

Lector Training

St. Anthony of Padua

Revised: September 2024 (Changes are noted in RED)

Order of the Mass:

The Entrance Procession: Ultimately, there will be 2 lectors. One does the first reading and the announcements, and the other does the second reading and the Universal Prayer. You always process in following the Altar Servers. **If there is no Deacon, the first reader should carry the Book of the Gospels above your head for all to see.** If there is a Deacon, please walk either with hands folded or with a Missalette to take part in the Entrance Hymn. When the procession reaches the Altar, the altar server with the Cross should be on the far left, and you should stand to their right. Bow or genuflect in reverence to the tabernacle when the priest genuflects. If you are carrying the Book of the Gospels, bow, do not genuflect, then proceed to your seat.

The Book of the Gospels: The Book of the Gospels is processed in during the Entrance Procession but is never processed out. When carrying the Book of the Gospels, bow to reverence the Tabernacle. Do not genuflect. **You will then place the Book in the middle of the Altar allowing enough room for the priest to reverence/kiss the altar and then take your place.**

Before the First Reading: There is no need to bow to the altar or tabernacle while proceeding to the Ambo. Allow the congregation to sit, settle down and focus before beginning the reading.

- Announce the reading, for example, “A Reading from the Book of Genesis” then **pause**.
- Proclaim the reading using the guidance provided in the Lector’s Workbook. Read slowly and deliberately. Allow your voice to stop bouncing around the church before continuing to the next phrase.
- **Pause** at the end of the reading, then say, “The Word of the Lord.”
- Return to your seat.

Responsorial Psalm: In the absence of a Cantor, please read the psalm. If a Cantor is present, he or she will move to the Ambo for the Psalm.

The Second Reading: If there is a Cantor, please wait until he or she is seated prior to returning to the ambo.

- Announce the reading, for example, “A Reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans” then **pause**.
- Proclaim the reading using the guidance provided in the Lector’s Workbook. Allow your voice to stop bouncing around the church before continuing to the next phrase.
- **Pause** at the end of the reading, then say, “The Word of the Lord.”

- After the Reading, place the Lectionary on the shelf of the Ambo.
- Return to your seat.

Alleluia and Gospel Acclamation for Lent: The Alleluia and Gospel Acclamation for Lent are omitted if not sung. If there is no music, the Gospel should be proclaimed right after the Second Reading.

Guest Speaker: If there is a guest speaker, he or she will speak after the Homily.

The Universal Prayer: In the absence of a Deacon, the second Lector will lead the Universal Prayer. Review any difficult names with the priest. Wait until the Creed is complete before moving to the Ambo. In his introduction, the priest will inform the congregation what the response is to each petition. **Once the final Intersession is read, turn to the priest and stay at the Ambo until the Prayer is concluded.** Return to your seat once the prayer is finished.

~~***Prior to Communion:*** While the priest receives Communion, as the Eucharistic Ministers are approaching the Altar, the lector walks to the ambo and says: "If anyone wishes to receive a low-gluten host, please come to the piano."~~

~~{This will now be read by the cantor prior to announcing the Communion hymn.}~~

The Prayer After Communion:

- When the Tabernacle is closed, the congregation sits. Eucharistic Ministers who are bringing Communion to the sick and homebound approach the altar and receive their pix from the priest.
- The congregation stands for the Prayer after Communion.
- **Following the Prayer After Communion, the first lector walks to the Ambo to read the announcements.**
- The priest begins the Dismissal Rite when the announcements are finished.

Recessional: The lector(s) should line up with the other ministers and genuflect when the priest does. When the priest turns to walk out, the lector(s) should follow the altar servers.

Did you know....

The Proclamation of the Scriptures at the Eucharist dates back to as early as the time of St. Justin who, describing a typical gathering of Christians in 150 AD, wrote that “the memoirs of the Apostles and the writings of the Prophets are read; the ceremony continues after the reader is finished.”

In the third and fourth centuries, a ritual action where the bishop would hand the book of reading to the lector before the readings began was performed. With this gesture, the bishop recognized the worthiness of the book and the appointment of the reader.

The lector ministry was originally a step towards ordination to the priesthood. It was not until after the Second Vatican Council that the ministry was returned to the laity who exercised it at the beginning of Church history.

Although existing much earlier, the oldest existing Lectionary dates from the 6th Century.

The Lectionary continued to develop throughout the Middle Ages and a one year reading cycle was established by the Council of Trent in the 16th Century. After the Second Vatican Council the Lectionary was expanded to the three-year cycle used today.

The General Instruction from the Roman Missal States: When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his own Word, proclaims the Gospel.

