

YEAR 1, PROPER 23, SATURDAY: EVENING PRAYER

For use with the First Lesson

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

Ecclesiasticus

uh-KLEE-zee-ASS-ti-kuhs

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from Ecclesiasticus

My son, perform your tasks in meekness; then you will be loved by those whom God accepts. The greater you are, the more you must humble yourself; so you will find favor in the sight of the Lord. For great is the might of the Lord; he is glorified by the humble. Seek not what is too difficult for you, nor investigate what is beyond your power. Reflect upon what has been assigned to you, for you do not need what is hidden. Do not meddle in what is beyond your tasks, for matters too great for human understanding have been shown you. For their hasty judgment has led many astray, and wrong opinion has caused their thoughts to slip. A stubborn mind will be afflicted at the end, and whoever loves danger will perish by it. A stubborn mind will be burdened by troubles, and the sinner will heap sin upon sin. The affliction of the proud has no

healing, for a plant of wickedness has taken root in him. The mind of the intelligent man will ponder a parable, and an attentive ear is the wise man's desire. Water extinguishes a blazing fire: so almsgiving atones for sin. Whoever requites favors gives thought to the future; at the moment of his falling he will find support.

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew

As John's disciples went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? Why then did you go out? To see a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, those who wear soft raiment are in kings' houses. Why then did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.' Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered

violence, and men of violence take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John; and if you are willing to accept it, he is Eli'jah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.