

FIRST READING

The sun of righteousness will shine on you.

A reading from the book of the prophet Malachi

3:19-20

The Lord says this:

“That day will surely come!
It will be like a red-hot furnace,
and its flames will burn up proud and evil people,
as though they were straw.
The Lord All-Powerful has promised
that not a branch or a root will be left.

“But if you honor my name,
justice will shine like the sun,
and its rays will bring healing.”

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

98:5-6, 7-8, 9

R. (see 9) The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice.

Make music for him on harps.
Play beautiful melodies!
Sound the trumpets and horns
and celebrate with joyful songs
for our Lord and King!

R. The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice.

Command the ocean to roar
with all of its creatures,
and the earth to shout
with all of its people.
Order the rivers
to clap their hands,
and all of the hills to sing together.

R. The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice.

Let them worship the Lord!
He is coming to judge
everyone on the earth,
and he will be honest and fair.

R. The Lord comes to rule the earth with justice.

SECOND READING

Do not give anyone food who refuses to work.

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 3:7-12

Brothers and sisters:

You surely know that you should follow our example.
We didn't waste our time loafing,
and we didn't accept food from anyone without paying for it.
We didn't want to be a burden to any of you,
so night and day we worked as hard as we could.

We had the right not to work,
but we wanted to set an example for you.
We also gave you the rule that if you don't work,
you don't eat.

Now we learn that some of you just loaf around and won't do any work,
except the work of a busybody.
So, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we ask and beg these people to settle down
and start working for a living.

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA

Luke 21:38

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Lift up your heads and see;
your redemption is near at hand.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

Your endurance will win you your life.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke

21:5-19

Some people were talking about the beautiful stones
used to build the temple
and about the gifts that had been placed in it.

Jesus said, "Do you see these stones?
The time is coming when not one of them will be left in place.
They will all be knocked down."

Some people asked, "Teacher, when will all this happen?
How can we know when these things are about to take place?"

Jesus replied:

"Don't be fooled by all those men
who will come and claim to be me.

They will say, 'I am Christ!'
and 'Now is the time!'

But don't follow them.

When you hear about wars and riots, don't be afraid.
These things will have to happen first,
but that is not the end.

"Nations will go to war against one another,
and kingdoms will attack each other.

There will be great earthquakes,
and in many places people will starve to death
and suffer terrible diseases.

All sorts of frightening things will be seen in the sky.

"Before all this happens,
you will be arrested and punished.

You will be tried in the Jewish meeting places and put in jail.
Because of me

you will be placed on trial before kings and governors.
But this will be your chance to tell about your faith.

"Don't worry about what you will say to defend yourselves.

I will give you the wisdom to know what to say.

None of your enemies will be able to oppose you
or to say that you are wrong.

"You will be betrayed by your own parents,
brothers, family, and friends.

Some of you will even be killed.
Because of me you will be hated by everyone.
But don't worry!
You will be saved by being faithful to me."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Thirty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time
Cycle C**

Prayer:

Dear Jesus,
Please help us to be ready for you when you return.
In your name we pray. Amen

Readings:

Malachi 3:19-20, Psalm 98:5-6, 7-8, 9, 2nd Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 3:7-12, Luke 21:5-19

Reflection/Discussion:

What do you do to get ready for school each morning?
What do you do to get ready for your soccer game?
What do you do to get ready to go to a party?
What do you do to get ready when a relative is coming to visit?
What do you do to get ready for Jesus?

Today's Gospel is scary. It tells us about the end of the world: the wars, earthquakes, starvation, and terrible diseases. It says that we will be betrayed, arrested, and maybe killed but that we are not to worry because if we are faithful we will be saved. (Thank goodness!)

What do you think heaven will be like? (Discuss with the children)

Jesus tells us that there will be no sickness or death. There will be no hatred or meanness. The food and drink will fill us forever. We will never be hungry. There will be only happiness and love. I picture it as a great party out by the ocean. The weather is perfect and everyone I have ever loved is there having fun! I want to make sure I get there. That is one party I don't want to miss!

How do we get to heaven? (Discuss with the children)

I saw a bumper sticker recently that said, "Jesus is coming. Look busy!" It reminded me of when I was in school and our teacher would leave the classroom for just a minute. She would always tell us to behave while she was gone but as soon as she left the room everyone would start talking and playing while one kid acted as the "look-out" watching for her to come back. As soon as the look-out saw her they would give the signal and the rest of us would quiet down and get back to work, pretending we had been perfect angels while she was away. She always knew, though, what we had been up to and we were all punished.

Jesus' second coming will be something like that. He was here on earth but left for a while, telling us to "be good" and carry on His work. However, not everyone has behaved. There are many "look-outs" telling us that He is coming back so we should "look busy" doing His work. One difference...when Jesus returns He will know who was goofing-off and who was doing what they were supposed to do. The ones who were living good lives will be rewarded with heaven.

This does not mean that we have to be perfect and it certainly won't be easy. Jesus knows that we will make mistakes but if we try to follow His path and are sorry when we mess-up, He will forgive us and we will still make it to the prize.

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Activity: Obstacle Course

Materials needed – two skeins of yarn (1 white, 1 any other color), candy, items to be used as obstacles, hand held games (and/or a portable DVD player with a movie), stop watch.

Preparation: Create an obstacle course where the children have to go over, under, around and through things. You can use tables, chairs, blankets, appliance boxes, cones, hula hoops, paper plates, etc. Using the white yarn, create a path through the course that leads to the candy bowl. Using the other colored yarn, create a path that will lead in various spots to hand held games/movie

Activity: Have 1 child at a time go through the obstacle course. Tell them there is a prize at the end if they follow the right path. Give them a set amount of time to complete the course.

After everyone has had a chance to go through talk about how the course is like life: not always easy, lots of twists and turns, etc but if you stay on the right path you are promised a reward: heaven/candy. If you follow another path, though, it may lead to fun but not to the ultimate prize. You can, however, get back on the right track and eventually get there. You have to remember, though, that we don't live forever so we have to be careful not to run out of time.