

Procedures for Lectors of Sacred Scripture Resurrection Parish

Before Mass:

Since lector assignments are scheduled on a monthly basis, please take time prior to your scheduled service to familiarize yourself with the scripture readings. Read them aloud in practice because you will be communicating through your voice. You may use a Lectors workbook, a missal or a website to find the readings.

Please remember to dress in a manner which portrays the deep respect of the Word of the Lord. A Lectors attire should never attract attention or be a distraction.

Please arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the Mass for some prayerful preparation time before Mass. Lectors are encouraged to check the Lectionary and the Prayers of the Faithful to make sure they are correct for the Mass.

If there is a choir, check with the leader to see who will do these parts during the Mass.

- Entrance Hymn
- Responsorial
- Gospel Acclamation

During Mass:

The lector will be part of the procession. The processional members meet in the sacristy before Mass then walk to the entrance of the church. They process behind the servers (if available), but in front of the priest. The priest may ask the lector to carry the Book of Gospels in the procession if no Deacon is present.

The procession moves up the center aisle to the altar. Each individual moves to their area in the sanctuary, makes a profound bow and remains standing.

Following the opening prayer, the lector gives a bow toward the altar then moves to the ambo to begin the Liturgy of the Word.

First Reading: It is not necessary to say, “Our first reading is” or to read any other introduction unless instructed to do so by the priest. Rather announce reading itself such as “A reading from the book of Genesis”.

The lector proclaims the first reading ending with “The word of the Lord. There is a brief pause between the last word of scripture and the ending “the Word of the Lord.”

The lector should pause for a moment to allow the faithful to reflect on God’s word that was just proclaimed. There is no need to announce, “We pause to reflect...”

The Responsorial Psalm: If the choir/cantor is singing the responsorial, the lector may be seated. If the choir is not singing the responsorial, the lector takes on this assignment.

At the conclusion of the responsorial psalm, the lector should pause briefly to allow the faithful to reflect on the message. There is no need to announce, “We pause to reflect...”

Second Reading: The lector next begins the second reading. It is not necessary to say, “Our second reading is”, rather announce the reading itself: “A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans”

The lector proclaims the second reading. There is a brief pause between the last word of scripture and the ending “The Word of the Lord.”

Gospel Acclamation: The lector returns to stand by their chair to listen to the Gospel proclamation if song by the choir. Make sure to tuck the Lectionary on the shelf so that the priest may place the Book of Gospels on the Ambo. If not sung by choir, but the priest leads the people in signing, then the lector must stay at the Ambo to read the verse. After the verse is read, place the lectionary on the shelf and return to stand by your chair.

The alleluia before the Gospel is omitted if it is not sung. The “Alleluia” should never be read by the lector.

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he lector may serve as the cantor and can intone or sing the alleluia and accompanying verse if they have the skill. This should be determined before Mass begins when conferring with the priest.

General Intercessions/Prayers of the Faithful: At the ending of the Creed, the lector moves to the ambo to read the General Intercessions, if no Deacon is present. The lector should be facing the priest as the priest gives the introduction. After the priest completes the introduction the lector turns to the congregation to read the Intercessions.

After the last intercession the lector then turns to face the priest as the priest reads the concluding prayer of petition.

The lector may return to sit near the ambo or may return to the pew to sit with family.

Communion: The lector and EMHC approach the right of the altar to receive communion as the priest finishes Communion from the chalice.

Conclusion of Mass: Announcements are made by the priest just before final dismissal; however at times a lector may be given the task of making special announcements. The priest will inform you if you are to help with announcements.

After the priest announces that the Mass has ended, the lector will follow the priest to the foot of the altar. The lector bows at the same time as the priest and servers and then process out in the same order as they entered.

After Mass the lector may return the lectionary to the sacristy.

Miscellaneous Information.

Lectors are invited each month to pick a Mass to serve. Lectors may ask for consideration for only certain Masses each month or make themselves available for any Mass. If unable to serve at a scheduled Mass, please arrange for a substitute.

Lectors who would like some experience before serving at a weekend Mass are invited to lector at weekday Mass. Contact the priest to arrange this opportunity.

