

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #159

READING I Malachi 3:19–20a

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Malachi

**Lo, the day is coming, blazing like an oven,
when all the proud and all evildoers will be stubble,
and the day that is coming will set them on fire,
leaving them neither root nor branch,
says the LORD of hosts.
But for you who fear my name, there will arise
the sun of justice with its healing rays.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 98:5–6, 7–8, 9 (see 9)

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

Sing praise to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and melodious song.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
sing joyfully before the King, the LORD.

Before the LORD, for he comes,
for he comes to rule the earth;
he will rule the world with justice
and the peoples with equity.

Let the sea and what fills it resound,
the world and those who dwell in it;
let the rivers clap their hands,
the mountains shout with them for joy.

Malachi = MAL-uh-ki

Be sure all are attentive before you begin.
Pause after speaking the exclamation "Lo,"
then continue with high energy.

These are hard truths spoken without malice,
but with conviction.

Holding back on this stern message deprives
listeners of an important truth.

"But . . ." is spoken with strength, but in a
comforting tone. God's fire can both destroy
and heal.

For meditation and context:

READING I

Malachi's prophecy opens with a terrifying image. On the coming day, "the day of the Lord, the great and terrible day" (3:23), the Lord of hosts will judge the proud and evildoers with a blazing fire. All that will be left of them will be mere stubble, with neither root nor branch for possible future growth. When the people of Israel envisioned this Day of the Lord, they most often looked at other nations as recipients of God's harsh judgment, while they themselves would be vindicated. However, Malachi's prophecies are a series of sharp indictments against

Israel, the people of the covenant who have acted corruptly and have not kept the faith of their ancestors. They are the proud and evildoers.

According to Malachi, when the people returned from exile and rebuilt the temple, their temple sacrifices were a sham. The priests did not lead the people in proper worship, and even accepted animals for oblation that were stolen, lame, and sick. The Lord's indictment extends beyond the priests, for the people have abandoned the Torah requirements: they have defrauded widows and orphans, have

turned aside the stranger, and do not fear the Lord of hosts.

The graphic metaphors of the Day of the Lord, along with the indictments against both priest and people, are intended to make them aware of their behavior and challenge them to turn from their sinful ways. There is hope for those who repent. The final verse in today's reading offers another vision, far different from the devastating judgment of the day of the Lord. For the ones who fear God's name, the sun of justice will arise with its healing rays. This will be the dawning of a new day

Thessalonians = thes-uh-LOH-nee-uhnz

Paul is all teacher today correcting and laying down the law. His tone immediately calls his listeners to attention!

Paul is just stating facts, not self-aggrandizing.

At his own expense, Paul offered a "model for [them]."

Paul is concerned about the disruption caused by the slackers in the community.

Paul claims the authority of Christ to order everyone to do their fair share.

Let the grand description of the Temple contrast with the fate Jesus predicts in the following lines.

Jesus takes no joy in this prediction.

for those who have listened to the prophetic word and have turned to the Lord.

READING II The Second Letter to the Thessalonians is from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. Thus, the advice to the community explaining "how one must imitate us" includes all three letter writers as models for the community to imitate. Paul himself used Christ as the model for how he should conduct himself, as he urged the Christians in Corinth, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). All who believe in Christ are to be co-

READING II 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians

Brothers and sisters:

You **know** how one must **imitate** us.

For we did **not act** in a **disorderly** way among you, **nor** did we eat food received free from **anyone**.

On the **contrary**, in **toil** and **drudgery**, **night** and **day** we **worked**, so as not to **burden** any of you.

Not that we do not have the **right**.

Rather, we wanted to **present** ourselves as a **model** for you, so that you might **imitate** us.

In **fact**, when we were **with** you,

we **instructed** you that if **anyone** was **unwilling** to work, **neither** should that one eat.

We hear that some **are conducting** themselves among you in a **disorderly** way,

by not keeping **busy** but **minding** the **business** of **others**.

Such people we **instruct** and **urge** in the **Lord Jesus Christ** to **work quietly**

and to **eat their own food**.

GOSPEL Luke 21:5-19

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

While **some** people were speaking about how the **temple** was adorned with **costly stones** and **votive offerings**,

Jesus said, "**All** that you **see** here—

the days will **come** when there will **not** be **left**

a **stone** upon **another stone** that will not be **thrown down**."

imitators of Christ, along with Paul and his fellow missionaries (Philippians 3:17).

As Jesus worked tirelessly in proclaiming the Kingdom of God, Paul and his coworkers also labored night and day for their communities. Presenting themselves as a model to imitate, they encouraged each member of the community to conduct themselves in a like manner. Such instruction was needed, since Paul had heard that some among them acted in a disorderly way. Making a clever play on words, Paul says that some people there were not keeping busy but instead were "busybod-

ies." Instructing further that they "work quietly," Paul implies that people should peacefully do their own work without meddling officiously in the affairs of others. In the verse immediately following today's reading, Paul summarizes his exhortation: "Brothers and sisters, do not be remiss in doing good." Such a way of life would imitate Paul, Silvanus, Timothy, and most importantly, Jesus himself.

GOSPEL With the magnificent temple in Jerusalem in the background, Jesus addresses the people