

# THE MINISTRY OF READER (LECTOR)

Roles and Responsibilities (January 2017)

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**P**roclaiming the Word of God is more than just reading. It mediates the presence of God to us! A key to effective proclamation lies in understanding the meaning of scripture, which is contained within the words that you are about to read.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR READERS

- ⇒ We schedule two Readers (Lectors) for each Mass. Please check the schedule for your dates assigned as soon as it is posted on the parish website. If you are not able to attend the Mass you are scheduled for, **please arrange for a substitute through Ministry Pro (online schedule)**! Please do not rely on the other scheduled Reader to cover for you.
- ⇒ Spend some time in prayer and contemplation before you read. One half-hour each week with the **Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers**. Once you understand the content of the reading, begin to consider the tone and pace at which it should be read. Read through several times aloud, deciding on appropriate pauses. Review any words that you find difficult to pronounce. Get comfortable enough with the reading that you can lift your eyes from the page occasionally to make eye contact with the assembly.
- ⇒ Dress the way you proclaim—with dignity and respect!
- ⇒ Arrive 10 minutes early and check the readings in the Lectionary to note any differences to the one you have prepared.
- ⇒ Locate materials—binder with Reader's Sheet, *Lectionary*, and *Book of the Gospels* (Reader Two carries this in the opening procession). The Lectionary should be on the ambo and opened to the correct page before Mass begins. Make sure readings match what you have prepared.
- ⇒ Please do **not** adjust the microphone.
- ⇒ The second Reader carries the *Book of the Gospels* in the opening procession with the exception being when the deacon is present. Then, he is responsible to carry the *Book of the Gospels*.
- ⇒ It is best to sit with the assembly towards the front of the church.
- ⇒ Ask God to help you as you **proclaim** the **Word**. Remember, **this is a ministry!**

## BEGINNING THE MASS

- ⇒ If you are the first Reader, move to the ambo at the designated time mass is scheduled to begin. Beginning on time is important; you initiate this, there is no signal for you to look for!
- ⇒ Please stick to the written script, no need to add your own comments or greetings.

## DURING MASS

- ⇒ After the *Opening Prayer (Collect)*, and people are seated, the first Reader walks up slowly and reverently to the ambo. If crossing the center aisle to approach the ambo, pause at the center, bow towards the altar, then proceed to the ambo from the right side (between the ambo and the altar).

## **DURING MASS (continued)**

- ⇒ Following the reading, *pause (take a deep breath)* and say, “The Word of the Lord.”
- ⇒ Return to your seat—no need to make eye contact with the Cantor.
- ⇒ Following the sung Psalm response, the second reader approaches the ambo to proclaim the second reading. After the reading, *pause (take a deep breath)* and say, “The Word of the Lord.” Return to your seat.
- ⇒ Toward the end of the Creed (as we are saying, “I confess one Baptism...”), the second reader approaches the ambo for the *Prayer of the Faithful*. Reader should be in place at the ambo immediately following the presiders lead in.

## **AFTER MASS**

- ⇒ First Reader returns *Lectionary* and binder with Reader’s Sheet and Prayer of the Faithful to the ambo, set and ready for the next Mass.
- ⇒ Second Reader returns *Book of the Gospels* to the top front of the altar.

## **ONGOING FORMATION**

- ⇒ Readers are expected to attend an annual enrichment session provided by the parish.
- ⇒ Read the introduction in your WORKBOOK at least once every year.
- ⇒ Periodically, Readers should spend some time practicing aloud the art of proclaiming God’s Word. This can be done with a partner (“buddy system”) in the church or at home.

## **RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARISH**

- ⇒ Provide an introductory formation session for all new Readers.
- ⇒ Provide an annual enrichment session.
- ⇒ Provide a WORKBOOK for all Readers to prepare the readings.
- ⇒ Be available to assist Readers with needs and requests.
- ⇒ Schedule time in the church for practice when requested.
- ⇒ Provide a quarterly schedule at least three weeks ahead of time.

## **REFLECTION**

*“As caretakers of the Word, a readers’ ministry is intimately connected with the assembly’s encountering Christ and coming to belief. Before readers can proclaim the Word effectively so that Christ is encountered, they themselves must have encountered Christ in the Word. Their proclamation must ring with their own belief so that the assembly is moved to respond, “My Lord and my God!” The way to come to this kind of proclamation is twofold: readers must pray and reflect deeply and long on the word they proclaim, and readers must live the Word in their life so they know from their own experience of the Word’s challenges and blessings.”*

*(“Caretakers of the Word,” Living Liturgy 2003 by Joyce Ann Zimmerman, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN).*

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