### LSW

children

*city of Tanis of Indiana Jones fame (there really was such a city buried under the sands but no Ark), many other ruins buried under the sea or elsewhere.*

If there is time

*Run through some of the stories of persecution that the Church faced and is still facing today.*

*Each and every one of the apostles other than John was martyred. They all died in different ways in different countries. John was exiled to an island away from home.*

*During Roman times when the Church was young, people were required to sacrifice to Roman gods and get a certificate to say that they were good citizens. Many Christians who refused ended up being thrown to hungry lions in stadiums like the Coliseum in Rome, as a sporting spectacle with Romans cheering on the lions.*

*Many priests who tried to bring the Gospel to pagan people were killed, and most of these deaths were not even recorded – we only remember them as part of the multitude of countless and nameless saints on All Saints Day, which we just celebrated.*

*In Japan many years after St Francis Xavier baptised many Japanese, a new government decided to persecute Christians and all Catholic priests where either expelled from the country or were crucified. Many Catholic families though continue to pray in secret. They baptised & taught their children even though they had no priests. More than a century later, they re-joined the Church when Japan opened its doors once again to missionaries.*

*Today in China and Vietnam, Catholics and priests loyal to the Pope can be jailed by the government (and sometimes killed), as has happened in Eastern Europe before the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Church was and is constantly persecuted but has always trusted God and has flourished to this day.*

Year C

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Images**

Hope in God’s protection

**Points to note**

This can be a rather complex reading as it dwells on the prophecy of Jesus that the Temple will be destroyed and that his disciples will face numerous persecutions. These are all very adult concepts and hard for children to follow.

Leaving the first two paragraphs aside, I will focus on the last paragraph but not in terms of persecutions that children will not be able to follow, but to present them in children terms. None of us would enjoy being persecuted and while most children would never encounter it, children and adults do meet up with the fear that makes us avoid persecutions if possible.

If there is time, go through the stories of great persecutions that form the seed out of which the Church grew all over the world.

**Liturgy**

Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Stand erect, hold your heads high,

because your liberation is near at hand.

Alleluia!

Gospel

*Explain that in Jesus’ time, there was a huge Temple in Jerusalem where the Jews made their sacrifices to God. It was huge, 400m by 500m in size and the parts of the outer walls that was not decorated with metal plates, was snow-white in colour. That Temple was destroyed 37 years after Jesus and all there is left today are parts of a stone wall.*

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Luke

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Lk 21:5-19)

When some were talking about Temple, remarking how it was adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings, Jesus said, “All this things you are staring at now - the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another: everything will be destroyed.” And they to him this question: ”Master,” they said “when will this happen, then, and what sign will there that this is about to take place?”

“Take care not to be deceived,” he said “because many will come using my name and saying, ‘I am he’ and ‘the time is near at hand.’ Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened, for this is something that must happen but the end is not so soon.” Then he said to them, ”Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines here and there; there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

“But before all this happens, men will seize you and persecute you; they will hand you over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and bring you before kings and governors because of my name – and that would be your opportunity to bear witness. Keep this carefully in mind: you are not to prepare your defence, because I myself will give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated by all men on account of my name, but not hair on your head would be lost. Your endurance will win you your lives.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Dialogue**

Is there anything you are afraid of? *Lead the children from talking of being afraid of the dark to situations where they were fearful about what is going to happen – being lost somewhere big or someone getting them into trouble with the teacher. Discuss what the worst that could have happened in that situation. Remember though children nowadays have been well protected by their parents that some of them never had a fearful moment in their lives. If they do not have any appropriate experience, use a hypothetical one.*

Did the fear remain forever or did the fear pass eventually? How? *Discuss whether someone helped them get over the fear. Was it their parents, teachers, or friends? Was God involved in helping them get over their fears? Wasn’t it God who sent them someone to help them get over their fears?*

Now, looking back at that situation, was there any point in fearing? Was the worrying wasted? If it were to happen again, what would you do? Would you be fearful all over again or would you leave it to God to help you get out of the situation unharmed? *Gently bring them to an understanding that with God looking over them, there is no need to be so fearful. This is what hope is about.*

*Contrast this with the great cities of the past that now lies in ruins because people did not put their trust in God but believed in their own greatness. Starting with the Tower of Babel, there is the Temple of Jerusalem in this reading, the many Roman ruins all over Europe, the city of Pompeii buried when the volcano erupted, the city of Troy (no it was not a legend), the*