

Guidelines for Lectors

Introductory Remarks

“The Word of God as proclaimed in the sacred Scripture lies at the heart of our Christian life and is integral to all our liturgical celebrations.” (Book of Blessings, 1827)

The proclamation of the Word of God is truly a ministry in the Church. Lectors bring the living Word of God to the liturgical assembly. In and through them God speaks to the gathered faithful. The ministry of the Word, therefore, is treated seriously and with great dignity.

Ministers of the Word

According to the ancient tradition and the teaching of the Church, the readings other than the Gospel are proclaimed by lay ministers called lectors. The practice of ordained ministers proclaiming these readings is improper. (Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass #51).

The Gospel is ordinarily proclaimed by the deacon. In the absence of a deacon, the priest proclaims the Gospel. In concelebrations, one other than the presiding celebrant proclaims the Gospel.

(Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass #49, 50; General Instruction of the Roman Missal #59).

Preparation for Reading

The Word of God is not merely read during the liturgy. It is **proclaimed**. Proclaiming the Word of God can be a powerfully prayerful experience for you — one that you share with the entire assembly. The key to effective proclamation lies in understanding the meaning, the lesson, which is contained within the words you are about to read.

Spend some time in prayer and contemplation during the week before you will be reading. Familiarize yourself with all three readings, so that you understand the tone and the flow of the entire Liturgy of the Word for that Sunday. Review the commentaries in your Workbook for Lectors and Readers, which will help you understand something about the purpose of the author and the historical setting out of which the passage arises.

Once you have an understanding of the content of the reading, begin to consider the tone and the pace at which it should be read. Read through the reading several times aloud. Decide where it is most appropriate to pause, and for how long. Review any words that you find difficult to pronounce (There is a pronunciation guide in the workbook. When in doubt — ask!) Become so

familiar with the reading that it would appear you know it almost by heart. This will let you feel comfortable enough to lift your eyes from the page occasionally, to make eye contact with the assembly.

Before Mass

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass in order to have sufficient time to vest and prepare for the service.
- Check the lectionary on the ambo to be sure that it is open to the correct readings for the day. This is also a good time to adjust the microphone to a position that is comfortable for you.
- If there are multiple options for the readings check with the celebrant to see if he has a preference as to which readings should be used or if a shorter or longer form should be proclaimed.

Introductory Rites

- In the procession to the altar, when no deacon is present, the lector may carry the *Book of the Gospels* elevated slightly (about shoulder height). In that case, the lector walks in front of the priest, otherwise with the other ministers.
- Upon reaching the altar, the lector makes a profound bow with the other ministers. If the lector is carrying the

Book of the Gospels, the lector does not bow but goes around to the back of the altar and places the *Book of the Gospels* on the center of the altar.

- Then, the lector takes a place in the choir stall with the other ministers.

Liturgy of the Word

- Following the opening prayer, the lector proceeds to the ambo and proclaims the first reading and returns to his/her place in the choir stall.
- If there is no cantor, the lector may also sing or recite the responsorial psalm after the first reading .
- After the responsorial song, the lector returns to the ambo and proclaims the second reading.
- If the *Book of the Gospels* is to be used, at the conclusion of the second reading the lector closes the lectionary and places it on the shelf beneath the ambo.
- If there is no deacon or cantor to do so, the lector may announce the intentions. In that case proceed to the ambo as the Creed is concluded, or in the case where the creed is not recited, as the priest introduces the prayer of the faithful.
- If there is to be a second collection, that is announced only

after the priest offers the closing prayer of the general intercessions.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- If needed, the lector should be ready to help with the presentation of gifts at the offertory.
- Though it is preferred that individual perform only one ministry at any given liturgy, all lectors should be alert and ready to assist at the offertory or with the Eucharist if they have been trained and properly mandated.
- At the conclusion of the Mass, the lector does not process with the *Book of the Gospels*. The Lectionary is never carried in procession. The lector may join in the procession at the end of Mass in the same order as in the procession to the altar.

After Mass

- After the recessional, please return to the ambo to retrieve the Book of the Gospels and return the Lectionary to its place on the ambo.
- Please return the vestments to the appropriate place in the sacristy.



The Lord GOD has given me a well-trained tongue, That I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear (Is. 50:4)

St. Lambert Parish Guidelines for Lectors