

## LENT 1, THURSDAY: MASS

*The First Lesson. The Reader begins*

### **A Reading from the Book of Esther**

Esther the queen, seized with a deathly anxiety, fled to the Lord; she took off her splendid apparel and put on the garments of distress and mourning, and instead of costly perfumes she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she utterly humbled her body, and every part that she loved to adorn she covered with her tangled hair. And she prayed to the Lord God of Israel, and said: “O my Lord, thou only art our King; help me, who am alone and have no helper but thee, for my danger is in my hand. Ever since I was born I have heard in the tribe of my family that thou, O Lord, didst take Israel out of all the nations, and our fathers from among all their ancestors, for an everlasting inheritance, and that thou didst do for them all that thou didst promise. And now we have sinned before thee, and thou hast given us into the hands of our enemies. Remember, O Lord; make thyself known in this time of our affliction, and give me courage, O King of the gods and Master of all dominion! Put eloquent speech in my mouth before the lion, and turn his heart to hate the man who is

fighting against us, so that there may be an end of him and those who agree with him. But save us by thy hand, and help me, who am alone and have no helper but thee, O Lord.”

*The Reader concludes*

The Word of the Lord.

## **Psalm 138**

*The Reader says*

Please join me in reading Psalm 138, found in the red Prayer Book on page 793.

*(The Reader repeats the above information as needed.)*

- 1 I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart; \*  
before the gods I will sing your praise.
- 2 I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your Name, \*  
because of your love and faithfulness;
- 3 For you have glorified your Name \*  
and your word above all things.
- 4 When I called, you answered me; \*  
you increased my strength within me.

- 5 All the kings of the earth will praise you, O  
LORD,\*  
when they have heard the words of your mouth.
- 6 They will sing of the ways of the LORD, \*  
that great is the glory of the LORD.
- 7 Though the LORD be high, he cares for the  
lowly;\*  
he perceives the haughty from afar.
- 8 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep  
me safe; \*  
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of  
my enemies;  
your right hand shall save me.
- 9 The LORD will make good his purpose for me; \*  
O LORD, your love endures for ever;  
do not abandon the works of your hands.

*In Lent there is no verse before the Gospel. The Reader says  
Please stand for the Gospel.*

*The Reader then returns to his or her seat.*

## **The Holy Gospel**

*The Minister says*

The Lord be with you.

*People*

And also with you.

*Minister*

The Holy Gospel of our Lord  
Jesus Christ according to  
Matthew.

*People*

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus said to the crowds, “Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.”

*The Minister says*

The Gospel of the Lord.