

St. John XXIII Reader Guidelines

“You will proclaim that Word in the liturgical assembly, instruct children and adults in the faith and prepare them to receive the sacraments worthily. You will bring the message of salvation to those who have not yet received it.” -Pope Francis

A Note to Our Readers

Thank you for participating in this special ministry at St. John XXIII. You have a great responsibility of proclaiming the Word of God to the people of God. You are not simply public speaking or reading and you are not acting; you are sharing God's Word to all present.

About Readers:

“In the absence of an instituted lector, other lay people may be deputed to proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture, people who are truly suited to carrying out this function and carefully prepared, so that by their hearing the readings from the sacred texts the faithful may conceive in their hearts a sweet and living affection for Sacred Scripture.” (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 101)

Requirements of Readers:

Readers are typically fully initiated Catholics having received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation who are in full communion with the Catholic Church and in a state of grace (and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation as needed). They must be in good standing according to the law of the Church, spiritually sound, and capable of adhering to all of the community's procedures for reading. Readers must be able to proclaim the Word of God in a loud, clear voice from the ambo.

Scheduling:

Two readers are scheduled for each Mass. Reader 1 will read the welcome and proclaim the first reading. Reader 2 will proclaim the second reading and, if there is not a deacon, the prayers of the faithful. Readers are scheduled through Ministry Scheduler Pro (MSP) which is where readers can set preferred Mass times, designate days they cannot serve, make and accept sub requests, and receive reminders for when they are scheduled.

Dress/Appearance:

Readers should dress intentionally with dignified, modest, and suitable attire for the function of reader. Overall, their clothes and appearance should not be a distraction to them or to others based on appearance or function.

Recommendations include:

- Khaki pants, dress pants, knee length or longer skirts or dresses
- Collared shirts, button up shirts, dressy shirts
- Dress shoes and dress socks; prefer no flip flops, slides, crocks, snow boots, super high heels
- Neatly groomed hair
- Simple makeup or jewelry if it is worn

Preparation:

Readers should prepare to proclaim the Word of God in advance. A hard copy of the readings can be found in the Workbook for Lectors. We have a few copies available to check out on the shelf below the Liturgical Ministry bulletin board. Digitally, the MSP app has access to the readings or the readings can be found at usccb.org where you can read and listen to the daily readings. Readers should read and pray with the readings for understanding and should practice proclaiming the readings out loud to practice emphasis and pronunciation. Readers should look at the other reading in case the other scheduled reader is absent.

Before Mass:

Readers should arrive 15 minutes before Mass begins and check in at the Liturgical Ministry bulletin board in the gathering space near the sacristy. They should place a check mark by their name or add their name if it is not listed. The readers should sit near the front of the church and near the aisle. The readers should go up to the ambo and make sure they have the correct readings opened in the lectionary and practice in their head, as the page may be laid out differently than how the reader practiced. Reader 1 should also look over the welcome and reader 2 should look over the prayers of the faithful if there is no deacon. Reader 1 should adjust the microphone to his/her height if needed. The mic should sit at chin level.

Reader 1:

A couple minutes before Mass is to begin, reader 1 goes up towards the ambo, waiting at the base of the steps until Father or the permanent deacon signals him/her to begin. When signaled, reader 1 will bow towards the altar and approach the ambo and read the welcome. When they are finished, the reader goes down the steps, bows, and returns to his/her pew.

After the Collect (opening prayer), reader 1 goes to the ambo and, from the Lectionary already placed there before Mass, proclaims the First Reading, to which all listen. At the end, the reader should pause briefly, then pronounce the acclamation "The Word of the Lord", and all reply, "Thanks be to God". The reader then walks down the steps, bows towards the altar, and returns to his/her pew.

Reader 2:

If they feel comfortable, reader 2 can be the cross bearer if there are only two altar servers.

After the responsorial psalm, reader 2 goes to the ambo, adjusts the mic if necessary, and proclaims the second reading, to which all listen. At the end, the reader should pause briefly then pronounce the acclamation “The Word of the Lord”, and all reply, “Thanks be to God”. The reader then closes the lectionary and places it on the shelf. The reader then walks down the steps, bows towards the altar, and returns to his/her pew.

During the Profession of Faith, if a deacon is not present, when all present say, “I believe in one, holy, catholic...” the reader should walk towards the sanctuary, bow at the bottom of the steps, and approach the ambo. The prayers of the faithful are in a binder. If it is not on the ambo, it will be on the shelf. After the Creed the priest will say a prayer to introduce the Prayers of the Faithful. Then the reader will read the petitions, leaving a brief pause before saying, “Let us pray to the Lord” to which the congregation responds, “Lord, hear our prayer” (or a similar phrase). When finished, the reader remains standing behind the ambo until the priest has finished his prayers. Then the reader goes down the steps, bows, and returns to his/her pew.

Other Notes:

- Never add, subtract, or alter anything in the Scripture, the welcome, or the introduction of the Scriptures. Simply read what is written.
- If there is a mistake as you read, do not apologize or get upset, either keep going, or repeat the line correctly, depending upon the mistake and when you notice. Remember Mass is a prayer, not a performance.
- Speak slowly, confidently, loudly and with good annunciation. Think about what the Scripture is saying to choose how to emphasize certain parts. Emphasis can be made with tone, volume, speed, etc.
- Be aware of your body language and facial expressions while reading.