’s take a moment and consider how many people have lost their lives just for associating with Jesus. Indeed, Matthew’s Gospel gives us the basic facts about today, and even a superficial study of King Herod the Great will reveal what a troubled and evil man he was, but what about today? What can we do today to protect the innocence of children? Certainly, we realize how the culture in which we live espouses a protection of innocent children and yet the culture robs children of their innocence. Do you remember conversations with your classmates in elementary school that are like the ones that children today have? In a metaphorical way, King Herod the Great is alive and well in our culture today.

There is only one answer for parents today regarding the tragedy of the loss of innocence at such early ages - JESUS.

Parents and Grandparents:

Do you have family Prayer Time?

Do you read the Bible?

Do you give a religious book/gift to your children/grandchildren?

Do you allow your children to dictate church involvement and let them discover Christ on their own without any direction from you?

Do your children/grandchildren know your “story” about Jesus - what Jesus means to you and how He is the Lord of your life?

Have you written down your religious memories and given them as a gift to your children/grandchildren?

If someone walked into your house, would they know that it’s a Christian house?

If we are counting on the culture to teach the Faith to our children - we have already lost the battle. Holy Innocents Day is a good day to write down what you want your children/grandchildren to know, so that after they have lost their innocence, Jesus’ words through you may draw them back.