## Year 2, Proper 20, Sunday: Morning Prayer

*The First Lesson. The Reader begins*

## A Reading from the Book of Judith

When Ach′ior had finished saying this, all the men standing around the tent began to complain; Holofer′nes’ officers and all the men from the seacoast and from Moab insisted that he must be put to death. “For,” they said, “we will not be afraid of the Israelites; they are a people with no strength or power for making war. Therefore let us go up, Lord Holofer′nes, and they will be devoured by your vast army.” When the disturbance made by the men outside the council died down, Holofer′nes, the commander of the Assyrian army, said to Ach′ior and all the Moabites in the presence of all the foreign contingents: “And who are you, Ach′ior, and you hirelings of E′phraim, to prophesy among us as you have done today and tell us not to make war against the people of Israel because their God will defend them? Who is God except Nebuchadnez′zar? He will send his forces and will destroy them from the face of the earth, and their God will not deliver them—we the king’s servants will destroy them as one man. They cannot resist the might of our cavalry. We will burn them up, and their mountains will be drunk with their blood, and their fields will be full of their dead. They cannot withstand us, but will utterly perish. So says King Nebuchadnez′zar, the lord of the whole earth. For he has spoken; none of his words shall be in vain.” Then Holofer′nes ordered his slaves, who waited on him in his tent, to seize Ach′ior and take him to Bethu′lia and hand him over to the men of Israel. So the slaves took him and led him out of the camp into the plain, and from the plain they went up into the hill country and came to the springs below Bethu′lia. When the men of the city saw them, they caught up their weapons and ran out of the city to the top of the hill, and all the slingers kept them from coming up by casting stones at them. However, they got under the shelter of the hill and they bound Ach′ior and left him lying at the foot of the hill, and returned to their master. Then the men of Israel came down from their city and found him; and they untied him and brought him into Bethu′lia and placed him before the magistrates of their city, who in those days were Uzzi′ah the son of Micah, of the tribe of Simeon, and Chabris the son of Gothon′iel, and Charmis the son of Mel′chiel. They called together all the elders of the city, and all their young men and their women ran to the assembly; and they set Ach′ior in the midst of all their people, and Uzzi′ah asked him what had happened. He answered and told them what had taken place at the council of Holofer′nes, and all that he had said in the presence of the Assyrian leaders, and all that Holofer′nes had said so boastfully against the house of Israel. Then the people fell down and worshiped God, and cried out to him, and said, “O Lord God of heaven, behold their arrogance, and have pity on the humiliation of our people, and look this day upon the faces of those who are consecrated to thee.” Then they consoled Ach′ior, and praised him greatly. And Uzzi′ah took him from the assembly to his own house and gave a banquet for the elders; and all that night they called on the God of Israel for help.

*The Reader concludes* The Word of the Lord.

*The Second Lesson. The Reader begins*

**A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew**

Jesus opened his mouth and taught them, saying, “Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

*The Reader concludes* The Word of the Lord.