

# MINISTRY OF PROCLAIMING THE WORD

## Guidelines for Lectors

Welcome to the liturgical Ministry of the Word! The Eucharist constitutes the very life of the Church. Scripture says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1) When we share the Word, especially within the Eucharistic celebration, we are sharing God. "And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

This handout is designed to assist you in your participation in the Liturgical Ministry of the Word (more commonly known as Lector) at St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Student Center. Your willingness to serve as a Lector reflects not only your response to your Baptismal call to serve the people of God, but a commitment to Christ. You offer the Word of the Lord, recognize the Body of Christ in those to whom you offer the Good News, and ultimately you act as the Body of Christ by fully participating in the life of the parish and the wider community. Your willingness to commit to a schedule and to prepare properly for your service further reflects that commitment. God bless your efforts!

### Qualities

- A practicing Catholic of faith and prayer
- A love and devotion to scripture and the Eucharist
- A willingness to engage in ongoing formation
- A gift of hospitality

### Preparation:

- **PREPARE** and **PRACTICE** in order to proclaim. Practice the reading at least five times throughout the week before your assigned liturgy.
- Proclaim the difficult words with confidence. Learn the pronunciation. Utilize the Workbook for Lectors that is provided to you by the church.
- Engage in formational activities and events. It is important for lectors to remain open to new methods and new resources that will allow their ministry to deepen and grow. Experienced lectors find methods of preparation that suit them best.
- **Dress:** As a liturgical minister, your ministry draws us more deeply into the mystery of God's love, which we experience in hearing the words of scripture. Proclaiming with respect and dignity is essential for everyone. In this light, when you are scheduled to serve at Mass, please use good judgment in your selection of attire. Please do not dress in gym shorts, tennis shoes, t-shirts, and the like. You are assuming a leadership position within the community worship; you want to communicate a message of reverence which does not draw attention to you and away from the Lord's message that you are trying to deliver.

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- On the day you are assigned to serve as Lector, please develop the habit of taking time to prepare for your service with quiet prayer and a reflective reading of all of the scriptures of that day. Allow God to speak to you, before you speak to His people on His behalf.

## Responsibilities before Mass

- Check in by checking your name off the schedule which is located on the bulletin board in the community room by the sacristy AT LEAST 10 MINUTES BEFORE MASS. You will be replaced by the sacristan 10 minutes before mass begins if your name is not checked off.
- Familiarize yourself with your reading in the Lectionary and note the page (or know what Sunday it is and what cycle) so that if by some chance the marker is moved you will know what you are looking for.
- When the deacon is not present, if you are the second reader, you should familiarize yourself with the intercessions, and personally place them where you can easily access them. Be sure to look at the intention for that mass (listed on the intercessions list.)
- Become knowledgeable of the microphone and how it works in case there is a problem.
- Remain in the community room to pray with the priest and the other ministers before mass begins.

## Functional Responsibilities during mass

- When a Deacon is not present, the first reader processes with the Gospel book and places it on the back side of the altar at the start of mass. Pause and bow before the altar. Walk straight through the middle, set the book on the altar (just above the red cross stitched in the altar cloth); walk off the left or right side, depending on where your seat is.
  - *Think of Liturgical movements as a formal dance – move so that you do not interrupt another's movement, but rather, in coordination with the priest/deacon/servers*
- When it is time for you reading, do not rush up to the altar.
- Walk reverently and confidently towards the FRONT – approach the ambo from the center aisle (\*Note: if you are seated on the choir side, you may approach from the ambo side); when you reach the sanctuary, bow towards the altar, and then proceed towards the ambo.
- Proclaim the reading, remembering that for many of them, this is the first time they have heard it. Proclaim the Word that will rouse them.
- At the end of the reading, proclaim only “the Word of the Lord”. DO NOT lift the book or do anything extra. Give the people time to digest the readings. After stepping off of the sanctuary, turn and bow again towards the altar.

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- The second reader approaches the altar after the Psalm and bows before walking up to the ambo. Do not rush but give time for the people to take in the psalm.
- DO NOT say the second reading is, say only what is written in the lectionary.
- When you are finished, please place the Lectionary on one of the shelves in the ambo. After you step off of the sanctuary, turn and bow towards the altar before returning to your seat.
- If the second reader reads the intercessions, he or she should come forward and be at the ambo and ready before the Creed is finished. A good time to begin approaching is during the line, “I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church”; however, it will depend on where you are seated and how quickly you walk. Always approach from the front or choir side.
- After reading the last intercession, step back from the ambo and wait to leave the sanctuary until all additional intercessions (if any) are completed and Father has finished the concluding prayer.

## Other Notes

- Schedules are emailed out 3 times each year as indicated below:

<u>SCHEDULE RANGE</u>	<u>SCHEDULE PREP DEADLINE</u>
October – January	End of August
February – May	End of December
June – September	End of April

Ministers should notify Christine Harsh (the ministry scheduler) by the schedule prep deadline if they will be out of town for a period of time, or if they will be unable to serve at a particular liturgy each week.

