

YEAR 1, PROPER 20, MONDAY: EVENING PRAYER

For use with the First Lesson

Adapted from *The Vocabulary of the Church* (1960):

Ha'thach

HAY-thak

Ha'man

HAY-muhn

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Book of Esther

When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her that Mor'decai lay in the entrance of the king's gate in sackcloth, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mor'decai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. Then Esther called for Ha'thach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mor'decai to learn what this was and why it was. Ha'thach went out to Mor'decai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, and Mor'decai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Ha'man had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mor'decai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he

might show it to Esther and explain it to her and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people. And Ha'thach went and told Esther what Mor'decai had said. Then Esther spoke to Ha'thach and gave him a message for Mor'decai, saying, "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law; all alike are to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter that he may live. And I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days." And they told Mor'decai what Esther had said. Then Mor'decai told them to return answer to Esther, "Think not that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Then Esther told them to reply to Mor'decai, "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish."

Mor'decai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew

Jesus opened his mouth and taught his disciples, saying, “You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison; truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny.”

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.