

## GUIDELINES FOR LECTORS

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### BEFORE MASS

- All lectors are expected to prepare ahead of time so that they are able to proclaim God's Word, not just read it! There are links below to help in your preparation. The Prayers of the Faithful are available on the lector page of our website so that you may review them before coming to Mass.
  - [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)
  - [www.liturgy.slu.edu](http://www.liturgy.slu.edu)
  - [www.stmarysblacksburg.org](http://www.stmarysblacksburg.org)
- Lectors' attire should be appropriate to the role of proclaiming the Word of God to the community. (Slacks, shirt and tie or polo shirt are suggested for men, and dresses or slacks with a nice top for women. Jeans are allowed so long as they do not have holes and are not frayed. Skirts and dresses should not be shorter than finger tip length. No spaghetti strap shirts, shorts, windbreakers, etc. Neat clean shoes should be worn. No flip-flops.)
- Both lectors need to communicate before Mass, and make sure that the Lectionary is on the ambo and open to the correct Sunday's readings. You may review your reading (or see it if you are a last minute substitute!) Also, please check that the binder with the Prayers of the Faithful is on the shelf of the ambo. If you will be reading the prayers (no deacon serving) or the announcements (no parish council member present), please review them as well. The announcements should be on the lectern near the choir.
- All lectors should be under the crucifix in the Narthex 10 minutes before Mass to pray with the other ministers and to be informed of any last-minute changes. If you arrive after the prayer time, please check to see if a substitute has been assigned to take your place.

Note: When attending Mass on a week that you are not scheduled, please check in the narthex to see if any substitutes are needed.

### FOR THE PROCESSIONAL

- **Lector 1** will carry the Book of the Gospels in the Processional, preceded by the cross bearer and altar servers, and followed by the priest (unless there is a deacon, in which case the deacon will process with the Book of the Gospels). **Lector 2** will process along side of **Lector 1**.
- As the cross bearer moves forward, the servers move up to the front of the baptismal font and stop. When the cross bearer reaches the 3rd pew from the back, the servers begin, trying to maintain this same distance from the cross bearer. **Lector 1**, carrying the Book with both hands at about chest level, cover facing out, in a dignified manner, then follows beside **Lector 2**, keeping the same spacing. If you know the words to the song, please sing along. The priest will bring up the rear.
- As you reach the steps in front of the center of the altar, pause briefly(1-2 seconds), then **Lector 2** will bow (from the waist) to the altar. **Lector 1** does not bow. **Lector 2** will then immediately go to his/her seat

while **Lector 1** goes up to the altar and places the Book on it. Please place the Book flat upon the altar, in the center. Then **Lector 1** will go directly to his/her seat.

- Please note that whenever you cross in front of the altar from one side to the other during Mass, e.g. approaching or leaving the ambo, you should bow (not genuflect) to the altar. This is not necessary when you are carrying something "liturgical" (i.e. Sacramentary, Book of the Gospels, Cross, Body and Blood of Christ, etc.).

### **FOR PROCLAIMING THE WORD**

- **Lector 1** should proceed to the ambo after the concluding "Amen" of the opening prayer.
- **Lector 2** will proceed to the ambo after the cantor has finished leading the responsorial psalm.
- When you get to the ambo, adjust the microphone so that it is pointing toward your chin. Wait a few moments until the congregation settles and turns their attention to you.
- Look out at the people, announce "A reading from the book of..." without looking down, pause 1-2 seconds, then begin the reading.
- At the end of your reading, pause again for 1-2 seconds, look up, and announce "The Word of the Lord" slowly, as a pronouncement, not *The word of the Lord*. (Listen to Fr. Remi sometime - he does this really well!) Do not raise the book as if to draw attention to it - the Word you are announcing is what has been spoken and heard, not the printed page. If you need to lift the book slightly to see the words, that's fine!
- Step back, and count to 20 slowly, or say a slow Glory Be to the Father.... This may seem like forever, but will actually be no more than 30 seconds. Take your time. **Lector 2** may wait for the musical intro to the Gospel Acclamation. No one should rush away from the ambo!! This brief period of silence helps the Word to be taken in by those listening.
  - If you are **Lector 1**, you will be moving back to your seat as the cantor/psalmist moves up to take your place.
  - If you are **Lector 2**, please place the Lectionary on the shelf under the ambo before returning to your seat.
- At the time of the Gospel Acclamation or *Alleluia*, the priest or deacon will process to the altar, pick up the Book of the Gospels and process with it to the ambo. He will leave the Book of the Gospels on the shelf under the ambo when he is finished, and it will remain there for the remainder of the Mass.

### **FOR THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL AND THE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The Prayers of the Faithful occur immediately after the Creed, or, when there is a baptism, directly after the homily.
- When there is no deacon, **Lector 1** should begin moving to the side next to the ambo during the Creed, and up to the ambo during Father's introductory prayer, so that he or she is ready to begin when Father finishes the prayer.

- The Prayers are read from a binder which will be on the shelf under the ambo. As usual, remain at the ambo until Father is through with the concluding prayer and the people have responded, “Amen.”
- Usually, a Pastoral Council member will read the announcements, but if one is not available, then **Lector 2** will do so. This will be determined at the prayer time before Mass.
- Announcements take place immediately after Communion and are to be read from the movable lectern near the choir. Please move to the aisle next to the choir area by the end of Communion and come forward when Father returns to his chair. You will need to move and adjust the microphone so that you are able to speak directly into it.

