

Lector's Prayer

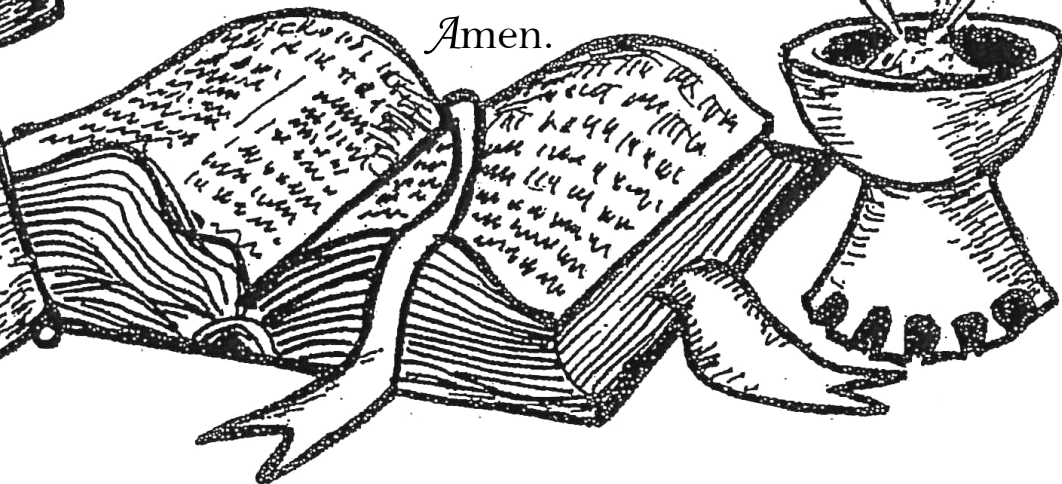
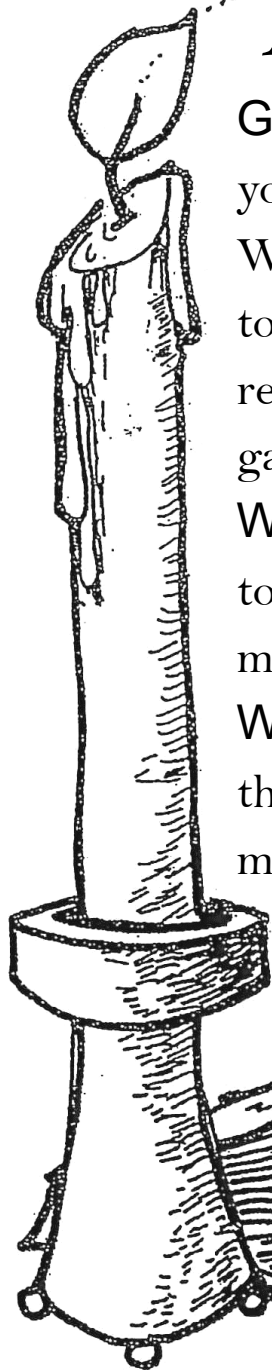
God, our Father, we believe that you are truly present in your Word. We believe that you become present to us in a special way when your Word is read aloud, where two or three are gathered in your name.

We ask you to help us grow in faith and to speak to us and to others through this ministry of proclaiming your Word.

We ask for the help and inspiration of the Holy Spirit in performing our ministry. We ask this through Jesus

Christ, your Son.

Amen.



GUIDELINES FOR LECTORS



Lector's Prayer

May the Lord be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart,
that I may worthily proclaim the good news of salvation.

- 1. Prepare your reading well.** Reflect on its meaning. Practice at home to become comfortable with your reading. Know how to pronounce difficult words.
- 2. Dress "UP" neatly and conservatively.** Flip-Flops, tennis shoes, sun dresses, tank tops, T-shirts, shorts, and blue jeans are inappropriate for Sunday Mass.
- 3. Proclaim God's Word!** Speak loudly, clearly, and slowly. Utilize voice control, appropriate pauses, and eye contact.
- 4. Be reliable.** If you cannot serve when assigned, please arrange for a substitute.
- 5. Be present at least 15 minutes prior to Mass.** Sign in on the ministry list located in the sign-in book on the table in the Commons. Take a blue Crucifix and put it on. If you are late in signing in, the ushers will start looking for another lector to replace you within the last five minutes to the start of Mass. Please arrive early and sign in promptly!
- 6. Please sit in one of the front pews.** The liturgy will move along more smoothly if lectors are seated closer to the front, rather than seated toward the back of the church.
- 7. Spend some time in prayer.** Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you in your proclamation and speak through you as His instrument.
- 8. Take a deep breath.** It is normal to feel nervous, and not just the first time!

