

Lector Guidelines – St. Mary on the Hill

“When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his word, proclaims the Gospel.

Therefore, the readings from the Word of God are to be listened to reverently by everyone, for they are an element of the greatest importance in the Liturgy.”

General Instructions of the Roman Missal: Ch. 1, 29

Please review the information below. May God bless you and enrich your lives and love of the scriptures as you serve in this ministry.

1. Reverence, Purpose and Preparation:

- a. When preparing to serve at Mass we need to keep in mind, what we are doing and why we are doing it. The flow of the liturgy and the reverence provided can have a dramatic impact on allowing those in the pews to enter more fully into the mystery of the Mass.
- b. How we dress and what we do throughout the liturgy can either help or distract others. The better the congregation can hear and keep their attention where it needs to be, the better they can understand and meditate on His Words and the sacrifice on the altar.
- c. As you prepare to lector, please keep in mind what your duty is. It is not just about being present, it is about allowing the Holy Spirit to use you, to proclaim His Words so that others can hear and respond.
- d. We reverence the tabernacle, not the altar during Mass (and outside of Mass). Any time we pass by the tabernacle, we need to be mindful of the true presence of Christ and should bow or genuflect to Him in response.
 - Upon entering and leaving the sanctuary, bow at the bottom of the steps facing the tabernacle.
 - The exception to this is when a lector processes in with the Book of the Gospels. When carrying the Book of the Gospels, the lector should proceed directly to the altar without bowing, to place the book.
- e. When reading, the microphone should be directly in front of or below your face. Speak slowly and clearly, making sure to enunciate each word. As you read the readings and PROCLAIM His Word to the congregation. Try to do so in the same way as the original author was intending it to be communicated to his audience.
- f. Make sure to set aside time to practice and meditate on what God is saying through the scripture passages you are to read.
- g. Pray before Mass. Ask the Holy Spirit to use your lips to speak His word and that those listening would hear His words and not your own.

2. Before Mass Begins:

- a. There will be 2 lectors scheduled at every Mass. It is your responsibility to find a substitute if you are unable to serve at the Mass you are scheduled.
- b. Arrive at church **20 minutes** before Mass begins. We need to help make sure everything is set up, and we leave time to review and time to pray.
- c. Check that the Sound System is turned on. (button in hall behind the tabernacle should be lit)
- d. Speak to the organist, as to who will be leading the Responsorial Psalm (cantor singing or lector reading).
- e. Identify if a deacon is present and will be carrying in the Gospels or if Lector 1 will be needed for this.
- f. Confirm that both lectors are present. If the other lector has not shown at 10 minutes until, try to find one in the congregation to serve in their place.
- g. Locate the correct lectionary (A, B or C) and make sure it is marked to the correct Sunday. Allow both lectors the opportunity to review their reading and place the Lectionary on the Ambo.
- h. **Lector 1**, locate the Prayers of the Faithful and if there is a deacon serving, make sure these prayers are on the deacon's chair (preferably in a binder). If there **is not** a deacon present, review the Prayers of the Faithful and place in a binder at your seat, then go to the back of the church to process in with the Book of the Gospels. (Make sure the correct Gospel for the day is marked).
- i. **Lector 2**, Locate and review the Mass Announcements, take a seat and pay attention to the lights above the choir loft. (One of the ushers will bring you the names of the gift bearers to add to the announcements.)
- j. **Lector 2**, When the celebrant is ready, he will flick the lights above the choir loft to signal the lector and organist, that it is time to begin. At this point, proceed up to the Ambo, reverencing the tabernacle on your way, and read the announcements. **Remember, you are likely the first person that someone in the congregation has heard from at St. Mary on the Hill. Make sure to be welcoming and inviting in both your tone and in your expressions.** After you are finished with the announcements, walk back to your seat, making sure to reverence the tabernacle as you get to the bottom of the stairs.

3. The Procession:

Lector 1

- a. If there is no deacon present, lector 1 will process in with the Book of the Gospels behind the altar servers and in front of the clergy.

- b. Hold the book chest high or above your head with the cross facing forward.
Remember the only reason a lector is processing in, is to bring in the Gospels, carry it with reverence and purpose.
- c. As you get to the front of the altar ***DO NOT BOW** with the **BOOK** of the Gospels* simply proceed around the altar and up the steps into the sanctuary.
- d. Place the Gospels near the front of the altar, with the cross facing down before returning to your seat.
- e. Keep in mind, the clergy will be coming behind you to reverence the altar with a kiss, if needed, step to the side, allowing the clergy to enter the sanctuary. Then walk down the steps, reverence the tabernacle and proceed to your seat.

