

GUIDELINES FOR LECTORS

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Christ Our Redeemer Catholic Church

The purpose of the lector's ministry is to proclaim the Word of God in the liturgical assembly. This proclamation must be done clearly and with understanding so that all gathered in worship may be nurtured and grow as they are fed from the table of God's Word. In proclaiming the Scriptures, the lector becomes a voice through which the Spirit speaks in the worshiping community. When lectors are preparing to proclaim the Word of God, they are not simply practicing for a delivery of the text, but conforming themselves to the Holy Spirit who speaks through them. "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."

As ministers of the Word, lectors must allow the Scriptures to be deeply rooted in their lives. This requires more than a passing familiarity with the printed word. It also demands prayerful study and consultation with various resources that will assist in the comprehension of the sacred text. The lector must also practice the skills of public proclamation. Because of the dignity, importance and responsibility of this ministry, pastors and those charged with the responsibility of coordinating parish worship, should take great care in assessing both the spiritual maturity and abilities of those who aspire to this ministry. No one should exercise this ministry who has not been properly prepared.

Pastoral Consideration in Selection of Lectors

A person with a strong faith and a knowledge and command of communication skills can be one who proclaims the Word of God. In the selection of candidates and in review of those exercising this ministry, the following considerations may be helpful:

- ◆ Received the Sacraments of Initiation of the Church (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) and regularly attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and frequently participate in the sacraments.
- ◆ Should have gifts and skills in public communication and reading.
- ◆ Should have a love and reverence for the Sacred Scriptures and engage in some form of regular study of them.
- ◆ Understand the importance of this ministry and appreciate the need for study and preparation as well as the ministry's connection to Christian life and practice.

Formation Requirements

Candidates for the ministry of lector should complete an adequate program of preparation and instruction. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (3rd typical edition) states that those who serve in this ministry "should be truly suited to perform this function and should receive careful preparation, so that the faithful, by listening to the readings from the sacred texts, may develop in their hearts a warm and living love for Sacred Scripture."

At this parish a person who wishes to read at Mass must participate in a program of spiritual and practical formation in their lives. Knowledge of the Bible and love of scripture is essential for those who enter into this sacred ministry. It is the responsibility of the Lector Coordinator to see that those selected are properly prepared before they undertake the ministry. After preparation, the person will be commissioned by the pastor to read at Mass.

Termination

Termination will be effective when a lector moves from the parish in which they were commissioned. Termination can be any time by the Bishop in consultation with the pastor or by the pastor himself for good reason. Former Readers must go through formation and be re-commissioned.

Lector Specific Responsibilities

- ◆ Prepare for the reading before Mass. Make use of the Lector Workbooks found in the Sacristy, and double check difficult words using the Lectors Pronunciation Guide also found in the Sacristy.
- ◆ Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass time. Sign in on the ministry roster located in the Brides' Room.
- ◆ Lectors should dress in a way that is dignified and shows respect for the Blessed Sacrament, the assembled community and the function they are carrying out.

- ◆ Clothes should be clean and neat, modest in appearance and coverage of the body and reflect the importance of the celebration of the Eucharist. Generally this is done by dressing in a more formal fashion.
- ◆ As a minister, an important principle that must always be followed is that nothing should be worn which would draw attention to yourself or be distracting to the community.

Lector in Liturgical Celebration

The main function of the Reader is to take part in the Liturgy of the Word. The Liturgy of the Word takes place at the Ambo, and consists of:

- ◆ A first Reading, normally from the Hebrew Scriptures, and will be read from the Lectionary.
- ◆ A responsorial Psalm, normally sung by the Cantor.
- ◆ On Sundays and Holy Days, a second reading taken from the New Testament, (with exception of the four Gospels) typically an Epistle (letter) of Paul or one of the other New Testament documents.
- ◆ Since the Lectionary and the Book of the Gospels are signs of God's presence, care should be taken to ensure that they are worthy and beautiful. Worship publications, particularly missalettes, should not be substituted for these books.
- ◆ It is appropriate that, as a member of the assembly, the lector be seated in the assembly.
- ◆ In approaching the ambo and returning to one's place in the assembly, the reader should walk in an unhurried and dignified manner. The lector reverences the altar with a profound bow as he/she passes in front of it.
- ◆ The lector should wait until the assembly is seated and quiet before beginning the reading.
- ◆ When announcing the readings, never provide ad lib introductions. Use the approved format. Simply announce the reading as written, for example, "A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah."
- ◆ During the actual proclamation of the Liturgy of the Word, the lector should remember that God is speaking in the reading. Christ is present in His Word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church.
- ◆ Don't look around at the assembly as if these were your personal words.
- ◆ Do not rush the reading. Take your time between sentences and annunciate so that all can understand.
- ◆ When the reading is finished, simply say, "The Word of the Lord" which is the proper translation of Verbum Domini for the Latin Rite. The reader should pause and look at the assembly to engage them in responding "Thanks be to God."
- ◆ Following the proclamation of the Scripture reading a period of sacred silence is to be observed. A 20-30 second pause allows the assembly to reflect in the Word that has been proclaimed. The lector should stand at the ambo with head bowed during this time. Then return to seat in assembly showing a profound bow to the altar not ambo.
- ◆ If there is no Cantor, the first reader will read the Responsorial Psalm. In this case it should be recited in such a way that it is particularly suited to fostering meditation on the Word of God.
- ◆ After the Responsorial Psalm, the second reader approaches the Ambo in the same manner as the first and follow the same procedure at the conclusion of the reading.

Lectors Needed

All Sunday and Holy Day Masses require at least one reader, but two are preferred.

Scheduling of Lectors

The Lector Coordinator will create the schedule. Much effort is applied to meet personal requests such as preferred Mass Times or deconflicting other schedules. However, if you are scheduled either through error or during a period in which you cannot attend that Mass, it is the responsibility of the Reader to find a replacement from the list. Do not call the Lector coordinator to have him find a replacement. Schedules are developed during the middle of the month for the following two months. If you will be unavailable during the ensuing two months, inform Mass captain and ministry coordinator. Deadline dates for schedule inputs is the middle of the following months:

- September for October-November
- November for December-January
- January for February-March
- March for April-May
- May for June-July
- July for August-September

Please ensure the Lector Coordinator has your current phone number and e-mail address for coordination and distribution purposes



Lector Coordinator
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