**Year 2, Lent 3, Wednesday: Evening Prayer**

**For use with the First Lesson**

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

Gil'ead GIL-ee-ad

*The First Lesson. The Reader begins*

## A Reading from the Book of Jeremiah

My grief is beyond healing, my heart is sick within me. Hark, the cry of the daughter of my people from the length and breadth of the land: “Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King not in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with their foreign idols? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” For the wound of the daughter of my people is my heart wounded, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gil'ead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored? O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! O that I had in the desert a wayfarers’ lodging place, that I might leave my people and go away from them! For they are all adulterers, a company of treacherous men. They bend their tongue like a bow; falsehood and not truth has grown strong in the land; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know me, says the Lord. Let every one beware of his neighbor, and put no trust in any brother; for every brother is a supplanter, and every neighbor goes about as a slanderer. Every one deceives his neighbor, and no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies; they commit iniquity and are too weary to repent. Heaping oppression upon oppression, and deceit upon deceit, they refuse to know me, says the Lord. Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: “Behold, I will refine them and test them, for what else can I do, because of my people? Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks deceitfully; with his mouth each speaks peaceably to his neighbor, but in his heart he plans an ambush for him. Shall I not punish them for these things? says the Lord; and shall I not avenge myself on a nation such as this?”

*The Reader concludes* The Word of the Lord.

# The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

**A Reading from the**

**First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians**

Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” “Knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. If any one imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if one loves God, one is known by him. Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through being hitherto accustomed to idols, eat food as really offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol’s temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother’s falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall.

*The Reader concludes* The Word of the Lord.