



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary



### Intermediate Session

Malachi 1:14-2:2, 8-10

Matthew 23:1-12

### Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God, may our church leaders show us how to put our faith into practice.

Help us to live our faith in all we say and do.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.



### Opening Life Reflection

The topic for today is the role of the Magisterium. For today's session provide a variety of magazines, scissors, glue, and poster paper to create a collage. To begin, invite the children to cut out modern status symbols, such as cloths, jewelry, hairstyles etc., and glue them on the poster paper. Discuss:

- Do status symbols show how successful a person is?
- What does it mean to be successful?
- Who teaches us about how Jesus wants us to live in the world?

Allow time for discussion. Jesus shows us that successful leaders are not concerned about popularity and status, they focus on serving others instead. The role of the Magisterium is to



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teach us how to live our faith in the world.

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Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to find out why good leaders should set a good example for others.

Read Malachi 1:14-2:2, 8-10.

Allow for silence.

### **Scripture Discussion Starters**

- What will happen to the leaders who do not set a good example for others?
- Who should the leaders serve?
- How are the people reminded that God is their father and creator?

In the gospel today, listen to Jesus tell the religious leaders to practice what they preach.

Read Matthew 23:1-12.

Allow for silence.

- Why does Jesus tell the people to do what the religious leaders say, but not what they do?
- How are the religious leaders concerned with prestige and status?
- What does Jesus teach about good leadership?

### **Scripture Background**

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Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings using the **Catechist**

**Background** section.

In today's Old Testament reading, the prophet Malachi directs his wrath against religious leaders who are self-serving. Malachi gives a message to the priests that they have a special responsibility to serve the people, and if they lead the people astray, God's judgment against them will be harsh. This passage reminds us to put God first and place our trust and hope in God alone.

In today's gospel Jesus tells his listeners to do what the religious leaders say, but not what they do. Jesus accepts the teaching authority of the religious leaders, but at the same time he points out that their words do not match their actions. Many of the scribes and Pharisees were overly concerned with power and status. Jesus tells his followers to forget about status and concentrate on serving others.

### Questions for Deeper Reflection

- Why is it important for leaders to practice what they preach?
- What does Jesus want religious leaders to focus on?
- How does Jesus lead?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the **Gospel in Life.**]

Doctrinal Discussion Starters

#### ***The Role of the Magisterium***

The term "Magisterium" is used in the Church to refer to the teaching authority of the hierarchy, that is, the pope and bishops. When the pope and the bishops act together as the college of bishops, they exercise full teaching authority over the Church.

The pope is supreme pastor and teacher. As successor of Peter and head of the college of bishops the pope has a special authority in the Church. Infallibility is the charism of the Holy Spirit given to the Church that guarantees that the official teaching of the pope, or the pope and bishops, on matters of faith and morals is without error.

The purpose of the Magisterium is to guide people in faith and morals. We are required to

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accept the teaching authority of the Church leadership today, just as Jesus accepted the teaching authority of the religious leaders of his time. Leaders in the Church have a great responsibility to guide the people and not lead them astray. The teaching authority is to be of service to Christ's flock—the people of God.

- What is the purpose of the Magisterium?
- Who does the Magisterium serve?
- How do we learn about the teachings of the Church?

#### Sacrament Connection

In the sacrament of Holy Orders, bishops, priests, and deacons are ordained to serve the people of God. They serve the Church by proclaiming and preaching God's Word, leading us in celebrating the sacraments, and guiding us in living the Gospel.

#### **The Gospel in Life**

How can you learn more about the teachings of the Church this week?