#### **FOR THE RECESSIONAL AND AFTER MASS**

- The **Lectors** do NOT carry the Book of the Gospels in the Recessional. Please move to the altar steps on the side with the ambo when Father kisses the altar. Then bow when he bows, and process out in the same order as in the entrance procession.
- After Mass, one lector should return the Book of the Gospels to the sacristy (behind the organ.)

#### **Contact Information:**

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## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

(From the USCCB; [www.usccb.org/liturgy/girm/lit3.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/girm/lit3.shtml))

### Reading and Explaining the Word of God

When the Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself is speaking to his people, and Christ, present in his own word, is proclaiming the gospel. The readings of God's word must therefore be listened to by all with reverence; they make up a principal element of the liturgy. In the biblical readings, God's word addresses all people of every era and is understandable to them, and a fuller understanding and efficacy are fostered by a living commentary on it, that is to say, by the homily, understood as an integral part of the liturgical action (GIRM 29).<sup>(1)</sup>

### Vocal Expression of the Different Texts

In texts that are to be delivered in a loud and clear voice, whether by the priest or deacon or by the lector, or by all, the tone of voice should correspond to the genre of the text, that is, accordingly as it is a reading, a prayer, an instruction, an acclamation, or a liturgical song; the tone should also be suited to the form of celebration and to the solemnity of the gathering. Other criteria are the idiom of different languages and the genius of peoples. (38).

### Silence

The liturgy of the word must be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation. For this reason, any kind of haste which impedes recollection must be clearly avoided. Brief moments of silence are appropriate during the liturgy. Such moments should be suitable for the gathered assembly, in which the Word of God is taken into the heart by the fostering of the Holy Spirit, and its response is prepared through prayer. Such moments of silence are opportunely observed after the first and second reading, and then, at the completion of the homily (56).

### Scripture Readings

- In the readings, the table of God's word is laid for the faithful and the riches of the Bible are opened to them. Hence, the arrangement of the biblical readings must be observed, whereby the unity of each Testament and of the history of salvation is demonstrated; nor is it permitted that the readings and responsorial psalm, which contain the word of God, are substituted by other, non-biblical texts (57).
- In the celebration of the Mass with a congregation, the readings are always given from the ambo (58).
- By tradition, the office of reading the Scriptures is a ministerial, not a presidential function. The readings should be delivered by a lector, the Gospel being proclaimed by the deacon or by a priest other than the celebrant. If, however, a deacon or other priest is not present, the priest celebrant proclaims the Gospel. Further, if a suitable lector is not present, then the priest celebrant also delivers the other readings. After each reading, whoever does the reading proclaims the acclamation. Responding to it, the gathered people honor the word of God which they have received with faith and grateful hearts (59).
- The lector is instituted to proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture, with the exception of the gospel reading. He may also announce the intentions for the *General Intercessions* and, in the absence of the psalmist, sing or read the psalm between the readings. In the celebration of the Eucharist, the lector has specific duties which he alone ought to perform, even though ordained ministers may be present (99).
- In the absence of an instituted lector, other lay people may be designated to proclaim the readings from the Sacred Scriptures. Such designated lectors must be truly qualified and carefully prepared for this office, so that the faithful will develop a warm and lively love for Sacred Scripture from listening to the reading from the sacred texts (101).

### Liturgy of the Word

- After the opening prayer, all sit. The priest may, in a very few words, introduce the faithful to the liturgy of the word. Then the lector goes to the ambo and proclaims the first reading from the *Lectionary* already placed there before Mass; all sit and listen. At the end, the lector makes the acclamation, *The Word of the Lord*, with all responding, *Thanks be to God*.
- Then a brief period of silence may be observed as appropriate, so that all may meditate on what they have heard (128).
- The psalmist or the lector sings or recites the psalm verse and, as a rule, the congregation makes the response (129).
- If there is a second reading before the Gospel, the lector proclaims it from the ambo with all listening and making the acclamation at the end, as above (128). Then, as the occasion allows, a brief period of silence may be observed (130).

## Functions of the Lector

### Introductory Rites

- In the procession to the altar, when no deacon is present, the lector, wearing the appropriate vesture,<sup>(2)</sup> may carry the *Book of the Gospels* elevated slightly. In that case, the lector walks in front of the priest, otherwise with the other ministers (194).
- Upon reaching the altar, the lector makes a profound bow with the others.<sup>(3)</sup> If the lector is carrying the *Book of the Gospels*, the lector goes to the altar and places the *Book of the Gospels* on it. Then, the lector takes up a position in the sanctuary with the other ministers (195).

### Liturgy of the Word

- At the ambo the lector proclaims the readings that precede the gospel reading. If there is no psalmist, the lector may also sing or recite the responsorial psalm after the first reading (196).
- After the priest gives the introduction to the *General Intercessions*, the lector may announce the intentions from the ambo when no deacon is present (197).
- If there is no opening liturgical song or communion song and the antiphons in the Missal are not said by the faithful, the lector may recite them at the appropriate time (198).

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

- 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.

### Notes

1. All subsequent citations are from the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, unless otherwise noted.
2. GIRM, no. 339: *...lectors, and other lay ministers may wear the alb or other suitable vesture or other appropriate and dignified clothing.*
3. Ibid., no. 274. *If, however, the tabernacle with the Most Blessed Sacrament is present in the sanctuary, the priest, the deacon, and the other ministers genuflect when they approach the altar and when they depart from it, but not during the celebration of Mass itself.*

