



HOLY TRINITY PARISH

GUIDE FOR LECTORS

The mission of the lector or lay reader is to proclaim the Word at liturgy. The Bishops of North America, in their statement on the role of the laity in the church since Vatican II, have described this role as being *called by the Spirit into the Body of Christ, through the gifts which the Spirit bestows on each of us*. Vatican II documents speak of the importance of being *called and gifted* with regard to the proclamation of The Word. Qualified lectors demonstrate an ability to read the Word of God with respect and authority, and an understanding of scripture.

As a ministry of laypersons, lectors strive to meet the tests of being called and gifted. To that end, the lector ministry is open to those who are called to it and who are gifted by the Spirit with the skills necessary for the lay reader at liturgy.

This document is intended to familiarize the members of the lector ministry with the guidelines and requirements of the diocese and the parish. It will be revised periodically as norms change and older versions will be discarded. Please retain this guide for future reference and keep it with your current *Lector Workbook*. There may be some seasonal changes in guidelines and lectors will be notified of changes as they occur. It is a good practice to check with the presider before Mass for any changes of the day.

Schedule permitting, all lectors should be prepared to read at least once a month, and to prepare each reading seriously and prayerfully. Schedules will be made available in a timely manner and will also be posted on the parish website (htnh.org). Should you find yourself in a position where you will be unable to read, please call the lectors available for your liturgy and secure a substitute. Call the ministry head or rectory only as a last resort.

Lectors are expected to participate in the non-liturgical life of the ministry and make every effort to attend meetings and practicums that may be offered by the diocese and parish during the year.

PRE-LITURGY PREPARATION

Prayer and preparation are necessary for each reading assignment. The *Lector Workbook* provides an excellent starting point for interpretation and preparation of the reading. There are also many additional resources for the lector in libraries, bookstores and online. Group and individual bible study is encouraged and lectors are asked to increase their bible literacy in order to grow in the ministry.

Lectors should conduct themselves as the major participants in the celebration that they are, and dress appropriately for liturgy. Questions of dress should be resolved prior to the day of assigned readings.

Lectors should plan to arrive 15 minutes before Mass and make the presider aware of their presence. Lectors should have enough time to see if anything out of the norm is occurring and to check the lectionary and Book of the Gospels to be sure the proper readings are selected. Any questions of pronunciation should be addressed with the presider at this time.

Before Mass begins, the lector will bring the lectionary from the sacristy to the ambo and, when the altar party is in place, read any announcements or introductory remarks. When a deacon is present, the deacon will carry the Book of the Gospels in the procession. In the absence of a deacon, the lector (first lector, if there are two) will secure the Book of the Gospels and join the altar party in the rear of the church for the procession.

PROCESSIONAL

Due to the size of the churches in the parish and the ministry, the readings will normally fall to one lector, although two lectors would be preferred. There will be liturgies where two or more lectors are scheduled, and on those occasions, the first reader will carry the Book of Gospels (unless a deacon is present) and proclaim the first reading, and the second lector will lead the Prayer of the Faithful in addition to the second reading. When there are two lectors they will process and recess together, side by side.

The normal processional order places the lector behind the cross-bearer and candle bearers and immediately in front of the presider, or the deacon, if there is one. Regardless of who carries the book, it should be elevated to shoulder height. Upon reaching the foot of the altar, the book bearer will continue into the sanctuary and around the side of the altar placing the book in the center of the altar, then return to the foot of the altar and rejoin the altar party. The presider, deacon and lector will bow while the cross bearer and servers remain erect. The altar party then moves into the sanctuary as the lector is seated in a pew convenient to the ambo. These movements are reverent and deliberate and should not be hurried. *(Note: It is important that the lector joins the assembly and does not remain in the sanctuary, as he or she will symbolically come from the assembly to proclaim the Word.)*

THE READINGS

At the conclusion of the Introductory Rite, the presider and congregation will sit and the lector will leave the pew and go to the ambo. The lector moves in a deliberate and dignified manner. The lector then pauses briefly for the congregation to settle, and to allow for any introductory comments the presider may care to make. *Lectors do not make any introductory comments before the readings.*

The lector introduces the reading with: *A reading from the...* At the end of the reading, the lector pauses briefly before proclaiming: *The Word of the Lord.* If there are two lectors, the first lector will then return to the assembly. If there is one lector, he/she remains in the sanctuary.