4. Proclaiming the Word of God:

Lector 1:

- a. At the Conclusion of the Opening Prayer, proceed towards the sanctuary, bow at the bottom of the steps towards the tabernacle then proceed up the steps and to the ambo.
- b. Pause until the congregation is settled, make eye contact with your brothers and sisters and then PROCLAIM in a strong voice, "A reading from..."
- c. Pause again before beginning to PROCLAIM the first reading. Go slowly and make sure to enunciate every word.
- d. Try to read in the manner the original author intended.
- e. Be clear and loud enough so the congregation can listen without having to follow along in the missalette.
- f. At the end of the reading, pause and then distinctly PROCLAIM "The Word of the Lord." as a gift just received.
- g. Do not vary from above. Variations such as "Today's first reading is..." or "A letter from Paul to the church at Corinth" and "This is the word of the Lord" are NOT CORRECT.
- h. If a cantor will be singing the Responsorial Psalm, turn the page in the lectionary to the second reading and proceed out of the sanctuary, **reverencing the tabernacle** at the bottom of the steps before returning to your seat.
- i. If Lector 1 will be reading the Responsorial Psalm, stay in place, pause after the first reading, then provide the congregation with "the response is" and provide the response. Then read each verse of the Psalm and raise your hand to the congregation, when it is time for them to respond with the refrain. After the last response, turn the page to the second reading and proceed out of the sanctuary, **reverencing the tabernacle at the bottom of the steps** and return to your seat.

Lector 2

- a. If a cantor is singing the Responsorial Psalm, wait for the psalm to conclude completely, then begin walking into the sanctuary, reverencing the tabernacle at the bottom of the steps, and proceeding to the ambo for the second reading.
- b. Pause until the congregation is settled, make eye contact with your brothers and sisters and then PROCLAIM in a strong voice, "A reading from..."
- c. Pause again before beginning to PROCLAIM the first reading. Go slowly and make sure to enunciate every word.
- d. Try to read in the manner the original author intended.
- e. Be clear and loud enough so the congregation can listen without having to follow along in the missalette.
- f. At the end of the reading, pause and then distinctly PROCLAIM "The Word of the Lord." as a gift just received.
- g. Do not vary from above. Variations such as "Today's first reading is..." or "A letter from Paul to the church at Corinth" and "This is the word of the Lord" are NOT CORRECT.
- h. After the second reading concludes, close the lectionary and take it with you then place it on the side table below the Mary statue, making sure to reverence the tabernacle at the bottom of the steps.

5. Intercessory Prayers (Prayers of the Faithful) *Only if a deacon is not serving*

Lector 1

- a. Begin to approach the altar near the end of the Profession of Faith (Nicene/Apostles Creed). At the words "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who **PROCEEDS**..." lector 1 then PROCEEDS up to the altar with the binder, reverencing the tabernacle at the bottom of the steps.
- b. Once at the ambo, let the profession of faith conclude and face the priest as he introduces the Intercessory Prayers, then turn and begin the petitions with "the response is ...".
- c. Read each petition clearly and loudly enough for all to hear and raise your hand to the congregation, after each petition, to elicit the response (Lord hear our Prayer).
- d. Read them as written, do not add words to these petitions.
- e. When reading the names of the sick and the dead, pause after each group.
- f. After all petitions have been read, turn to the celebrant and allow him to conclude the intercessory prayers. Then upon completion and the congregation taking their seats, take the binder and return to your seat. *reverencing the tabernacle at the bottom of the steps*

6. Recessional

Lector 1 & 2

- a. After the final blessing and dismissal, both lector 1 and lector 2 follow behind the altar servers and proceed to the center aisle, even with the 1st or 2nd pew.
- b. Facing the altar, as the priest bows towards the altar, the lectors and altar servers bow, then turning inward and to the back, process down the aisle and into the vesting sacristy.
- c. *After the hymn has finished, both lectors need to return to the front and make sure everything is cleaned up and ready for the next Mass.***
- d. The Book of the Gospels needs to be returned to the vesting sacristy.
- e. The Lectionary and Announcements need to be placed on the first pew (where the lectors sit) or returned to the sacristy after the final weekend Mass.