LOGISTICS

FIRST READING

1. After the Opening Prayer, the celebrant will invite the congregation to be seated to listen to the Word of God. At this point, walk slowly and reverently. Do not swing your hands as you come forward. Reverence the altar with a bow from the center and then proceed to the lectern.
2. Proclaim the first reading. Say: "A reading from..." When you have completed your reading, say "The Word of the Lord". Do not say: "The first reading is..." or "This is the Word of the Lord."
3. After the reading, step back slightly. The Responsorial Psalm will normally be sung on Sundays and recited on weekdays. When recited, you should lead the Psalm. When sung, stay in place until you see the cantor coming down the side aisle. Leave the lectern and step down in front of the altar, where the cantor from the choir will join you. Together, reverence the altar with a bow and then return to your seat. Follow this procedure if you are a lector at the 9:00 or 12:00 Mass.
4. At the 5:00 Mass on Saturday or Sunday evening, the cantor will not come to the lectern to lead the Responsorial Psalm. If you are a lector at these Masses, stay in place after your reading until the music begins. Then leave the lectern, step down and reverence the altar with a bow and return to your seat.

SECOND READER

1. If you are a lector at the 9:00 and 12:00 Mass, come forward when the last refrain of the responsorial psalm has been sung. Approach the center to meet the cantor in front of the altar. Together, reverence the altar with a slight bow and proceed to the lectern to proclaim the second reading.
2. If you are a lector at either of the 5:00 Masses, come forward as the last refrain of the Responsorial Psalm is sung. Come to the center and reverence the altar with a slight bow. Proceed to the lectern and proclaim the second reading.
3. After the reading, step back slightly and pause for a few moments at the lectern. Then, as the ALLELUIA begins, reverence the altar with a slight bow and return to your place.
4. If you are asked to do both readings, just step back from the lectern after the first reading and wait till the responsorial song is over. Then step forward to do the second reading.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

If a deacon or deacon candidate is present on the altar, he will read the Prayers of the Faithful. If a deacon or a deacon candidate is not present, the second reader will read the Prayers of the Faithful.

As the last paragraph of the Creed is being recited, the second reader will come forward, reverencing the altar as before, and go to the lectern to read the Prayers of the Faithful.

The celebrant will give a brief introduction, the second reader will read the prayers, and the celebrant will add a closing.

When he is finished, return to your place. Reverence the altar as you leave.

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENTS

The ministry schedule for the upcoming month can be found on the parish website: www.saintben.com. The ministry schedule is made by the software *Ministry Scheduler Pro by Rotunda*. Once you sign up for a ministry, you will receive an email with instructions to sign-in into the website. A tutorial video will show you how to navigate the website and according to your preferences you will receive reminder via email prior to your particular assignment.

MINISTRY SUBSTITUTES

Liturgical ministers are responsible for finding your own substitutes. To find a substitute or to trade places with another minister, you need to log in to the *Ministry Scheduler Pro by Rotunda* website and request a sub or a trade. Periodically you may be notified if there are substitutes needed in various ministries. You may respond if you wish to be assigned by following the instructions in the email and logging in to the *Ministry Scheduler Pro by Rotunda* website.

COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

BODY LANGUAGE

On the way to the lectern your body should be strong, certain, relaxed. Move with authority. Clasp your hands to avoid swinging your arms. Reflect the importance of your task. **DON'T BE IN A HURRY.**

At the lectern do not give the impression of casualness. Both feet should be firmly planted on the floor. Hands may be placed on the lectern, but without leaning. Your body should be straight, but not rigid. Again, in leaving, don't rush away.

VOCAL ELEMENTS

Pace: A slower pace will help the assembly understand the reading, so **SLOW DOWN!** Slowness for the lector means roughly half the speed of regular conversation. Make appropriate pauses. Speak carefully, and slowly.

Volume: Breathing: Take good deep breaths. Breathe from the diaphragm. The Microphone: Every mike is different. Try out the one you will be using. Be especially careful with sounds that explode, like "p" and "b".

Projection: You must project to the back rows. This involves having the intention of reaching that area, with or without a mike. Watch the reaction of your listeners. Their body language will show you if they can hear.

Articulation: This involves the pronunciation of the consonants with emphasis on the final consonants. Differentiate between "d" and "t", between "g" and "k", between "n" and "m". Avoid the tendency to drop the voice at the end of sentences. The normal downward inflection must not be accompanied by a decrease in energy or volume. Maintain volume and projection.

Emphasis: Every reading will have several important phrases or verbs which should be stressed. Determine in advance the words you wish to emphasize.

Eye Contact: You are not reading to the assembly; you are **PROCLAIMING THE SCRIPTURE** and demanding their personal involvement. Sharing the Word means true eye-to-eye contact with the assembly. Eye contact does not pay off if you do it just anywhere in the sentence. It is most effective when it comes at the end of a thought or sentence. As you finish the last phrase or word, make the eye contact that invites the personal involvement of your listeners.

Nine steps to becoming a better Lector



*Pray for the strength to put aside your own ego
and for the Spirit to speak through you.*

Lectors need to be “truly qualified and carefully prepared,” says the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, “so that the faithful may develop a warm and living love for Scripture from listening to the sacred texts.” (66)

That is, perhaps, a larger responsibility than you thought when you signed up to be a lector. It means more than getting up on Sunday to do a reading. It means proclaiming God’s word in such a way that those gathered come to a deeper, richer faith. If you follow these nine steps, you will be on track for making that happen in your parish.

