

Lectors

Revised September 2016

Preparing for your ministry is part of the commitment to be a Lector. You are not “just reading a story” – **you are proclaiming the Word of God, YOU are “the Word made flesh”.** Lectors need a workbook that includes the readings for all Sundays and Feast Days. The workbook includes a brief explanation of the readings, suggestions for emphasis, and pronunciation of words. Pray to the Holy Spirit and practice both readings **out loud** three times before you come to mass. New workbooks arrive in November – pick yours up from the vestibule. Readings are also available at <http://www.usccb.org/nab/index.shtml> but this webpage does not contain the helpful extras.

Come 15 minutes early. Find the Lector Sheet for your mass. The Lector Sheet has the Greeting and Announcements on one side and the Petitions on the other side. There is a **different Lector Sheet with (different Mass Intentions) for each mass** – make sure you use the one marked with your mass time! Practice the Announcements and Petitions out loud – you can use one of the back offices if you want. There is a pronunciation guide in the sacristy chest top drawer for unfamiliar words.

My name is first on the schedule. Does that mean I am the First Lector?

No. Two people are scheduled to Lector for each mass, but they choose which one will be First Lector and Second Lector. Coordinating with the other lector is another reason to come 15 minutes early! Usually the First Lector reads the Greeting and Announcements and the first reading (Old Testament); the Second Lector reads the second reading (New Testament) and the Petitions. That is what we usually do – you can change this if you both want to. You should practice both readings to be prepared. Plus, if the other lector doesn't come and there are no last minute volunteers, you will do it all!

Options for Readings

Sometimes there is an option between a long reading, and a shortened version. Our default choice is the long version, but if Fr is around, ask him if he prefers short or long. Sometimes there is a choice between completely different readings - usually labeled with letters: A, B, etc. Our default is to use reading A. Again, if Fr is around, ask him if he has a preference or look for a note on the lectionary specifying A, B, etc. But if no one tells you differently, use A. Fr Jeff may tell you to use whichever you prefer. Another reason for coming prepared!!

When do we go out and start the announcements?

After both Lectors have finished reviewing their readings from the Lectionary, the First Lector places the Lectionary and the Lector Sheet on the ambo then returns to the sacristy. Taking the Book of the Gospels, the Second Lector goes with the priest and servers to the vestibule.

Going by the clock in the sacristy or the bells, the First Lector goes out to the ambo at Mass time. Fr Jeff will wave when he is ready for you to begin. Ask a visiting priest if you should wait for a signal or start by the clock. After reading the announcements, take a seat in a pew.

During Mass

To form the entrance procession, the servers go first, then the Lector and the priest goes last. The Lector carries in the Book of Gospels, holding it up so that all can see it. Follow the servers, stopping at the bottom of the steps. Wait for the priest and servers to bow. Keep the Book of the Gospels upright - do not bow from the waist like the priest does although you can bow your head slightly. The procession then enters the sanctuary. Place the Book of Gospels on the altar (in the clear stand) then go to your seat in a pew. If there are flowers/decorations in front of the altar, it is perfectly appropriate to walk around to the back of the altar to place the book in the stand.

After the Gloria and the Opening Prayer by the priest, the congregation sits down. The First Lector goes to the ambo for the reading. Wait until things quiet down before you begin the first reading. After the reading, return to your seat. Or, if you are the only lector, sit in the chair next to Father for the psalm.

Next comes the Responsorial Psalm. Following the Psalm, the Second Lector goes to the ambo for the second reading.

AFTER THE 2ND READING (except during Lent) The priest does not read from the lectionary but uses the book of the Gospels. Our ambo is too small to hold both books, so **after the 2nd reading, close the lectionary and place it on the stand under the statue of Joseph. Leave the Lector Sheet on the ambo.** If you forget to move the book, don't run back and move it, but remember next time. During Lent, we don't use the Book of the Gospels. Fr. reads the Gospel from the lectionary, so leave it on the ambo.

After the second reading come the Alleluia, the Gospel, the homily, then the Creed. After the Creed, the priest makes a prayerful reference to the Petitions (perhaps something like "Let us bring our prayers before the Lord" or "Let us stand for our petitions".) After the priest makes reference to the Petitions, the Second Lector leaves the pew and goes to the ambo and reads the Petitions. After finishing the Petitions, stay at the ambo or step back a bit while the priest adds the closing prayer, then return to your seat.

After mass, take the Book of Gospels, the Lectionary and the Lector Sheet back to the sacristy. Your Lector Sheet should be placed in the marked drawer so that it is not accidentally used at the next mass.

Dress

Dress respectfully and in a manner that does not call attention to your person. Use your own judgement. We are informal at St. Mary's, but we are still reverent. Ladies – see paragraph below!!!

