

YEAR 1, PROPER 20, TUESDAY: EVENING PRAYER

For use with the First Lesson

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

Ha'man

HAY-muhn

Ze'resh

ZEE-resch

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Book of Esther

On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, opposite the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne inside the palace opposite the entrance to the palace; and when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she found favor in his sight and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the top of the scepter. And the king said to her, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom." And Esther said, "If it please the king, let the king and Ha'man come this day to a dinner that I have prepared for the king." Then said

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ESTHER 5:1–14; MATTHEW 5:27–37

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the king, “Bring Ha'man quickly, that we may do as Esther desires.” So the king and Ha'man came to the dinner that Esther had prepared. And as they were drinking wine, the king said to Esther, “What is your petition? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.” But Esther said, “My petition and my request is: If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition and fulfil my request, let the king and Ha'man come tomorrow to the dinner which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said.” And Ha'man went out that day joyful and glad of heart. But when Ha'man saw Mor'decai in the king's gate, that he neither rose nor trembled before him, he was filled with wrath against Mor'decai. Nevertheless Ha'man restrained himself, and went home; and he sent and fetched his friends and his wife Ze'resh. And Ha'man recounted to them the splendor of his riches, the number of his sons, all the promotions with which the king had honored him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and the servants of the king. And Ha'man added, “Even Queen Esther let no one come with the king to the banquet she prepared but myself.

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And tomorrow also I am invited by her together with the king. Yet all this does me no good, so long as I see Mor'decai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." Then his wife Ze'resh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mor'decai hanged upon it; then go merrily with the king to the dinner." This counsel pleased Ha'man, and he had the gallows made.

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew

Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his

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wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. Again you have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.”

The Reader concludes

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