Therefore, when serving in your role as a lector, you become the mouthpiece of God. Although the words are ancient, God uses your voice to say something new, something modern, and something that applies to our world today, you are conveying the divine message! What a daunting responsibility!!!

References

Turner, P., & Maher, V. (2007). *Guide for Lectors*. Liturgy Training Publications.

Lector Responsibilities - The 3 Bs:

Be early! It is recommended that you arrive 15 minutes before Mass time. This will allow you to focus and to center yourself prior to Mass and to check in with the priest and other liturgical ministers as needed.

1. Always check the Ambo before Mass and make sure it is set up properly and everything you need is at your fingertips and can be accessed quickly (i.e. Lectionary, Binder with Universal Prayer and Announcements).
2. You are the first speaker so be sure the microphone is on. The switch is on the back of the ambo down to your left. You should see a blue light. Adjust height and angle of the microphone so that it picks up your voice properly.
3. Read through the readings in the Lectionary, since they are formatted differently in the Lectionary than they are in the Workbook!
4. Be sure to proclaim and project the reading.
5. Read through the Universal Prayer (Petitions) in case there is no deacon serving this Mass. Check with the priest if you are unsure how to pronounce a name when praying for the sick or deceased.
6. Meet the priest and deacon in the Sacristy. Ask any questions at this time, especially regarding alternate readings or long / short form for that Mass.

Be Prepared! Do not let the first time you read through the readings be 15 minutes before Mass.

1. Practice and prepare at home for several days prior to your assignment. Use the Workbook that was provided to you.
2. If there is a choice of readings, be ready with all options...you never know what the Priest or the Deacon will base his homily on.
3. Be sure to read and practice the readings out loud. Read them aloud with expression and feeling and then read them silently and prayerfully.

Be Aware! Keep the appearance of prayerfulness, but always be in tune with what is going on around you in case you need to step in suddenly with another responsibility (Responsorial Psalm, announcements, etc.).

1. The congregation looks to you for direction, know your cues and watch your body language.
2. Be sure to dress in a manner that does not distract the congregation from the matter at hand keeping in mind the season and solemnity of the occasion.

Basics of Effective Proclamation

Step 1: Reading for Understanding:

Effective Proclamations begin with an understanding of not only your particular reading assignment but cultivating an understanding of Sacred Scripture itself. Each book of the Bible was written at a specific time and place in history for a specific purpose and audience. Deepening your understanding of the who, what, when, where, and whys of the books of the Bible, will make you a more confident and effective proclaimer. Also, when Reading for Understanding it is crucial to determine the Genre, Speaker, Theme, and Voice of the reading. All four of these characteristics will affect your proclamation.

- 1. Genre:** The most common genres found in Scripture are Narratives (Early Old Testament writings, Acts of the Apostles), Discourses (speeches, Letters, lectures that make an argument or explanations, i.e.: the letters of St Paul, part of the Gospel of John), Poetry (the proclamations of the prophets, the laments of Job, the wisdom books, and visions in the Book of Revelation), and Prayer (the Psalms). Determining the Genre is crucial in proclamation. The storytelling of a Narrative is delivered much differently than the flow, cadence, and meter of poetry.
- 2. Theme:** The Theme is the point of the narrative, discourse, poem, or prayer. Understanding the theme that runs through readings and how the first and second reading, and the Gospel work together will lead to a cohesive and purposeful reading.
- 3. Voice/Speaker or Mood:** It is important that your proclamation reflects the mood and speaker of the reading. For example, the Lament of Job should be proclaimed differently than the Prophet Isaiah's proclamation that a "People in darkness have seen a great light."

Step 2: Reading for Proclamation:

Once you have an understanding of the reading, begin to prepare for Proclamation.

- 1. Practice out Loud:** Many times, although you understand the Reading, there are tricky words and turns of phrase that can only be mastered by practicing the Reading out loud. You will be less likely to trip over these phrases if you practice out loud at home. Also, it is helpful to practice standing up. Your posture has an effect on voice quality.
- 2. Practice Emphasis with Breathing:** Your workbook provides guidance on suggested points of emphasis. Learning to emphasize specific words and phrases correctly and effectively will not only assist with conveying the point of the reading and help with phrasing but will also assist with breathing. Proclamation, not unlike singing, should come from the diaphragm. Deep breathing will not only keep you calm and your voice steady but will also ensure that you have enough breath to make it through to the end of the phrase.
- 3. Learning to Pause/Managing Silence:** Effective pauses and moments of silence help us to center ourselves and focus. This can help emphasize key points and allows the Liturgy of the Word to be celebrated in a way that promotes meditation.