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

*The First Lesson. The Reader begins*

## A Reading from the Book of Jeremiah

Thus shall you say to them: “The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens.” It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens. When he utters his voice there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and he makes the mist rise from the ends of the earth. He makes lightnings for the rain, and he brings forth the wind from his storehouses. Every man is stupid and without knowledge; every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols; for his images are false, and there is no breath in them. They are worthless, a work of delusion; at the time of their punishment they shall perish. Not like these is he who is the portion of Jacob, for he is the one who formed all things, and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance; the Lord of hosts is his name. Gather up your bundle from the ground, O you who dwell under siege! For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I am slinging out the inhabitants of the land at this time, and I will bring distress on them, that they may feel it.” Woe is me because of my hurt! My wound is grievous. But I said, “Truly this is an affliction, and I must bear it.” My tent is destroyed, and all my cords are broken; my children have gone from me, and they are not; there is no one to spread my tent again, and to set up my curtains. For the shepherds are stupid, and do not inquire of the Lord; therefore they have not prospered, and all their flock is scattered. Hark, a rumor! Behold, it comes!—a great commotion out of the north country to make the cities of Judah a desolation, a lair of jackals. I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps. Correct me, O Lord, but in just measure; not in thy anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

*The Reader concludes* The Word of the Lord.

**For use with the Second Lesson**

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

Ce'phas SEE-fuhs

# The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

**A Reading from the**

**First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians**

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Ce'phas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing this to secure any such provision. For I would rather die than have any one deprive me of my ground for boasting.

*The Reader concludes* The Word of the Lord.