

YEAR 1, PROPER 25, FRIDAY: 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

A man of no understanding has vain and false hopes, and dreams give wings to fools. As one who catches at a shadow and pursues the wind, so is he who gives heed to dreams. The vision of dreams is this against that, the likeness of a face confronting a face. From an unclean thing what will be made clean? And from something false what will be true? Divinations and omens and dreams are folly, and like a woman in travail the mind has fancies. Unless they are sent from the Most High as a visitation, do not give your mind to them. For dreams have deceived many, and those who put their hope in them have failed. Without such deceptions the law will be fulfilled, and wisdom is made perfect in truthful lips. If one sacrifices from what has been wrongfully obtained, the offering is blemished; the gifts of the lawless are not acceptable.

The Most High is not pleased with the offerings of the ungodly; and he is not propitiated for sins by a multitude of sacrifices. Like one who kills a son before his father's eyes is the man who offers a sacrifice from the property of the poor. The bread of the needy is the life of the poor; whoever deprives them of it is a man of blood. To take away a neighbor's living is to murder him; to deprive an employee of his wages is to shed blood.

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew

Another parable Jesus put before the disciples, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the householder came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then has it weeds?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he said, 'No; lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with

them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

The Reader concludes The Word of the Lord.