1. Read Scripture

You cannot effectively proclaim God’s word without being intimately familiar with Scripture. The Sunday lectionary is organized on a three-year cycle based on the first three Gospels. You will want to read Scripture according to the way it is organized in the lectionary. So, for example, it is helpful to read the entire Gospel every Advent (Matthew in Year A, Mark in Year B, Luke in Year C). Much of John’s Gospel is read in Year B, especially during the summer. That is a good time to read all of the fourth Gospel.

When preparing a reading for Sunday, read the Gospel first. Then read the first and second readings, which are intended to prepare the assembly to hear the Gospel. The second reading is usually one of the letters from St. Paul, which is read somewhat continuously over a series of Sundays. Part of your preparation can be to read the entire letter before you get down to the work of practicing your reading. Read the letter even if you will be proclaiming the first reading; doing so is another way to expose yourself to the riches of Scripture.

When you prepare your reading, read it in context. This is especially important if you have the first reading because some of the selections don't make much sense out of their original context. The first is to read the passages that come before and after your reading in the Bible. The second is to read the lectionary passages that occur the week before and the week after your reading. By doing both, you will get a sense of what the original author intended and what the church intends by selecting this particular passage for this particular Sunday.

2. Practice

To expect a lector to practice seems obvious. However, you'd be surprised at how many lectors leave out this basic step. To practice means to read the reading out loud while standing up. Silent reading at your desk may help you get ready to practice; but it doesn't substitute for it. Practice out loud at least six times. Practice on at least two different days other than the Sunday you read. Other helpful things you can do are: practice in front of a mirror, practice with a tape recorder, practice with a video camera and practice in front of your children or grandchildren. Children are great critics.

3. Pray

Praying is another basic but often overlooked step. Read the Gospel as a Sunday night prayer the week before you read. Read your reading as morning prayer at least twice in the week before you read. Pray for the Scripture to open the ears of those who will hear your reading. Pray for the strength to put aside your own ego and for the Spirit to speak through you.

4. Find the Emotion

If you want the Scripture you proclaim to speak to people's hearts, you have to find the emotion in the reading. Read the passage several times and try to discover the primary emotions. Sometimes reading the psalm assigned to the day can help. Once you have the primary emotion identified, recall times when you have felt that emotion. Try to recall that emotion in yourself as you practice the reading, and let the emotion come through as you proclaim.

5. Find the Most Important Phrase

Every reading will have at least one important phrase. Most readings have several, so you will need to decide which one is most important. If you are having trouble, use a pencil and underline all the powerful, interesting or disturbing ideas in the reading. Then read the Gospel again, and discern its main idea. Read your reading again, focusing on the underlined parts. Pray about it, and then decide what the most important phrase is in the reading. Emphasize that phrase in such a way that its importance is clear to everyone in the assembly.

6. Use Eye Contact

Always look at the assembly for a long time before you begin to read. Use your finger or an index card to keep your place. Always use eye contact on the opening and closing sentences. Make eye contact on words and phrases that reveal the key emotion. Make eye contact on the most important phrase. The more times you practice reading out loud, the easier it will be to make eye contact with the assembly.

7. Project

To project does not necessarily mean to speak louder, although that is often the result. Humans are built with two air cavities. If you inhale in such a way that your stomach pushes out, you are filling your lower air cavity. If you try to make your chest bigger, you are filling your upper cavity. To project your words effectively, fill your lower air cavity first, then your upper air cavity. As you read, use the air from the lower cavity first. Keep in mind that you want to use your diaphragm instead of your throat. Try not to rely on the microphone to carry your voice. Control your breathing, and make sure you feel your stomach muscles moving as you read.

8. Vary Your Pace

Almost every reading has fast parts and slow parts. Most readings also have loud parts and quiet parts. Some readings call for clipped, staccato rhythm; others call for smooth, melodic rhythm. When you practice, try different, even ridiculous paces. Find the pacing that works best for your reading.

9. Vary Your Style

Some readings read like stories, and some are read as fire-and-brimstone prophecies. There are “newsy” readings and poetic readings. Be conscious of the kind of reading you are assigned and match your proclamation style to the style of your reading. Also be aware of the season of the church year you are in. That will also influence your style. And different assemblies require different styles. The 5:00 p.m. Saturday evening assembly may need to hear the reading presented in a different way than the 9:00 a.m. Sunday crowd.

These steps will help you become a better lector, but in the end, it is the Holy Spirit that proclaims God’s word through you. Your job is to prepare as well as possible, and then let the word move through you to the members of the assembly. When that happens, “the faithful receive the power to respond... actively with full faith, hope and charity through prayer and self-giving, and not only during the Mass but in their entire Christian life” (Lectionary for Mass, Introduction 48).

Source: Nick Wagner. Modern Liturgy / Volume 25 Number 9