

Saint Patrick Church Victor New York

Guidelines for Lectors

Prayer

Everlasting God,
when he read in the synagogue at Nazareth,
your Son, Jesus, proclaimed the good news of salvation
for which he would give up his life.
Open my lips that my mouth may declare your praise.
Open my heart that I may greatly love the Word made flesh.
Strengthen my will that I may live the holy words I speak.
Your Word is all holy and all true
and lives in glory with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.



Remote Preparation

The proclamation of the Word of God is a ministry in the Church. Lectors duly bring the living Word of God to the liturgical assembly. In and through them, God speaks to His people. The ministry of the Word, therefore, must be treated seriously and with great dignity.

The Word of God is not merely *read* during the liturgy. It is *proclaimed!* “*For in the liturgy God speaks to His people and Christ is still proclaiming His gospel*” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 33). Effective proclamation involves the delivery of the message with clarity and conviction. Proclamation of the Word of God is a sacred ministry, which presupposes living the Christian faith and, in this way, it can rouse faith in those who hear the Word proclaimed.

In order that the ministry of the Word might be effective, all lectors are expected to be prepared for this sacred ministry. Preparation should be all together spiritual, scriptural, and practical. Spiritual preparation involves praying over the sacred text and personal reflection on its message. Scriptural preparation involves understanding the sacred text and interpreting it sufficiently so as to evoke a response from the People of God. Practical preparation involves learning difficult words and right pronunciations, and practicing the delivery of the sacred text aloud.

- Lectors are encouraged to read and to practice the Sunday readings.
 - Two lectors are assigned at each Sunday liturgy (including the Vigil Mass on Saturday).
 - Responsibilities of Lector I
 - reads the Introduction at the beginning of the Mass
 - proclaims the First Reading
 - leads the Responsorial Psalm, if no cantor is present

- and reads the intentions during the Prayer of the Faithful, if no deacon is present
 - Responsibilities of Lector II
 - carries the Book of the Gospel during the Entrance Procession, if no deacon is present
 - proclaims the Second Reading
 - During the Offertory, join the priest, and the deacon, if present, at the foot of the Sanctuary. Please assist in bringing the gifts of bread and wine to the altar. If the deacon is present, one lector suffices in helping with the gifts.
 - Both lectors return to the pews after the Prayer of the Faithful. Kindly reverence the altar with a profound bow at the foot of the sanctuary before going to your respective pews.
 - It is a good practice for each lector to be familiar with all the readings: first reading, responsorial psalm and second reading, and to read the intentions before Mass. To hear the readings being proclaimed, you may visit the USCCB website: www.usccb.org/bible/readings-audio.cfm.
- The use of the *Workbook for Lectors*.
 - Prayerfully read the Sunday readings during the days leading to the weekend. Begin by reading the Gospel. Then, the First Reading, which is chosen in relation to the Gospel reading. Follow with the Responsorial Psalm which is chosen as a reply to the First Reading. The Second Reading, on the other hand, following “*semi-continuous reading*,” may not have thematic connection with the other readings. (Lectionary for Mass, 79, 106)
 - Be attentive to the literary genre the readings belong to. A poetic text like an oracle or proverb will be read differently than a narrative text like a story, or an epistolary text like the letters of Saint Paul.
 - Be attentive to the tone of the Scripture passage – is it a chastisement, a consolation, or encouragement, etc.?
 - Be attentive to phrasing, pauses, and emphases. Here, it might be helpful to be mindful of the theme of the Gospel. Look up pronunciation of difficult words and names, using the Pronunciation Guide, the small red book, which may be found in the topmost Sacristy drawer.
 - Read the texts aloud. Keep a consistent pace and loudness, particularly at the end of a sentence. It is very easy to both drop the voice and to speed up near the end of a sentence, which can make the words difficult for the people to understand.
 - Occasionally, we stumble during the reading. Let the reason for this not be the lack of preparation.
 - Dress in a dignified manner that shows respect for the Eucharistic celebration. Clothes should be clean and neat, and reflect the importance of the Eucharistic celebration.

Before the Mass

- Arrive at least fifteen minutes before the Mass.
 - Pray.
 - Sign in, and use name tag. Let the sacristan know that you have arrived.
 - Know if the other lector is present.
 - Know if there is a deacon at Mass. In the absence of a deacon, Lector II must secure the Book of the Gospel for the Entrance Procession.
 - If there are optional readings or if there are long and short versions of a reading, check with the Presider, or the deacon, if he is preaching, for the proper version.
 - If reading the Introduction before Mass and/or the Prayer of the Faithful, go over the introduction and/or intentions and check pronunciation of names, e.g. sick parishioners, the dead, the person/s for whom the Mass will be offered.
 - Use the Lector's Binder during the Mass to keep the lector sheets.
 - The Lector's Binder is found and kept in the Sacristy.
 - After checking the Lectionary and the Lector's Binder, place the binder in the Ambo shelf and the Lectionary on the Ambo. Set the Lectionary open to the page where the First Reading is found.

