

YEAR 2, EASTER 4, WEDNESDAY: EVENING PRAYER

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Wisdom of Solomon

The righteous man who has died will condemn the ungodly who are living, and youth that is quickly perfected will condemn the prolonged old age of the unrighteous man. For they will see the end of the wise man, and will not understand what the Lord purposed for him, and for what he kept him safe. They will see, and will have contempt for him, but the Lord will laugh them to scorn. After this they will become dishonored corpses, and an outrage among the dead for ever; because he will dash them speechless to the ground, and shake them from the foundations; they will be left utterly dry and barren, and they will suffer anguish, and the memory of them will perish. They will come with dread when their sins are reckoned up, and their lawless deeds will convict them to their face. Then the righteous man will stand with great confidence in the presence of those who have afflicted him, and those who make light of his labors. When they see him, they will be shaken with dreadful fear, and they will be amazed at his unexpected salvation. They will speak to one another in repentance, and in

anguish of spirit they will groan, and say, “This is the man whom we once held in derision and made a byword of reproach—we fools! We thought that his life was madness and that his end was without honor. Why has he been numbered among the sons of God? And why is his lot among the saints? So it was we who strayed from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness did not shine on us, and the sun did not rise upon us. We took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and destruction, and we journeyed through trackless deserts, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What has our arrogance profited us? And what good has our boasted wealth brought us?”

The Reader concludes The Word of the Lord.

For use with the Second Lesson

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

Philip'pi

fi-LIP-pigh

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the

First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our visit to you was not in vain; but though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philip'pi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the face of great opposition. For our appeal does not spring from error or uncleanness, nor is it made with guile; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please men, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never used either words of flattery, as you know, or a cloak for greed, as God is witness; nor did we seek glory from men, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of

God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. For you remember our labor and toil, brethren; we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you, while we preached to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our behavior to you believers; for you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

The Reader concludes The Word of the Lord.