

Guidelines for Lectors

“When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God Himself speaks to His people, and Christ, present in His own word, proclaims the Gospel.”

--General Instruction of the Roman Missal

I. Introduction:

The proclamation of the Word of God is truly a service to the Church. Lectors bring the living Word of God to the liturgical assembly. The ministry of the Word should, therefore, be treated seriously and with great dignity. To serve in this capacity is a privilege, not a right!

The Word of God is not merely read during the liturgy. It is proclaimed, yet not with theatrical show. Effective proclamation involves the delivery of the message with clarity, conviction, and appropriate pace.

Part of ministry is to help “set the pace” for all who take part in the Mass. What you do there and how you do it can help other people to understand the Mass better and make their love for God stronger. Our involvement in the Mass serves as an example and an encouragement for others to be actively involved. At Mass, our actions and appearance show that we are proud to serve.

II. Requirements:

- Be at least 16 years old;
- Be a Catholic who has received First Holy Communion and Confirmation, and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be assumed.

II. Expectations:

A. You should be at the Church at least 15 minutes before Mass begins. At this time, take a few minutes to pray in church, asking the Lord to help you fulfill your ministry well, and to set a good example for the other parishioners. Afterward, confer with the other ministers in the vestibule to ensure that your respective ministries are carried out smoothly.

B. Upon arrival please sign in. Since these sign-in sheets will be used as an attendance record, please make sure your signature is legible. If you are consistently absent you may be asked to step down from the ministry. If you inform the ministry head of your special request before the 15th of the prior month, it will be honored, thereby, negating the need for a substitute. You are expected to fulfill your obligation to serve at your assigned time or find your own replacement if you cannot make it for any reason.

C. All Lectors should maintain a spirit of appropriate reverence. This reverence is shown by your demeanor, your manner, and your dress. The lector should never do anything to draw attention to herself/himself.

It is important that Lectors dress in an appropriate fashion to show reverence to God and, to set an example to the congregation.

Dress Code: No jeans, shorts or Tennis Shoes. Minimum dress code is business casual.

- For men, appropriate attire would include either a suit or sports jacket and dress slacks. A necktie, while most appropriate and encouraged, is not required. Jeans, shorts, open shirts, sports jerseys, sneakers, and other such casual dress are inappropriate and do not meet the standards for reading at Mass. A nice polo shirt and dress slacks are permitted in warmer weather.
- For women, appropriate attire would include dresses, dress slacks, skirts and blouses (or sweaters) and suits. Dresses and skirts should be modest in length (i.e. to the knee). A modest neckline is appropriate for dresses, sweaters, and blouses. Short skirts or dresses, revealing blouses or shorts of any length do not meet the standards for reading at Mass.

If you are willing to fill in at the last minute, please come dressed appropriately.

III. Procedures:

A. Set aside time to review the reading prior to your arrival at Church. Your lector workbook will provide you with the material you need to fully understand, appreciate, and present the reading.

B. Before Mass, verify that the Lectionary is on the ambo opened to the first reading. Familiarize yourself with the Prayer of the Faithful if necessary.

C. The Presider will usually assemble the ministers for the Mass for a brief prayer. After the prayer, line up directly behind the altar servers for the procession. Obtain a hymnal from the pews so you may sing during the procession. Process in with the other lector. When you reach the sanctuary steps, genuflect and then move to your pew. If you are physically unable to genuflect, you may bow from the waist, but both priests desire genuflection when at all possible.

D. At a Mass where there is no Deacon, Lector 1 will carry the Book of the Gospels. Lector 2 will walk behind him/her at the processional. The Book of the Gospels is a visible symbol of God's Word and should always be treated with reverence. It is held with both hands (front forward), about head high. When the lector reaches the altar steps, he or she does not genuflect or bow but carries the Book up the steps and places it on the altar and then proceeds to his/her seat.

F. When the Presider completes the opening prayer and is seated, Lector 1 proceeds to the ambo to proclaim the first reading, pausing first to bow to the altar. (Fr. Linsky suggests that the bow be somewhere between a head nod and a full from the waist bow.) When finished, he/she places the ribbon at the correct place for the second reading. Lector 1 then returns to his/her seat.

G. At the end of the responsorial psalm, Lector 2 will proceed to the ambo for the second reading, again pausing to bow to the altar. Upon completion of the second reading, he/she places the Lectionary on the shelf below and returns to his/her seat.

H. The readings should be proclaimed slowly and clearly. Announce the Scripture reading simply as it is stated in the reading, i.e. "A

reading from the Prophet Isaiah,” etc. Do not add anything like “the first reading is ...” At the conclusion of the readings, pause slightly before saying, “The Word of the Lord.” Again, no other words are added.

I. At a Mass where there is no Deacon, toward the end of the Creed, Lector 2 proceeds to the Ambo for the Prayer of the Faithful. (Lector 2 should be at the ambo slightly before the end of the Creed.) After the Presider concludes the introduction, clearly and slowly read each petition. Upon completion of the intercessions, the lector remains standing at the Ambo until the Presider completes the concluding prayer. When the Presider is finished, the lector may return to his/her pew. When a Deacon is present, Lector 2 will have no additional duties. When lectors are finished with their readings, they may choose to sit with family members if they prefer.

J. Please stay in your place until the final hymn is completed. It would also be good to give some minutes to prayer of thanksgiving after Mass, again remembering that you are setting an example for all parishioners.

These guidelines have been prepared as an aid to assist all ministers perform their roles in a prayerful, reverent, and consistent way. These guidelines are not intended to represent an exhaustive list. Questions about any aspect of serving as Lector should be directed to the Pastor, Pastoral Staff or ministry head for clarification.

Thank you for volunteering to serve the parish in this way. The ministry of Lector is one of the most visible roles of service at liturgy. We appreciate all of you who are willing to take this ministry seriously. Thank you again for taking the time to serve your fellow parishioners.

Barbara Remack

October 30, 2015 (revised February 9, 2020)

Approved by:

Father Gary S. Linsky, V.F., Rector
February 9, 2020

*Lord, open my lips,
that my mouth may declare your praise.*