

Catholic Community of the Blessed Trinity Guidelines for Lectors

Prayer

Everlasting God,
when Jesus read in the synagogue at Nazareth,
your Son proclaimed the good news of salvation
for which he would give up his life.
Open my lips that my mouth may declare your praise.
Open my heart that I may proclaim the Word made flesh.
Strengthen my mind that I may live the holy words I speak.
Your Word is all holy and all true
and lives in glory with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Preparation

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 His people. The ministry of the Word, therefore, must be treated seriously and with great dignity.

The Word of God is not merely *read* during the liturgy; it is *proclaimed!* “For in the liturgy God speaks to His people and Christ is still proclaiming His gospel” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 33). Effective proclamation involves the delivery of the message with clarity and conviction. Proclamation of the Word of God is a sacred ministry, which presupposes living the Christian faith and it can rouse faith in those who hear the Word proclaimed.

In order that the ministry of the Word might be effective, all lectors are expected to be prepared for their ministry. Preparation should be spiritual, scriptural, and practical. Spiritual preparation involves prayer over the sacred text and reflection on its message. Scriptural preparation involves understanding the sacred text and interpreting it sufficiently so as to evoke a response from the People of God. Practical preparation involves learning difficult words and right pronunciations, and practicing the delivery of the sacred text aloud.

- Lectors are encouraged to read (and re-read) and to practice the Sunday readings.
 - Starting the weekend of January 17-18, two lectors will be assigned at each Sunday liturgy (including the Vigil Mass on Saturday).
 - Responsibilities of Lector I
 - reads the Introduction at the beginning of the Mass
 - proclaims the First Reading
 - Responsibilities of Lector II
 - if no deacon at Mass, carries the Book of the Gospel during the Entrance Procession

- if no cantor at Mass, leads the Responsorial Psalm
 - proclaims the Second Reading
 - if no deacon at Mass, reads the intentions during the Prayer of the Faithful
 - It is a good practice to be familiar with all the readings: first reading, responsorial psalm and second reading. The Prayer of the Faithful is in the Lector's Binder.
- Starting Advent, we will be providing lectors with a copy of a workbook for lectors.
 - If you provided Father Edison and Sandy your e-mail, you will receive a copy of the readings electronically.
 - A copy of the workbook will be available in the Sacristy. Let this copy be available for use by lectors without Internet or e-mail. If you take the copy, make sure to bring it back for the next lector.
- Practical Tips
 - Prayerfully read the Sunday readings during the days leading to the weekend. Begin by reading the Gospel. The First Reading is chosen in relation to the Gospel reading. The Responsorial Psalm is chosen as a reply to the First Reading. The Second Reading, on the other hand, following "*semi-continuous reading*," may not have thematic connection with the other readings. (Lectionary for Mass, 79, 106)
 - Be attentive to the literary genre the readings belong to. A poetic text like an oracle or proverb will be read differently than a narrative text like a story, or an epistolary text like the letters of Saint Paul.
 - Be attentive to phrasing, pauses, and emphases (be mindful of the theme of the Gospel). Look up pronunciation of difficult words and names.
 - Read the texts aloud. Keep a consistent pace and loudness, particularly at the end of a sentence. It is very easy to both drop the voice and to speed up near the end of a sentence, which can make the words difficult for the people to understand.
 - Occasionally, we stumble during the reading. Let the reason for this not be the lack of preparation.
 - Dress in a dignified manner that shows respect for the Eucharistic celebration. Clothes should be clean and neat, and reflect the importance of the Eucharistic celebration.

Before the Mass

- Arrive at least fifteen minutes before the Mass.
 - Pray.
 - Sign in. Let the sacristan know that you have arrived.
 - Know if the other lector is present.
 - Know if there is a deacon at Mass. In the absence of a deacon, Lector II must secure the Book of the Gospel during the Entrance Procession.
 - If there are optional readings or if there are long and short versions of a reading, check with the Presider, or the deacon, if preaching, for the chosen reading.

- If reading the Prayer of the Faithful, check pronunciation of names (sick parishioners, the dead, the person/s for whom the Mass will be offered).
- After checking the Lectionary and the Lector's Binder, place the binder and the Lectionary on the Ambo. Set the Lectionary open to the page where the First Reading is found.

At the Introductory Rites

- The deacon is given the responsibility of carrying the Book of the Gospels during the Entrance Procession (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 172-173). In his absence, Lector II processes in with the Book of the Gospels (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 120d).
- Since Lector I does the Introduction before Mass, he/she need not join the Entrance Procession. Lector II joins in the Entrance Procession and, with a hymnal, must join in singing the Opening Hymn.
- When carrying the Book of the Gospels, the deacon or lector needs not genuflect or bow at the foot of the altar. The deacon or the lector goes up to the altar and places the Book of the Gospel on the altar. (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 173)
 - Then, the deacon waits for the Presider, and both reverence the altar.
 - Or, the lector goes to his/her seat.

At the Liturgy of the Word

- Lectors sit in the assembly in a location that gives them easy access to the ambo.
- Lectors approach the ambo reverently. Lector I must allow the assembly to settle on the pews before proclaiming the word. After completing the reading, the lector remains in place for a period of silence before leaving the ambo (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 128 and 130; Lectionary for Mass, 28).
 - Helpful Hints:
 - Lectors are not to add their own words to the texts. The words of announcement (“*A reading from...*”) and conclusion (“*The Word of the Lord*”) are intended to be read exactly as printed in the lectionary. There is no need to greet the people with “Good morning!” or similar greetings. The Greeting has already taken place at the Introductory Rites, and is done by the Presider.
 - The announcement of the reading (“*A reading from ...*”) and the ending, (“*The Word of the Lord*”) need to be distinguished from the reading itself. Lectors make this distinction by observing a distinct pause after the former and before the latter phrase.
 - If the Responsorial Psalm is recited, the lector begins the recitation with the antiphon in the Lectionary. Announcing, “*The Responsorial Psalm is...*” is unnecessary. A cue like raising the hand is given to the congregation that they may respond at the proper time.
 - Lector I returns to his/her seat after the reading. If cantor is present, Lector II

- approaches the Ambo after the Responsorial Psalm. After the proclamation, he/she returns to his/her seat, after allowing for a period of silence.
- When only one lector proclaims both readings, he/she is seated when the cantor does the Responsorial Psalm.
 - All movements in the liturgy are performed with dignity and reverence; they are never hurried.
 - After the Second Reading and the accompanying pause, all stand for the singing of the Gospel Acclamation. During that time, the deacon, or in his absence, the priest carries the Book of Gospels from the altar to the ambo.
 - The Prayer of the Faithful is introduced from the chair by the priest and the intentions are announced by the deacon, lector or another minister (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 71). The intercessions may be announced at the ambo or cantor stand (Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass, 31, 33 and 53).
 - The person announcing the intercessions remains in place until the presiding celebrant has concluded the prayer.

At the Concluding Rites

- The lectors join the Presider and other ministers in the Closing Procession. Neither the Lectionary nor the Book of Gospels is carried in the Recessional.