

LECTOR GUIDELINES

Sunday, November 3, 2019

PREPARATION

- Start preparing to proclaim the Word at least 7 days in advance of when you are scheduled (unless you get called to substitute for someone less than a week ahead.)
- Read the passages to yourself first—decide what kind of reading each is—prophecy, epistle (letter), poetry or story—each requires a different type of expression in your voice.
- Practice reading the passages aloud several different times throughout the week so you become comfortable with the flow of the text and can look up every so often to make eye contact with the assembly. You may want to practice in front of family members who can help you know if your pace is too quick or your words are unclear.
- Use the “Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers”^{*} to learn how to correctly pronounce any names that may be unfamiliar to you; consult a dictionary if you come across any unfamiliar words.
- Remember that you aren’t just reading—you are proclaiming the Word of God—while there is no need for theatrics, there should be an audible difference in your tone of voice.

BEFORE MASS

- Please dress appropriately for your ministry—this is not a time for casual dress such as t-shirts, jeans or sneakers. Also to be avoided is clothing that draws undue attention to itself or you personally. As a liturgical minister, you should become transparent to allow the Word to speak through you and to allow the assembly to focus on that Word—not on you.
- Arrive no later than 15 minutes before Mass begins—this will give you an opportunity to look over your reading as it appears in the Lectionary. Please take time to do this as the page layout will be different from what you have practiced with.
- Please check off your name on the sign-in sheet on the table in the Gathering Space and make yourself a nametag.
- If you are Lector #1, read the General Intercessions (one copy in the Vesting Sacristy and one copy on the ambo) aloud at least a couple of times. Familiarize yourself with the cadence of the prayers and check on the pronunciation of any names in the prayers.

DURING MASS

- You will follow the servers in the entrance procession. Carry the Book of Gospels (with the spine in your left hand) out in front of you and no higher than eye level so that you will be able to see when you come to the front steps. Maintain a reverent pace as you process down the aisle. When you reach the steps of the Sanctuary, move to the left side of the steps, pause and bow your head as the servers and priest genuflect, and then go

directly up to the altar. Please do not lower the Book of Gospels until you place it on the altar. Lay the Book of Gospels in the center of the altar and then go to your seat in the assembly.

- At the end of the Opening Prayer, Lector #1 should walk forward to the foot of the ramp, bow to the altar and then proceed to the ambo. Adjust the microphone so it is pointed at your mouth. Take a moment and wait until everyone has settled into their seats before you begin. This will help to focus the assembly's attention on the ambo and will say to them "This is where the liturgical action is at this time in the Mass. Something very important is about to happen here."
- When announcing where the reading is from, please do not vary from what is printed in the Lectionary. Please memorize this opening line so that you can confidently look at the assembly while proclaiming "A reading from the Book of the Prophet..."
- Pause briefly after announcing where the reading is from and then begin proclaiming the body of the text. When you are finished, pause briefly again, look at the assembly and clearly state "The Word of the Lord." After they respond "Thanks be to God," turn the page to the second reading (if necessary), return to the foot of the ramp, bow to the altar and return to your seat for the singing of the responsorial psalm.
- When the cantor has returned to his/her seat, Lector #2 should walk forward to the foot of the ramp, bow to the altar and then walk to the ambo for the second reading. When you are finished and the assembly has responded "Thanks be to God," please return to the foot of the ramp, bow to the altar and then return to your seat in the assembly.
- During the conclusion of the Creed ("I believe in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church..."), Lector #1 should walk to the foot of the ramp, bow to the altar, then proceed to the ambo and take the sheet with the General Intercessions (Prayers of the Faithful) out so you are ready to begin the prayers as soon as the celebrant completes the introduction to the General Intercessions. This will allow for a smooth transition right into the General Intercessions.
- When you have finished reading the General Intercessions, turn to face the celebrant and listen to the concluding prayer with the assembly. Respond "Amen," with the assembly and then return to the foot of the ramp, bow to the altar, and return to your seat.

REMINDERS

- **PACE** is very important in many aspects of this ministry: 1) the pace of the entrance procession, 2) your pace as you proclaim the readings and 3) the pace at which the Liturgy of the Word proceeds. You help to set this by the pauses you utilize before and after each reading and before and after the announcement and conclusion of each reading.
- Please do not lift up the Lectionary when proclaiming "The word of the Lord."

- Neither lector participates in the closing procession. The Lectionary and Book of Gospels remain open on the ambo.
- A good and effective lector...
 - 1) stands up straight and tall on both feet and allows his/her body to convey warmth
 - 2) speaks at slower-than-usual rate, allowing the assembly time to take in what has been said
 - 3) prepares carefully and is able to make frequent eye contact with the assembly
 - 4) enunciates each word clearly (beginning and ending consonants are very important in this) and pays attention to punctuation marks
 - 5) makes sure s/he has the attention of the assembly before beginning to proclaim
 - 6) vocally conveys a sense of commitment to the message s/he is proclaiming
 - 7) allows the microphone to work for him/her while still using projection and a full range of vocal volume
 - 8) participates actively in the entire liturgy, singing, responding, gesturing, receiving Communion, etc.
 - 9) enjoys sharing God's Word with others and allows that to show in his/her face while proclaiming his Word
 - 10) never hesitates to ask questions, especially regarding pronunciation of a name or difficult word or about the meaning of a perplexing passage

AND FINALLY...

Mistakes happen. Even the most experienced public speakers may suddenly become nervous and lose their place or mix up the words in a sentence. If that should happen, simply take a deep breath, collect your thoughts and repeat the sentence correctly. Please try not to laugh or make a big deal out of your mistake—simply acknowledge it, correct it, and continue.

*New Lector Workbooks can be ordered from Jennifer for \$10 each. They start with December 1, 2019, the 1st Sunday of Advent.

If you prefer, the US Catholic Bishops' website (www.usccb.org) also has the daily readings. Go to their homepage, click on the calendar on the right side of the screen. A note of caution: sometimes there is a choice of readings or a choice between a long and short version of a reading. The website doesn't always indicate that. When there is a choice between a long and short version of a reading, Fr. Tschakert generally opts for the shorter version. Also, if you are a Lector at 5 p.m. Masses on Saturdays, make sure you click on the Sunday date of the weekend you're scheduled to read. Clicking on the Saturday date will bring up the daily Mass readings for that Saturday instead of the Sunday readings.