



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

Children's Liturgy of the Word Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

The readings invite us to reflect on God's justice amid worldly trials, emphasizing active perseverance, joyful praise, and diligent work as we await the Lord's coming. The themes of divine judgment, communal responsibility, and personal endurance form a message of hope rooted in trust in God's providence.

They are not meant to frighten us, nor the children. However, Christians cannot avoid hardship in the world – we will face adversity. Our response is to embrace it with confidence in God's providential care.

We are urged to persevere in love and service, even when others grow cynical. True faith is steady, patient, and resilient, with the conviction that God's justice and mercy will ultimately triumph.

As we approach the close of the liturgical year, the message is clear: do not fear the end—be faithful in the present. Christ the King is coming, and His reign of peace begins in every heart that endures with hope and trust.

Background

Malachi 4:1-2 describes a coming time that acts like a purifying fire. It will burn away the proud and those who do evil, leaving them like burnt stubble, with no roots or branches. However, for those who honour God, this day brings the "sun of righteousness," which rises with healing in its rays. This passage tells how God intervenes to bring justice. God will reward the faithful with healing and new life, while also warning against ignoring evil.

Psalms 98:5-9 urges praise to the Lord in all ways and, of course, through music—lyres, trumpets, and horns—celebrating His marvellous victories. Creation joins with the creation in singing with joy as God comes to judge the earth with righteousness. This psalm transforms judgment into a cosmic celebration, showcasing God's faithful vindication to all nations and inviting humanity to join in the praise.

2 Thessalonians 3:7-12 Paul urges the Thessalonian community to imitate his example of diligent work, recalling how he and his companions laboured without idleness during their stay, so as not to burden others. He commands that those unwilling to work should not eat, addressing reports of idleness that disrupt community order. This exhortation promotes quiet, productive living in the Lord, emphasizing personal responsibility and mutual support as fruits of faith, rather than passive waiting for Christ's return.

Luke 21:5-19 Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple amid the awe of its admirers, warning of deceptive signs, wars, earthquakes, famines, and persecutions to come. Believers will face betrayal, even by family, and arrest for their witness, yet Jesus assures them of divine wisdom to counter accusers and promises that "not a hair of your head will perish." Endurance through these trials will secure their souls, framing eschatological upheavals as opportunities for faithful testimony rather than cause for despair.

Jesus calls us to be his witnesses with enduring trust. This message is vital today, calling for detachment from fleeting things and a commitment to Christ in the face of personal and global issues. While we can appreciate the beauty of earthly things, true beauty lies in living a life in this world that prepares us to live with God eternally.

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

Dismissal

Priest:

God teaches us in different ways. Sometimes, it means trusting Jesus in times of difficulty. Follow your leaders and learn how to trust Jesus more.

Once most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the CLoW location. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the location, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Welcome

The leaders assist the children in sitting and preparing. **Begin with the Sign of the Cross.** Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may recite the following prayer, or similar words.

Let us pray:

Pause for 5 – 10 seconds

Loving God, you are our strength and our hope. Help us to listen carefully and trust you in good and hard times.

Amen.

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, the Gospel is required.

Readings

FIRST READING

Malachi 4.1-2

A reading from the book of the prophet Malachi.

"See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up," says the Lord of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. "But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings."

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

R. The Lord is coming to judge the peoples with equity.

Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord. **R.**

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.
Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the Lord. **R.**

For the Lord is coming,
coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity. **R.**

SECOND READING

2 Thessalonians 3.7-12

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Thessalonians.

Brothers and sisters, you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labour we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you.

This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this command:

"Anyone unwilling to work should not eat." For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now, such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

GOSPEL

Ask the children to stand for the Gospel. Help them make the sign of the Cross over their forehead, lips and heart.

Luke 21.5-19

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, Jesus said, "As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down."

They asked him, "Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?"

And Jesus said, "Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is near!' Do not go after them. When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately."

Then Jesus said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven. "But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance, for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents, by brothers and sisters, and by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls."

The Gospel of the Lord.

The children respond, 'Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.'

Ask the children to sit.

RE-IMAGINED READINGS FOR CHILDREN

These readings are intended to be presented after the children have heard the original reading. Leaders may not have time to read all of them during the CLoW. Read the original reading, at a minimum, the Gospel, which has the highest priority, and then ask the children to sit down. You can then read them the re-imagined readings. If time permits, the first reading, the psalm and the Gospel readings have the highest priority. It is always essential to remain faithful to the original intent while adapting the readings to make them age-appropriate for children to understand.

FIRST READING

Malachi 4.1-2

A reading from the book of the prophet Malachi.

Picture a hot, dry day where everything feels wilted and tired, like when your favourite plant droops because it needs water. Long ago, a wise teacher named Malachi told God's people about a significant change that was about to come. He said that bad choices, like being mean or unfair, would one day face a fiery cleanup—much like a strong wind sweeping away dry leaves to make way for new growth. But don't worry! For those who love God and follow His ways with all their hearts, it's like the sun rising on a chilly morning. That warm light brings healing and joy, making everyone feel strong and happy again, just like jumping into a sunny playground after a long winter.