The psalm will be sung between the two readings and the lector will be seated in a chair near the ambo. If a chair is not available in the sanctuary, the lector should step back from the ambo. After the psalm is concluded, the lector returns to the ambo for the second reading. In the event that there are two lectors, the second reader will move to the ambo following the psalm.

The second reading is conducted in the same way as the first. Following the reading, the lector places the lectionary away in the ambo and returns to the assembly. The presider or deacon will then rise to process to the ambo for the Gospel reading.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL (GENERAL INTERCESSIONS)

As the Profession of Faith is ending, the lector (second lector if there are two) will move to the ambo, in the same way as for the first reading, and lead the Prayer of the Faithful. Again, this movement is deliberate and dignified. This move should be timed so that the lector is prepared to lead the prayer as the presider finishes the introduction. At the conclusion of the intercessions, the lector will wait at the ambo, turning slightly to face the presider, until the presider concludes the prayer, before returning to the assembly.

RECESSIONAL

The Book of Gospels will remain on the ambo and will not be carried during the recessional. The deacon, if there is one, and the lector or lectors join the presider, altar servers and cross-bearer at the foot of the altar. The presider, deacon and lector(s) will then bow and reverence the altar. There is no need to hurry this process, as it should be accomplished with dignity and decorum. The altar party then proceeds out of the worship space in the same order as the processional.

Following the liturgy, the lector should ensure that the lectionary and Book of Gospels are returned to the sacristy, together with the intercessions and announcements.

NOTES ON PROCLAMATION

Consider the following as you prayerfully evaluate your effectiveness on a regular basis:

- Am I dressed appropriately to proclaim the Word of God?
 - *Appropriate business attire is recommended. Open-collared shirts/blouses and dress slacks are appropriate as well, particularly during warm weather. No sneakers or shorts.*

- Do I assume a posture appropriate to the liturgy and the reading?
 - *A posture of confidence will encourage the assembly to listen. Do not use your arms or hands for emphasis. Try to maintain eye contact with members of the assembly.*

- Do I move with dignity and grace.
 - *All movement should be deliberate as it will set the mood for your proclamation. Movement that is too slow or fast will detract from your effort.*

- Is my attitude one of awareness of the liturgical significance of the reading?
 - *Good preparation technique, including use of the Lector Workbook, pronunciation guides and other materials will help increase awareness.*

- Do I show an insight into the meaning of the text?
 - *Read the readings several times. Read the passages before and after the readings for context.*

- Do I enunciate clearly, pronounce well and pause where appropriate.
 - *Practice the readings out loud and listen to yourself. If you read too slow or too fast you may lose the meaning of the text.*

- Are the pitch, texture and volume of my voice appropriate?
 - *Be aware of the sound system and how it can enhance your proclamation. It is important to vary the pitch and texture of your voice to help sustain the interest of the assembly. You are telling the greatest story ever told.*

MICROPHONES AND SOUND REINFORCEMENT

Under most circumstances you will not have to worry about the sound system in the church, but you do need to know something about microphone technique.

Microphones tend to be good at hearing all the wrong things and ignoring the things they should hear. With that in mind...

The ambo microphone is directional, that is, it will hear only the sounds from the direction at which it is pointed. It would seem advisable then to be sure it is pointed at your mouth.. No! If you point the microphone directly at your mouth it will "pop" every time it hears the letter T or P. These sounds (and a few others) are 'plosives' and they create a strong wave of air that distorts a microphone. So.. what do you do?

The answer is simple: don't point the microphone directly at your mouth. It should be a little high or off to the side so that plosive air will not go directly into the microphone element.

The ambo microphone is sensitive. You should keep the tip of the microphone about eight inches from your face or the closeness of your voice will distort the sound. Before Mass begins, adjust the mike so it is at the proper attitude for your use. If you read the intercessions and the presider has moved the microphone, take a moment to adjust your position or that of the mike before you begin.

Speak in your normal voice, adding emphasis when you need it. If you notice that the assembly is grimacing or holding their ears, you are probably too close to the mike, speaking too loud, or both.

Notes:

Please keep this document with your Lector Workbook

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