

**ESTHER APPROACHES THE KING**

**ESTHER 5:1-2**

***+ ADDITION D***

***[Vulgate 15:4-19]***

**<sup>1</sup>On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, opposite the royal apartment. The king was sitting on his royal throne inside the palace opposite the entrance to the palace.**

**<sup>2</sup>As soon as the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won his favour and he held out to her the golden sceptre that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the top of the sceptre.**

*<sup>4</sup>On the third day, when she ended her prayer, she took off the garments in which she had worshipped, and arrayed herself in splendid attire. <sup>5</sup>Then, looking absolutely radiant, after invoking the aid of the all-seeing God and Saviour, she took two maids with her; <sup>6</sup>on one she leaned gently for support, <sup>7</sup>while the other followed, carrying her train.*

*<sup>8</sup>She was radiant with perfect beauty, and she looked happy, like one who knows she is loved, but her heart was frozen with fear.*

*<sup>9</sup>When she had passed through all the doors, she stood before the king. He was seated on his royal throne, clothed in the full array of his majesty, all covered with gold and precious stones – a most formidable sight! <sup>10</sup>Lifting his face, flushed with splendour, he looked at her in fierce anger. The queen faltered, and turned pale and faint, and collapsed on the maid who went in front of her.*

The Hebrew Version simply states that Esther won the king's favour.

Addition D in the Septuagint heightens the drama.

Esther had done all she can, but her beauty is not enough to win her favour with the king. Confronted by his 'fierce anger' she concludes that her worst fears are sure to eventuate. Convinced that her life is forfeited, she collapses.

Verse 8 is the high point of the Greek Version of Esther. God (never mentioned in the Hebrew Version) intervenes to change the king's response from one of fierce anger that Esther has dared to come uninvited to one of affection and concern. On her own Esther cannot prevail. Nothing is impossible for God.

Rather than admit that she fainted through fear, she flatters the king by saying that his splendour overwhelmed her.

*<sup>11</sup>Then God changed the spirit of the king to gentleness, and in alarm he sprang from his throne and took her in his arms until she came to herself. He comforted her with soothing words, and said to her, <sup>12</sup>"What is it, Esther? I am your husband. Take courage; <sup>13</sup>You shall not die, for our law applies only to our subjects. Come near."*

*<sup>14</sup>Then he raised the golden sceptre and touched her neck with it; <sup>15</sup>he embraced her, and said, "Speak to me."*

*<sup>16</sup>She said to him, "I saw you, my lord, like an angel of God, and my heart was shaken with fear at your glory. <sup>17</sup>For you are wonderful, my lord, and your countenance is full of grace."*

*<sup>18</sup>And while she was speaking, she fainted and fell. <sup>19</sup>Then the king was agitated, and all his servants tried to comfort her.*

