

GUIDELINES FOR LECTORS

Parish of the Precious Blood

The purpose of this guide is to provide some general observations and principles on the ministry of Lector. These notes include the importance of this ministry, the proper liturgical practice of this ministry, and the Church's expectations that are universal and also some that may be specific to our parishes. The intention and spirit of this guide centers on helping our parishes experience the proclaimed Word of God as a powerful celebration by offering some basic, essential principles required of the lector.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

1. Lectors bring the living Word of God to the assembly. The ministry of lector must, therefore, be treated seriously and with dignity.
2. The Word of God is not merely read during the liturgy. It is proclaimed, yet not with theatrical show. Effective proclamation of the Word involves the delivery of the message with clarity, conviction and appropriate pace and tone of voice. The proclamation of the Word presupposes the faith of the lector. It also rouses faith in those who hear the Word proclaimed.
3. Ideally, the assembly should listen to the proclamation of the Scripture and not read along in a missalette. In the act of listening to the Word the worshippers, not only experience unity as Church, but also the presence of God speaking to them through the Word.

REQUIREMENTS

1. All lectors must be properly trained for this ministry. The ministry of the Word requires skill at public reading, knowledge of the principles of the liturgy, and an understanding of Scripture.
2. For pastoral reasons family members and friends may be allowed to read at funeral or wedding liturgies even though they may not have had formal training as lector. In such a case, the presiding priest is responsible for assuring that the Word is properly proclaimed.

3. Lectors need to be fully initiated, practicing Catholics whose lives witness to the Word they proclaim.
4. All lectors must be commissioned for their ministry.
5. All lectors should periodically participate in enrichment lectors, workshops, classes, or programs.

PREPARATION

1. To make the service of the Word effective, all lectors are expected to prepare for their ministry. Preparation should include prayer of the text and reflection on its message. It should also include the preparation of some practical items such as learning the correct pronunciation of words and locating the reading in the lectionary when you arrive at church.

SYMBOLS AND THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

1. God speaks to the faith community through persons, actions, and objects. Symbols are very important to the effectiveness of the Word on the hearer. These symbols include: the lector, the lectionary, the Book of the Gospel, the ambo and the procession.
 - a. The lector: Within Mass the lector must actively participate in the entire liturgy.
 - b. The Lectionary and the Book of the Gospels: These are dignified and well bound books from which the Word is proclaimed. The Books of the Gospels is placed on the Altar to emphasize that the reading of the Gospel is the high point in the Liturgy of the Word and also of the special reverence given to the Gospel reading by the Church. The Word should never be proclaimed from the missalette but only from liturgical books.
 - c. The Ambo: This is the symbol of the presence of the Word of God in the Church just as the Altar is the symbol of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Word is proclaimed from the ambo. Candles may be placed next to it. The responsorial Psalm is part of the Liturgy of the Word and should be proclaimed, preferably in song, from the ambo.
 - d. The Gospel acclamation is always sung. If it is not sung it is omitted.

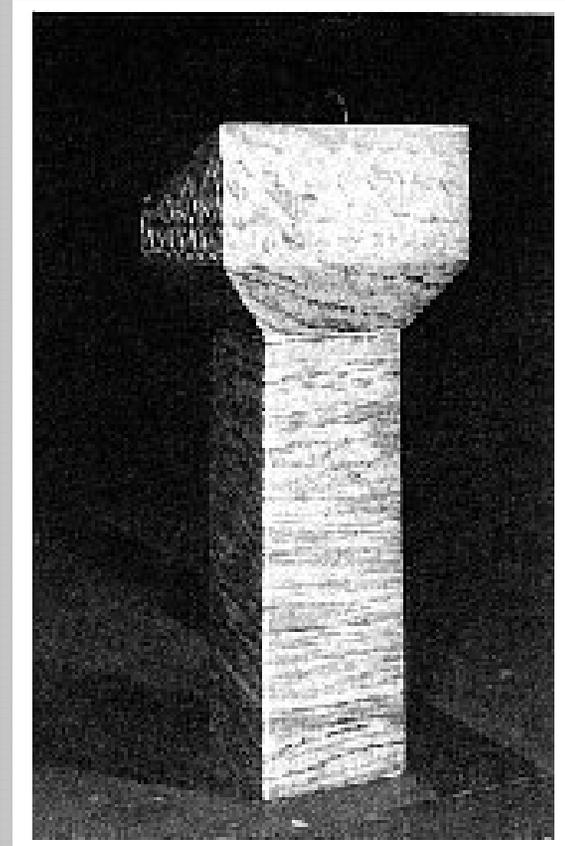
- e. Procession: Lectors should take part in the entrance procession. A Lector (or Deacon) should carry the Book of the Gospels and place it on the Altar. The Lectionary rests on the Ambo and is not carried in unless there is no Book of the Gospels.
2. A pause of 10 to 15 seconds should be allowed in between each reading and the Psalm. A brief period of silence should also be observed after the Psalm.

SEATING OF THE LECTORS

1. Lectors are to sit with the rest of the assembly preferably with easy access to an aisle. At the time of the Liturgy of the Word, the lector approaches the front of the church, bows to the Altar and then proceeds to the ambo. After the reading, the lector returns to his/her seat in a similar manner. When there are two lectors, the first reader returns to his/her seat after the reading and before the Psalm is sung or read. The second reader would then approach the ambo after the Psalm and return to his/her seat before the Gospel acclamation. When there is only one reader, he/she is to sit near the ambo during the singing/reading of the Psalm

USEFUL HINTS

1. Lectors should begin to read by saying, "A reading from the Book of Exodus (Example) and should end with a pause and then by saying, "the Word of the Lord."
2. Ministers of the Word should not add any of their own words to the text.
3. Anything that might distract from the proclaimed Word such as leaning on the ambo, hands in the pockets, shuffling or swaying, and chewing gum should be avoided.
4. The lector should never do anything to draw attention to him/herself at anytime. Clothing should be modest and appropriate for the occasion in keeping with the dignity of the ministry. Summer shorts, t-shirts, short skirts, or anything that is not your Sunday best should not be worn.



“Then they set out and went from
village to village proclaiming the
good news....”
-Luke 9:6