

JULY 4, INDEPENDENCE DAY: MORNING PRAYER

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from Ecclesiasticus

A wise magistrate will educate his people, and the rule of an understanding man will be well ordered. Like the magistrate of the people, so are his officials; and like the ruler of the city, so are all its inhabitants. An undisciplined king will ruin his people, but a city will grow through the understanding of its rulers. The government of the earth is in the hands of the LORD, and over it he will raise up the right man for the time. The success of a man is in the hands of the LORD, and he confers his honor upon the person of the scribe. Do not be angry with your neighbor for any injury, and do not attempt anything by acts of insolence. Arrogance is hateful before the LORD and before men, and injustice is outrageous to both. Sovereignty passes from nation to nation on account of injustice and insolence and wealth. The beginning of man's pride is to depart from the LORD; his heart has forsaken his Maker. For the beginning of pride is sin, and the man who clings to it pours out abominations. Therefore the LORD brought upon them extraordinary afflictions, and destroyed them

utterly. The LORD has cast down the thrones of rulers, and has seated the lowly in their place. The LORD has plucked up the roots of the nations, and has planted the humble in their place. The LORD has overthrown the lands of the nations, and has destroyed them to the foundations of the earth. He has removed some of them and destroyed them, and has extinguished the memory of them from the earth. Pride was not created for men, nor fierce anger for those born of women.

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Letter of James

Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and the late rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble, brethren, against one another, that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the doors. As an example of suffering and patience, brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.