Bowing

Although it is not a church rule, our tradition at St Mary is, during mass, to always bow before going up the steps to the ambo and again after descending the steps. A bow is a sign of respect. The altar is a Christ symbol and should be respected. Ladies, please be aware of your hemline and neckline when you bow! It is perfectly fine to wear a short skirt or V-neck blouse to mass, but in that case just make a "head & shoulders" bow – not a deep bow from the waist. It seems silly to have to mention this but unfortunately there really have been some instances of exposed underwear during bows.

NOTES:

Part of lectoring is to be in the sacristy 15 minutes before mass. If you are late a sub may have been found. In that case, the sub has the option of serving or turning it back to you. This is not meant to punish the lector who is late, but it is a practical procedure – mass can't wait because a parking spot was hard to find!

Practice early in the week. The readings will be in the back of your mind all week, and you may be surprised at the connections you will find between these ancient words and our modern world. This will help you to move from just "reading" at mass, to proclaiming the Word of God.

Audio recordings of the readings are available through the United States conference of Catholic Bishops web page: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings-audio.cfm>. There is a link to these from the web terminal, on the Full Schedules tab. Click on a mass time/date to see all the ministers scheduled and the link to the readings and recording. Some of the examples sound kind of flat to me, so I am not telling you to try to sound like them, but they speak very clearly (which I really like) and you can get help on any hard to pronounce names/words.

Your readings end with a period after the final sentence. Then there is a blank line on the page followed by the phrase: "The Word of the Lord." Please note that is five separate words! Sometimes nervousness causes lectors to run the words together into: "ThewordoftheLord." In order to prevent that, at the end of

the scripture passage – at the final period – stop! Take a breath, look up at the congregation, count to three and say all five words: “The Word of the Lord.”

Record yourself and listen critically. Cell phones are great helpers for this. Do you need to practice a difficult word? Your workbook has pronunciation help. Did your pauses work with the sentence structure? Are you speeding up towards the end of the reading? Can you memorize a key phrase and look at the congregation as you speak it? Is your delivery flat or overdramatic? Would you pay attention if you heard this proclamation?

If only one lector comes, you can place the Book of the Gospels in the stand on the altar before mass instead of carrying it in the entrance procession.

When Mass is extremely crowded, Lectors should make certain that their seat has been reserved – before mass starts ask someone to save a seat for you.

How are you doing? Ask a friend to sit at the back of church and critique your delivery. Tell them to be picky – it will help you improve!

Lector Workshops

Please come to one of the following 1 hour workshops in the church. All at 7pm.

Tuesday, Oct 4

Tuesday, Oct 18

Monday, Nov 14

Thursday, Nov 17

What am I doing here?!?!

People who proclaim the Scriptures are not actors who assume the role of a dramatic character in a play. However, they do not submerge their own personalities and their own example of faith. In a recent reflection for the lectors at our parish I wrote: "There you are. Standing alone at the ambo in front of a church full of people. You have prepared your reading. In your own unique way, you believe the truth of the words you are about to proclaim. You want to proclaim them with conviction. In reality, you have prepared for your reading throughout your entire life. You have thought about your beliefs and how to apply those beliefs to the challenges of everyday life. You have been on a lifelong journey where faith, hope and love are your most reliable guideposts. The unique person you have become is now in plain sight before your fellow worshipers. One of life's greatest comforts is the ability to say, "I believe in something." That belief is one of the first things people see in you. It is also what the assembly sees because they too want to believe in something. And they know in their hearts, as you do, that the ultimate source of genuine faith comes from God. Faith requires both a personal relationship with God and a communal sharing. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says it this way: "Faith is a personal act - the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself. But faith is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone" (166). Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger said it even more succinctly during his homily at the Mass of the Election of the Roman Pontiff in April, 2005: "We have received the faith to give it to others." Certainly, lectors share the content and meaning of the readings. But they also share something more. By their personal witness of faith, they strengthen and enliven the faith of others. By their authentic witness of faith, they strengthen and enliven the faith of the entire community." Lectors are not actors. They are real people who make powerful proclamations.

~ George Fournier

Lector's Prayer

Lord, invest me with Your Power
as I prepare to proclaim the marvel of Your Message.

I have prepared my reading,
I have tried to take within me the meaning
of what I am about to read:
help me, I ask, to read not just with my lips
but with my whole heart and soul.

Lord, make me a hollow reed so that Your Voice
will be heard by all who hear me.

Free me of excessive concern over my performance,
over the impression I create in this Sacred Action.

Convert my feelings of nervousness,
turn all my apprehensions into an energy for proclaiming
Your Word with power and authority.

May Your Spirit fill me as it fills the Holy Words
that I am about to proclaim. Amen.

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