- Be sure to mark the dates and times on your personal calendar as soon as you receive the schedule, and, if necessary, on the family calendar. Schedules will also be available on the Saint T’s website on the Liturgical Ministries Schedules tab: <http://saintt.com/schedules.asp>
- If you know right away that you cannot serve for one or more times that you are scheduled, find your substitute immediately. **You are responsible to find your own substitute.** Failure to do so indicates a lack of commitment to the ministry. The best way to find a sub is to email the entire lector list.
- When you get a substitute, let Christine Harsh know of the schedule change. If the weekly email reminder has already been sent by Christine, there is no need to notify her of your schedule change.

# APPENDIX

## Additional Information from the USCCB:

### The Lector at Mass

#### General Principles

##### Reading and Explaining the Word of God

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. Although in the readings from Sacred Scripture the Word of God is addressed to all people of whatever era and is understandable to them, a fuller understanding and a greater efficaciousness of the word is nevertheless fostered by a living commentary on the word, that is, by the Homily, as part of the liturgical action.

(General Instruction of the Roman Missal [GIRM], no. 29)

##### Vocal Expression of the Different Texts

In texts that are to be pronounced in a loud and clear voice, whether by the Priest or the Deacon, or by a reader, or by everyone, the voice should correspond to the genre of the text itself, that is, depending upon whether it is a reading, a prayer, an explanatory comment, an acclamation, or a sung text; it should also be suited to the form of celebration and to the solemnity of the gathering. Consideration should also be given to the characteristics of different languages and of the culture of different peoples. (GIRM, no. 38)

##### Silence

The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to favor meditation, and so any kind of haste such as hinders recollection is clearly to be avoided. In the course of it, brief periods of silence are also appropriate, accommodated to the assembled congregation; by means of these, under the action of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared. It may be appropriate to observe such periods of silence, for example, before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the First and Second Reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the Homily.

(GIRM, no. 56)

##### Scripture Readings

In the readings, the table of God's Word is spread before the faithful, and the treasures of the Bible are opened to them. Hence, it is preferable that the arrangement of the biblical readings be maintained, for by them the unity of both Testaments and of salvation history is brought out. Nor is it lawful to replace the readings and Responsorial Psalm, which contain the Word of God, with other, non-biblical texts.

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In the celebration of the Mass with the people, the readings are always read from the ambo.

The function of proclaiming the readings is by tradition not presidential but ministerial. Therefore the readings are to be read by a reader, but the Gospel by the Deacon or, in his absence, by another Priest. If, however, a Deacon or another Priest is not present, the Priest Celebrant himself should read the Gospel, and moreover, if no other suitable reader is present, the Priest Celebrant should also proclaim the other readings as well.

After each reading, whoever reads it pronounces the acclamation, and by means of the reply the assembled people give honor to the Word of God that they have received in faith and with gratitude. (GIRM, nos. 57-59)

The lector is instituted to proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture, with the exception of the Gospel. He may also announce the intentions for the Universal Prayer and, in the absence of a psalmist, recite the Psalm between the readings.

In the celebration of the Eucharist, the lector has his own proper function (cf. nos. 194-198), which he himself must carry out. (GIRM, no. 99)

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. (GIRM, no. 101)

## **The Liturgy of the Word**

After the Collect, all sit. The Priest may, very briefly, introduce the faithful to the Liturgy of the Word. Then the reader 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 pronounces the acclamation *The word of the Lord*, and all reply, *Thanks be to God*.

Then a few moments of silence may be observed, if appropriate, so that all may meditate on what they have heard.

Then the psalmist or the reader proclaims the verses of the Psalm and the people make the response as usual.

If there is to be a Second Reading before the Gospel, the reader proclaims it from the ambo. All listen and at the end reply to the acclamation, as noted above (no. 128). Then, if appropriate, a few moments of silence may be observed. (GIRM, nos. 128-130)

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## Functions of the Lector

### The Introductory Rites

In the procession to the altar, in the absence of a Deacon, the reader, wearing approved attire [see GIRM, no. 339], may carry the Book of the Gospels, slightly elevated. In that case, the reader walks in front of the Priest but otherwise walks along with the other ministers.

Upon reaching the altar, the reader makes a profound bow with the others [see also GIRM, no. 274]. If he is carrying the Book of the Gospels, he approaches the altar and places the Book of the Gospels upon it. Then the reader takes his own place in the sanctuary with the other ministers. (GIRM, nos. 194-195)

### The Liturgy of the Word

The reader reads from the ambo the readings that precede the Gospel. In the absence of a psalmist, the reader may also proclaim the Responsorial Psalm after the First Reading.

In the absence of a Deacon, the reader, after the introduction by the Priest, may announce the intentions of the Universal Prayer from the ambo.

If there is no singing at the Entrance or at Communion and the antiphons given in the Missal are not recited by the faithful, the reader may read them at an appropriate time (cf. nos. 48, 87). (GIRM, nos. 196-198)

### The Concluding Rites

At the conclusion of the Mass, the lector does not process with the Book of the Gospels. The Lectionary is never carried in procession. The lector may join in the procession at the end of Mass in the same order as in the procession to the altar.