Most people hear the word of God only in the formal setting of Mass. Their only regular exposure to Scripture is from the lips of the lector and the priest. That lays a heavy responsibility on the lector. If the lector sounds prepared, earnest, competent and reverent they help the congregation to take the Scripture's lessons more seriously. A lector brings the printed Word to life. You give voice to God's healing and strengthening Word. The ministry of Lector is such an important office or better still such an awesome task, your external "attitudes" and "appearances" are noted by the community.

The art of proclaiming the Scriptures differs from speech-making and theatrics. Even though the vocal techniques may be fundamentally the same, their use and expression differ greatly. For in proclamation the text must be primary. The lector is only a messenger of the Word of God. He or she does not read stories, but rather proclaims the mystery of salvation.

Contact with the assembly is achieved not simply by words, but especially through one's manner of speaking. This in turn is realized through physical attitude, inflection and a sense of dialogue. The Lector should not lean all over the pulpit, but stand with reverence and concentration. Make eye contact when possible. Make your proclamation prayer-like.

Suggestions to help bring out the meaning of the readings:

- a. To put it simply, the readings from scripture have been chosen because there is a spiritual message readily apparent in almost every passage. The lectors goal is to allow the congregation to hear that message
- b. Make sure you know the meaning of what you read. Become familiar with the readings to understand the central points made Know points or words of emphasis within the reading. Look up unfamiliar words
- c. Use this website www.lectorprep.org . It has summaries and background on the readings and pronunciation guide that you can use for unfamiliar words.
- d. Examine the phrasing. The readings are written in sense lines which are an aide to good proclamation
- e. Be conscious that words provide us with ideas and images. When you prepare a reading, form physical details of the situation in your mind and in your heart. This will make the event you are reading more believable to you. And the more believable it is to you, the more you know it through feeling and love and the more believable and loveable it will be to the assembly.
- f. Learn to control the rate of your speech. Beginners often read too fast. Speak pleasantly slow enough for clarity and to help focus yourself and the congregation, but avoid being too boringly slow.
- g. Vary your rate, tone and pitch and use appropriate pauses.
- h. Do not drop the last line of the reading. Keep energy up through the very last word.

- i. Learn to articulate all the sounds in each word you speak, so that you can project your voice. Read clean, clear, consonants: T, P, B, D, etc.
- j. Learn to use your diaphragm rather than throat when speaking for greater control and volume.
- k. Proclaim the readings with strength, confidence and clarity. A good lector allows the community to sense the powerful presence of the living Jesus in Word without focusing too much attention on the lector.
- l. To read with emphasis does not mean accentuating every word or phrase. A very rough rule of thumb suggests giving more attention to verbs and then meaningful phrases while being careful not to overemphasize adverbs and adjectives.
- m. Good posture is important. Don't Slouch. Stand straight but muscles need to be relaxed. Body language communicates many things without us saying a word. Stand comfortably on both feet that should be firmly planted and slightly apart to achieve a comfortable balance. Don't tense your upper body. Put any tension in your feet if you are nervous, but avoid shaking your foot or any other fidgeting. Practice reading in a front of a mirror if needed.
- n. Be loud enough to heard in the back rows, but don't over blow the microphone
- o. Remember to pause before you begin to read and pause after you finish before moving from the ambo.
- p. Remember the best participants of the Mass are "transparent". In other words the Mass is the focus so your actions should only enhance the Mass, not distract from it.
- q. Dress appropriately so that the Word itself, not the reader, is placed in the foreground.

As stated before the lector should become invisible yet a certain amount of individual expression is necessary to make the proclamation come alive. This expression should never take precedence over the Word. Proclaiming the Scriptures at the liturgy is a symbolic act and we must remember that it is Christ who is present in His word.

Lectors are encouraged to ground their lives in the Word of God. They are encouraged to read the scriptures often. Prayer based on the Gospels and psalms will help lectors to become more aware of their spiritual responsibility to live what they proclaim and to prepare seriously for reading God's word to his people.

Catechetical Background (From the USCCB)

Scripture itself tells us that God's word is "living and active." His Word is not primarily a written text but a Word spoken and proclaimed in the midst of a community of faith. His Word brings forth creation and whenever it is spoken anew it recreates.