At the Introductory Rites

- The deacon is given the responsibility of carrying the Book of the Gospels during the Entrance Procession (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 172-173). In his absence, Lector II processes in with the Book of the Gospels (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 120d).
- Since Lector I does the Introduction before Mass, he/she need not join the Entrance Procession. If not carrying the Book of the Gospels, Lector II joins in the Entrance Procession and with a hymnal, must join in singing the Opening Hymn. The order of procession: cross bearer, altar server/s, lector II, deacon and priest. As each person reaches the foot of the sanctuary, he/she makes a profound bow to the altar. There is no need to wait for others: once the profound bow is made, the minister goes to his/her proper seat.
- When carrying the Book of the Gospels, the deacon or lector need not genuflect or bow at the foot of the altar. The deacon or the lector goes up to the altar and places the Book of the Gospel on the altar. (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 173)
 - Then, the deacon waits for the Presider to come up the altar, and both reverence the altar with a kiss.
 - Or, the lector goes directly to his/her seat in the Sanctuary.

At the Liturgy of the Word

- Lectors sit in the sanctuary to provide them easy access to the ambo.
- Lectors approach the ambo reverently. Lector I must allow the assembly to settle on the pews before proclaiming the word. After completing the reading, the lector remains in place for a period of silence before leaving the ambo (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 128 and 130; Lectionary for Mass, 28).
 - Helpful Hints:
 - Lectors are not to add their own words to the texts. The words of announcement (“*A reading from...*”) and conclusion (“*The Word of the Lord*”) are intended to be read exactly as printed in the lectionary.
 - The announcement of the reading (“*A reading from*”) and the ending, (“*The Word of the Lord*”) need to be distinguished from the reading itself. Lectors make this distinction by observing a distinct pause after the former and before the latter phrase.
 - If the Responsorial Psalm is recited, the lector begins the recitation with the antiphon in the Lectionary. Announcing, “*The Responsorial Psalm is...*” is unnecessary.
 - Lector I returns to his/her seat after reading. If a cantor is present, Lector II approaches the Ambo after the Psalm. After the proclamation, he/she returns to his/her seat, after allowing for a brief period of silence.
 - All movements in the liturgy are performed with dignity and reverence; they are never hurried.
- After the second reading and the accompanying pause, all stand for the singing of the Gospel Acclamation. During that time, the deacon, or in his absence, the priest carries the Book of Gospels from the altar to the ambo.
- The Prayer of the Faithful is introduced from the chair by the priest, and the intentions are announced by the deacon, lector or another minister (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 71). The intercessions may be announced at the ambo or at a lectern or cantor stand (Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass, 31, 33 and 53).
 - The person announcing the intercessions remains in place until the presiding celebrant has concluded the prayer.
- After the Prayer of the Faithful, both lectors return to their pews.

At the Concluding Rites

- The lectors join the Presider and other ministers in the Closing Procession (General Instructions of the Roman Missal, 272). The order of recessional is cross bearer, altar server/s, lector/s, deacon and priest. Neither the Lectionary nor the Book of Gospels is carried in the Recessional.
 - Carry a hymnal and participate in singing the concluding hymn.

Genuflections and Bows (From Some General Norms of the GIRM)

274. A genuflection, made by bending the right knee to the ground, signifies adoration, and therefore it is reserved for the Most Blessed Sacrament, as well as for the Holy Cross from the solemn adoration during the liturgical celebration on Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.

During Mass, three genuflections are made by the Priest Celebrant: namely, after the elevation of the host, after the elevation of the chalice, and before Communion. Certain specific features to be observed in a concelebrated Mass are noted in their proper place (cf. nos. 210-251).

If, however, the tabernacle with the Most Blessed Sacrament is situated 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.

Otherwise, all who pass before the Most Blessed Sacrament genuflect, unless they are moving in procession.

Ministers carrying the processional cross or candles bow their heads instead of genuflecting.

275. A bow signifies reverence and honor shown to the persons themselves or to the signs that represent them. There are two kinds of bow: a bow of the head and a bow of the body.

a) A bow of the head is made when the three Divine Persons are named together and at the names of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saint in whose honor Mass is being celebrated.

b) A bow of the body, that is to say, a profound bow, is made to the altar; during the prayers *Munda cor meum* (Cleanse my heart) and *In spiritu humilitatis* (With humble spirit); in the Creed at the words *et incarnatus est* (and by the Holy Spirit . . . and became man); in the Roman Canon at the *Supplices te rogamus* (In humble prayer we ask you, almighty God). The same kind of bow is made by the Deacon when he asks for a blessing before the proclamation of the Gospel. In addition, the Priest bows slightly as he pronounces the words of the Lord at the Consecration.

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