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 98.5-6, 7-8, 9

R. The Lord comes to judge the earth.

Sing praises to the Lord.

With trumpets and the horn
celebrate before
the King and Lord. **R.**

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.
Let the hills sing together for joy
at the presence of the Lord. **R.**

The Lord is coming
to judge the earth.
He will judge the world
with righteousness and justice. **R.**

SECOND READING

2 Thessalonians 3.7-12

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Thessalonians.

Think of your family or class as a busy team building something amazing, like a fort or a group project.

A leader named Paul wrote a letter to his friends, saying, "Watch how we do things! When we visited, we didn't just sit around—we worked hard day and night, earning our own snacks and helping out, so we wouldn't be a burden."

Paul explained that they could have asked for help, but they wanted to set a good example: if you're part of the team and able to join in, you should! He remembered telling them, "If someone doesn't want to help build, they shouldn't just eat the snacks."

Some friends were being lazy, chatting instead of working, like kids who play while others clean up. So Paul kindly said, "In Jesus' name, let's all work quietly and take care of ourselves, so we can share and help each other better."

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus and His friends were walking by a huge, sparkly temple, like the most beautiful castle made of shiny stones and treasures given to God. The friends said, "Wow, look at this!" But Jesus gently replied, "One day, all these stones will tumble down. It won't look the same anymore."

The friends got worried and asked, "When? How will we know?" Jesus said: "Be careful not to get tricked! Some friends might say, 'I'm the hero—follow me!' or 'The end is here!' Don't go with them. You'll hear about fights in the world, like storms or arguments between countries, but don't be scared.

He warned of earthquakes, hungry times, sicknesses, and amazing signs in the sky. "Before that, people might be mean to you because you love Me. They'll take you to tough places, but guess what? It's a chance to share my story! Don't worry about what to say—I'll give you brave words that no one can argue with."

"Stay strong! Not a single hair on your head will be lost forever. By keeping your heart steady like a brave explorer, you'll find true safety with God."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions. An excellent place to begin is the question:

What did you hear?

Today's readings are like a map: God promises sunny healing (first reading), calls us to praise and join forces (psalm and second reading), and gives us Jesus' courage to face our worries (Gospel).

In the first reading, God says that unfair things will be blown away like dry leaves in the wind. But for those who love Him and strive to do good, He will bring a bright sun that heals and strengthens them. It's like waking up to a sunny day after rain and feeling warm and happy inside. This means God is saying, "I see your good choices, and I will take care of you!"

When have you felt God's "sunshine" after something hard, like sharing a toy or forgiving a friend?

How does that make you feel strong or good?

In the second reading, Paul instructs us to work hard together, just as a team building a fort. We shouldn't just sit back while others do all the work. God designed us to help one another, whether it's sharing chores at home or assisting a classmate. This way, everyone feels included and strong.

What's one small way you can be a "team player" this week, like setting the table or drawing a picture for someone?

How does helping others make you feel closer to God?

The Gospel tells us that Jesus reassures His friends not to fear changes or unkind people. He promises to give them courage and protect them. He says that if they trust Him, not even a hair on their head will be lost. Even when things feel shaky or frightening, staying close to Jesus makes the journey worth it!

When something worries you, like a new school or a thunderstorm, how can you remember Jesus' promise?

Maybe pray or talk to a grown-up?

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith. Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: I believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. The leader may need to repeat and paraphrase the petition, concluding it with the cue for the response: 'We pray.' All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

Leader: Now, let's pray for our world, like Jesus taught. Our response will be:
Thank you, Lord.

1. For the Church: that we may always be a people of prayer who trust in God's love. We pray to the Lord. All: Thank you, Lord.
2. For our parents, teachers and everyone who helps us grow in faith. We pray to the Lord. All: Thank you, Lord.
3. For people who are sick, sad, or alone: that they may feel God's comfort and care. We pray to the Lord. All: Thank you, Lord.
4. For peace in the world and in our families: that we may be people who are kind and forgiving. We pray to the Lord. All: Thank you, Lord.
5. The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader: Loving God, hear our prayers. Help us to trust in You and to keep praying with faith and joy. Through Christ our Lord. All: Amen.

Leader: Our Liturgy of the Word is ending. Now, we'll join the grown-ups for the rest of Mass. Go with God's peace.

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and think about what they have heard and are now doing. Be mindful of children having difficulty finding their families.

Liturgy adapted for Children.

All rights reserved. Prepared by the Diocese of Hamilton, Liturgy Office, © 2025

Acknowledgments:

LECTIONARY SUNDAYS AND SOLEMNITIES

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops 2500 Don Reid Drive Ottawa, ON K1H 2J2