### LSW

children

Dick Whittington was a little boy whose only possession was a cat and he went away to London to look for work. He found a job as kitchen help. Although the master of the house was a kindly soul, the cook was nasty to him and used to beat him up. The cat was his only friend. So, Dick ran away with his cat. He stopped on a hill outside London where he heard the church bells of London tolling to him, “Come back, Dick Whittington, thrice Lord Mayor of London.” Dick went back to the house. One day, the master of the house whose ship was about to sail asked everyone in the house if they had anything to sell in the faraway land. Dick gave his cat, which became a treasure when it helped to clear out all the mice in the palace of a king in a faraway land. Dick became rich, married the daughter of the master of the house, and became the Lord Mayor of London three times.

Interesting little-known fact – if you go to London, near a train station called Archway, there is a small statue of a cat by the side of the road. It marks the spot where Dick heard the bells of London and turned round. London public archives do record a Richard Whittington, who was, unusually, Lord Mayor three times.

Year A

#### Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Images**

Good and bad co-existing together

**Points to note**

This reading is the second in a series of three parables that Jesus told. For the children’s readings, only the shorter versions in the Missal are used. The longer alternative versions contain Jesus’ explanation to the parables.

The message of this parable is abstract and revolves around concepts of justice that younger children may find it difficult to grasp. As such, it is recommended that the idea that good and bad co-exist in this world is broached with younger children, moving up when the children are ready, to concepts about the rewards that good and bad will have at the end of time. Care should be taken that justice should not be equated to vengeance in this context but aim to highlight the good rather than the bad.

**Liturgy**

Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

May the father of our Lord Jesus Christ

enlighten the eyes of our mind,

so that we can see what hope his call holds for us.

Alleluia!

##### Gospel

*As this parable follows on directly from that last week, you may wish to revisit the parable of the sower briefly before starting this reading.*

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Matthew

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Mt 13:24-43)

Jesus put a parable before the crowds, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner’s servants went to him and said, ‘Sir, was it not good seed you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?’ ‘Some enemy has done this’, he answered. And the servants said, ‘Do you want to weed it out?’ But he said, ‘No, when you weed out the darnel, you might pull out the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn.’”

This is the Word of the Lord

**Dialogue**

Does everyone know the story of Dick Whittington and his cat (*you may choose to use another children story where there was a person in trouble, a person who caused it and a person who helped)*? *You may need to retell this story as I have found many children and grown-ups who do not know the story.*

*Highlight in the story that Dick was troubled because of the nasty cook in the house but the master of the house was such a good man.*

Have you ever been troubled? *Discuss the times that children have been troubled in their everyday lives. Do not force the discussion and do not lead children to create a troubled scenario for the discussion. Gently highlight the ones where some one else was the cause of the troubles. Take care again that we do not paint this other person as the villainous one. Ask questions to take the story a little further. Was there some one else who came to help the child in his or her time of trouble? Spend more time on this aspect of the story and make sure the time spent on the good person who helped is more than that spent on the bad person who caused the trouble in the first place. In all the discussion, you may use the story of Dick Whittington and his cat, or any other story of your choosing for the context.*

*Link this up with the parable. Each person/object in the story has an analogy: The owner is God and the field is the world. The servants are his missionaries and the wheat is the good people. The enemy is Satan and the darnel is the bad people. Harvest time is judgement day with the barn being paradise and the fire is you-know-where.*

*The message is that in every story with a bad person, there is a good person in there as well. You may wish to play down the part about what happens to the bad people. That will lead on to a lot of questions that cannot be finished this Sunday. (Basically, the bad will be with us together with the good, all the way until judgement day – harvest time in the parable - then, judgement will separate the good from the bad)*