

**YEAR 1, PROPER 25, WEDNESDAY:
EVENING PRAYER**

For use with the First Lesson

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

Ecclesiasticus uh-KLEE-zee-AS-ti-kuhs

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from Ecclesiasticus

Curse the whisperer and deceiver, for he has destroyed many who were at peace. Slander has shaken many, and scattered them from nation to nation, and destroyed strong cities, and overturned the houses of great men. Slander has driven away courageous women, and deprived them of the fruit of their toil. Whoever pays heed to slander will not find rest, nor will he settle down in peace. The blow of a whip raises a welt, but a blow of the tongue crushes the bones. Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have fallen because of the tongue. Happy is the man who is protected from it, who has not been exposed to its anger, who has not borne its yoke, and has not been bound with its fetters; or its yoke is a yoke of iron, and its fetters are fetters of bronze; its

death is an evil death, and Hades is preferable to it. It will not be master over the godly, and they will not be burned in its flame. Those who forsake the Lord will fall into its power; it will burn among them and will not be put out. It will be sent out against them like a lion; like a leopard it will mangle them. See that you fence in your property with thorns, lock up your silver and gold, make balances and scales for your words, and make a door and a bolt for your mouth. Beware lest you err with your tongue, lest you fall before him who lies in wait.

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew

Then the disciples came and said to Jesus, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” And he answered them, to you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to him who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah

which says: ‘You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive. For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn for me to heal them.’ But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.