It is by His Word that Israel was brought into being and continually called to renew its faithfulness to Him; it is by His Word that the Church was called into being and constantly challenged to renew and reform itself. God's Word, therefore, is a Word with a power beyond all other words. He speaks this Word to reveal Himself to us but also to reveal to us our own deepest nature. It is this Word which tells us that we are His people, that our destiny is intrinsically interwoven with His life. And, more than this, it is by this Word that He makes Himself present to us. For this reason, the Church has never known a sacramental celebration apart from the proclamation of God's Word. Indeed such a celebration could not be a sacrament. God establishes his presence by his Word and the power of that presence once again calls a community into being to receive God's work and to graciously respond. The real presence of another speaking to us demands a response. And so too, the Word of God. He calls us by this Word so that we can live by this Word. As we understand the Word more and more deeply, we come to recognize that we must change, thus, the fruit of God's Word truly heard and attended to always produced renewal, a renewal that has at its heart a recognition of our origins as his people.

God has spoken his definitive Word to us in Jesus Christ. It is He who is the living and effective Word of God in the worshipping community. The ultimate purpose, therefore, of celebrating God's Word is not to read biblical texts but to encounter Jesus in a manner that elicits from us a unified response of living fidelity. Our celebration of the Word in the Eucharistic celebration is above all else a celebration of the presence of Jesus.

A sacramental celebration of the Word of God is never mere reading of texts. It is the public proclamation in the midst of the assembled faithful of who God is, where God can be found and how God works through us. It is a sacramental event. When the Word is truly proclaimed and heard, things happen. It becomes the experience of the power and presence of the living God in this community, here and new. It is the discovery that the great works of God are not simply history but are enacted anew in our own community as we gather to worship.

No lector may change the wording of scripture. The translation in the Lectionary is the only approved translation for use at Mass. You can not take it upon yourself to use more inclusive language for example or to leave out any words. However, it is understandable that mistakes can occur and if you loose your place during a reading, you may inadvertently leave out or add unintentional words. While you are to make every effort to avoid such mistakes by studying the readings in advance, you need not be worried if such an error occurs. Often you will be the only person who notices such minor errors.

LECTOR PRAYERS

Everlasting Father
in the beginning your Word brought forth life
and called us into being.
In the fullness of time,
Jesus, your Son, the Word became flesh.
In the synagogue at Nazareth and on the hills of Galilee,
he taught the good news of salvation,
the Gospel of life and of truth.
In an act of everlasting love
he opened his arms on the cross
and by his death destroyed all death,
leading us to everlasting life.
Lord, open my lips,
that my mouth may declare your praise.
Open my heart,
that I may proclaim the Word made flesh.
Strengthen my mind,
that I may live the holy words I speak.
For your Word is all holy and all true
and lives in glory with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Lord, as I accept Your calling to be a Lector,
Bless me with passion that I may keep doing it with
fervor,
Bless me with inspiration that I may keep doing it with
excellence,

Bless me with wisdom that I may keep doing it with
prudence,
Bless me with humility that I may keep doing it with
servitude,
And bless me with love, that I may keep doing it for You.
Amen.

Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of Your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth Your Spirit,
that I may worthily proclaim your Word Amen.

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 proclaim.
Help me to proclaim, 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.
Convert my feeling of nervousness and
turn all my apprehension into an energy
for proclaiming your word with power and authority.
May your Spirit live in me and
fill the holy word that I proclaim. Amen.

From the GIRM (General Instruction of the Roman Missal): The readings are always given from the ambo in Masses with a congregation. (58) While the new *Institutio* recommends the singing of the Responsorial psalm (61), it notes that "if the psalm cannot be sung, then it should be recited in a way more suited to fostering meditation on the word of God." (61)

In the absence of a deacon, the reader, "wearing the appropriate vesture, may carry the *Book of the Gospels* slightly elevated" in the entrance procession. (194) Upon entering the sanctuary, he places the *Book of the Gospels* on the altar. Then, he takes up his position in the sanctuary with the other ministers. (195) *The Lectionary*, however, is never carried in procession. (120)

In the absence of an instituted acolyte, lay ministers (readers) may serve at the altar, assisting the priest or deacon. "They may carry the cross, candles, ashes, censer, bread, wine and water" or serve as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. (100)

Admonishing that the Liturgy of the Word "must be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation," (56) the *Institutio* cautions against "any kind of haste which impedes recollection" and recommends brief moments of silence throughout the liturgy, especially after the readings and the homily so that the word of God may be "taken into the heart by the fostering of the Holy Spirit." (56)