

A Guide for



Lectors

**Diocese of Prince Albert
Liturgy Office**



(2016)



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Ministry of the Reader:

The General Instruction for the Roman Missal (GIRM) states: “When the 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” (#29).

The reader’s ministry is truly awesome; he or she makes God present in the liturgy of the word through the living proclamation of the Scriptures just as the priest makes Christ present in the liturgy of the Eucharist. The reader’s ministry is the ministry of the table of God’s word, feeding us with the story of the wonderful things God has done for us so that we turn to the table of the Eucharist to give thanks and praise.

You have agreed to serve the Church as a reader. A reader is any lay minister who reads from the Lectionary at Mass or The Universal Prayer which is also known as the Prayer of the Faithful. You will be entrusted with the Word of God - a tool sharper than any two-edged sword. As any skilled craftsman does, you will want to know your tools in order to execute well your art.



Preparing to Read for a Liturgical Celebration:

Proclaiming the Word is an act of faith and worship. Readers need to prepare and take their ministry seriously.

- In your preparation, read all the readings of the day so that you get a sense of the over-all message.
- Find the main message of the reading you are to read; pick out the important words in order to give them emphasis; find any words that might give you trouble; find out the correct pronunciation of any words you do not know.
- Dress appropriately, in a manner that shows the dignity of what you are doing, and is not distracting.
- Arrive at the church at least 15 minutes before Mass is due to begin.

Please make sure you know how the sound system in your parish works! Go to the Sanctuary ahead of time to know how close or far away from the mic you need to be so that the congregation hears everything clearly.



- Check in with the coordinator, be sure the lectionary is properly marked, look over your reading.
- The entrance procession will be led by the cross, followed by the two candle servers. If the Lectionary is to come in procession it will be behind the two candle servers and in front of the two Altar servers. Carry the Book high and with reverence.
- When you reach the sanctuary, because you are carrying something, a slight inclination of the head is appropriate (*you do not need to bow*) place the book on the ambo and return to your place in the assembly. *If your parish has a Book of the Gospels that is carried in, it is placed on the Altar.*



“And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations.” (Mark 13.10)

First Reading

- If the Reader passes the altar on the way to the ambo before or after the reading, *they are to bow to the altar, not to the presider or to the tabernacle.*
- After the opening prayer is concluded, the assembly will be seated and Father may call the children forward and dismiss them to celebrate their own Children's Liturgy of the Word.
- After the children leave, the first reader proceeds to the ambo. Take a moment to ensure that people are settled and prepared to listen, and that you are prepared to proclaim your reading.
- In a clear voice look up at the assembly and proclaim "A reading from....." Pause, then begin your reading.



At the head of each reading the Lectionary presents the exact citation of biblical verses together with a one sentence summary. Traditionally the lector *does not read these aloud...* The lector does read aloud the announcement that precedes the reading; for example, "**A reading from the book of Exodus.**" Due to the ritual nature of this statement, *it is best not to vary it with redundancies such as "Today's first reading is a reading from the Book of Exodus."* (Let us Pray #293)

- After the reading is proclaimed it is appropriate to *pause a moment*, look up, and address the assembly with the words, "The Word of the Lord". Wait for the assembly's response, then proceed back to your seat.

Responsorial Psalm

- The singing of the Responsorial Psalm follows. If your parish has no music ministry, if possible have a different person other than the first reader read the psalm in order to truly make it responsory to the first reading.

Second Reading

- Once the Psalmist has returned to their place the second reader rises and proceeds to the ambo to proclaim the second reading (*use the same instructions as for the first reading*).

Gospel Acclamation

-The Gospel Acclamation is omitted if it is not sung.

Prayer of the Faithful / Universal Prayer

- After the homily, the assembly stands and we profess our faith. As the Profession of Faith ends, the third reader (Universal Prayer leader) moves to the ambo. After the introduction by the priest, read your petitions clearly, pausing briefly before leading in to the assembly's response.

-Similar to the Readings, it is not necessary to introduce the response for the people before the intentions are read unless the response is different than the usual "Lord, hear our Prayer."

- There should be no more than 5-6 intercessions. Guidelines for writing appropriate intercession can be found in the back of the living with Christ Missals or contact the Liturgy Office.

- After the priest celebrant has read the concluding prayer, you may return to your seat.



The Prayer of the Faithful is an integral part of the Liturgy. Having heard the word, the assembled people respond to it, are confident that God will act today (through us) as he has in the past, and thus "exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood," they "offer prayers to God for the salvation of all" (GIRM 69). The entire people of God form a "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9) who, in union with Christ, in solidarity with their brothers and sisters everywhere, and under the presidency of the priest, make "petitions, prayers, intercessions... for all" (1 Timothy 2:1). (Mystery of Faith, p. 52)

Glossary

Ambo: A dignified and stationary place from which the readings, responsorial psalm, and Easter proclamation are to be proclaimed. It may also be used for giving the homily and for announcing the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful.

Book of the Gospels: The collection of Gospel passages that may occur on Sundays or other major occasions, including solemnities, feasts of the Lord, and ritual Masses.

Discourse: A speech, lecture, or letter which makes an argument or explanation.

Genres: Literary types that have a characteristic style, form, and subject matter.

Lectio Divina: a process of slow meditation on the word of God.

Lectionary: A four-volume series that contains the readings for Sundays, weekdays, and various needs and occasions.

Lector: Any lay minister who reads from the Lectionary at Mass (also called a reader).

Liturgy of the Eucharist: Begins with the Preparation of the Gifts and ends with the Prayer after Communion, during which the action of the Mass is centered around the altar.

Liturgy of the Word: The parts of Mass from the first reading through the Prayer of the Faithful during which the action of the Mass is centered around the ambo.

Narrative: A story.

Proclamation: The act of proclaiming, that is, the act of making known publicly. Within the context of the role of the lector, proclamation is the act of making known to the gathered assembly “the continuity of the work of salvation according to God’s wonderful plan.”

*(Taken from the book ‘Guide for Lectors’ by Meagher and Turner)

Thank you for your service at the Eucharist.



Prayer in Preparing to Read at Mass

Almighty God, cleanse my heart and my lips that I may worthily proclaim your Word; bless my efforts to prepare, that I may meditate on your Word, understand it better, and proclaim it faithfully to your people; surround my ministry with your presence, that I may carefully perform the task entrusted to me, preach Jesus Christ to others, announce the Word of God properly, watch it grow in the hearts of listeners and give glory to you, Father, through your Son and in the Holy Spirit.

(Adapted from 'Messengers of God's Word:
A Handbook for Lectors,' Fr. Joseph M Champlin)

