

[146] **THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME** **A**

**FIRST READING**

You have strayed from the way,  
you have caused many to stumble by your teaching.

A reading from the book of the prophet Malachi 2:8-10

**T**he Lord says this:

Although I am the Lord All-Powerful,  
you priests have turned from following me.  
Your teachings have led many people to do sinful things,  
and you have broken the promise that Levi made to me.

So I made everyone hate and despise you  
because you disobeyed me and did not treat all people alike.

Don't you know that we all have the same father?  
Didn't the one God create us all?  
So why do you cheat each other  
by breaking the promise that your ancestors made?

The word of the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

25:4-5abc, 6 and 7cd, 8-9

*R. (4a) Teach me your ways, O Lord.*

Show me your paths  
and teach me to follow;  
guide me by your truth  
and instruct me.  
You keep me safe.

*R. Teach me your ways, O Lord.*

Please, Lord, remember,  
you have always  
been patient and kind.  
Show how truly kind you are  
and remember me.

*R. Teach me your ways, O Lord.*

You are honest and merciful,  
and you teach sinners  
how to follow your path.  
You lead humble people  
to do what is right  
and to stay on your path.

*R. Teach me your ways, O Lord.*

## **SECOND READING**

We were eager to hand over to you not only the good news  
but our lives as well.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 2:7-9, 13

**B**rothers and sister:

We could have demanded help from you.  
After all, Christ is the one who sent us.  
We chose to be like children or like a mother nursing her baby.  
We cared so much for you,  
and you became so dear to us,  
that we were willing to give our lives for you  
when we gave you God's message.

My dear friends,  
you surely haven't forgotten our hard work and hardships.  
You remember how night and day we struggled to make a living,  
so that we could tell you God's message  
without being a burden to anyone.

We always thank God that you believed the message we preached.  
It came from him,  
and it is not something made up by humans.  
You accepted it as God's message,  
and now he is working in you.

The word of the Lord.

**ALLELUIA**

Matthew 23:9b, 10b

*R. Alleluia, alleluia.*

You have one Father, your Father in heaven;  
you have one teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ!

*R. Alleluia, alleluia.*

## **GOSPEL**

The scribes and the Pharisees do not practice what they preach.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew 23:1-12

**J**esus said to the crowds and to his disciples:

“The Pharisees and the teachers of the Law  
are experts in the Law of Moses.

So obey everything they teach you,  
but don't do as they do.

After all, they say one thing and do something else.”

“They pile heavy burdens on people's shoulders  
and won't lift a finger to help them.

Everything they do is just to show off in front of others.

They even make a big show  
of wearing Scripture verses on their foreheads and arms,  
and they wear big tassels for everyone to see.

They love the best seats at banquets  
and the front seats in the meeting places.

And when they are in the market,  
they like to have people greet them as their teachers.”

“But none of you should be called a teacher.

You have only one teacher,  
and all of you are like brothers and sisters.

Don't call anyone on earth your father.

All of you have the same Father in heaven.

None of you should be called the leader.

The Messiah is your only leader.”

“Whoever is the greatest should be the servant of the others.

If you put yourself above others,  
you will be put down.

But if you humble yourself,  
you will be honored.”

The gospel of the Lord.

## THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

### Prayer:

Dear Jesus,  
Please help me to show the world your love by the way I live my life.  
In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen

### Readings:

Malachi 2:8-10  
Psalm 25:4-5abc,6 and 7cd, 8-9  
Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 2:7-9, 13  
Matthew 23:1-12

### Reflection and Discussion:

Today we learn that the way we live our lives teaches about Jesus and the Gospel just as much as our words do.

Halloween is tomorrow. In the evening many of us will be dressing up, wearing masks or make-up and pretending to be someone else. What's interesting, though, is in actuality, most of the time we are wearing a mask to cover up who we really are. Instead of showing the world that we are Christians who love and serve the Lord, we wear a mask that shows the world something else; maybe how cool we think we are, how pretty, how popular, how smart, how athletic, how talented. None of those things are bad but for them to be the only thing the world sees is not fair because it does not teach them how we are supposed to live. It focuses on us instead of on God.

Jesus tells us that we must practice what we preach so if we say we are Christians and should love everyone then we must act that way and not just talk about it.

### Discussion:

1. How can we show that world that we are Christians?
2. Why is it hard to show the world that we are Christians?
3. How does it help others when they see us acting as a Christian?
4. How can we help each other be good Christian role models?

### Activity:

Materials Needed: Paper Masks – one for each child (the kind that only cover around the eyes. These can be bought cheaply at the dollar store or made with card board and elastic cord).

Divide the children into small groups. Ask them to wear their masks and create scenarios showing how they are not acting like their true Christian selves. Have them present their short skits to the class. Then have them remove their mask and create another scenario where they are acting as a Christian. Have them present these skits to the class.