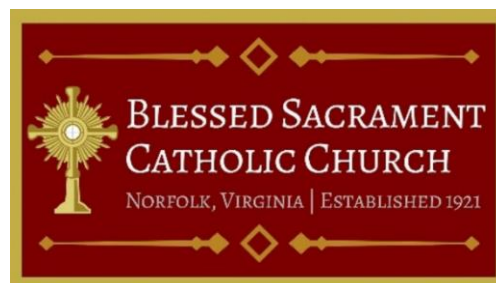


Lector Manual



Revised September 2023

The Role of the Lector

According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal 101, “In the absence of an instituted lector, other lay people may be deputed to proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture, people who are truly suited to carrying out this function and carefully prepared, so that by their hearing the readings from the sacred texts the faithful may conceive in their hearts a sweet and living affection for Sacred Scripture.”

Sacred Scripture is an essential element of the mission of the Church. It is the Word of God that is proclaimed, preached, preserved, and guaranteed by the Church and celebrated and made alive in the liturgy.

The Lector proclaims the Word in a way that is respectful, understandable, and meaningful to the lay faithful. To adequately proclaim the Word a Lector should reflect on the Sunday readings daily, pray frequently, and read spiritual materials in order to make the Scripture more meaningful to oneself and the congregation.

Qualifications of the Lector

Those who assist as Lectors at the Mass should meet the following qualifications for this ministry:

- ✦ Be practicing Catholics, distinguished in their Christian life, faith, and morals:
- ✦ Have received the sacraments of Baptism and First Eucharist.
- ✦ Demonstrate a deep reverence for and devotion to holy Scripture.
- ✦ Possess the requisite abilities and temperament to carry out their assigned duties.
- ✦ Participate in practical training of proclamation and opportunity for practice and critique.

Patron Saint of Lectors

St. Bede (Feast Day – 25 May) – St. Bede was born near a Benedictine Monastery in Wearmouth and Jarrow, modern-day Tyne and Wear, in the northeastern part of the United Kingdom. In 686, when St. Bede was about thirteen years old, a severe plague ravaged the monastery, leaving only St. Bede and Abbot Ceolfrid alive. One of the central duties of the monks was the chanting of the Divine Office, which the oblate St. Bede and the abbot continued faithfully.

Of his time in the monastery, St. Bede himself says, “I wholly applied myself to the study of Scripture; and amidst the observance of monastic rule, and the daily charge of singing in the church, I always took delight in learning, or teaching, or writing.” After more than a decade of study and prayer, St. Bede was ordained to the diaconate at the age of nineteen. He was ordained to the priesthood at the age of thirty. St. Bede describes the thirty-two years of his priestly ministry as a monk this way: “From the time when I received priest’s orders, till the fifty-ninth year of my age, I have made it my business, for my own needs and those of my brethren, to compile out of the works of the venerable Fathers, the following brief notes on the Holy Scriptures, and also to make some additions after the manner of the meaning and interpretation given by them...”

Proclamation of the Word

The proclamation of the Word of God is truly a service to the Church. Lectors bring the living Word of God to the liturgical assembly. The ministry of the Word should, therefore, be treated seriously and with great dignity.

The Word of God is not merely read during the liturgy. It is proclaimed, yet not with theatrical show. Effective proclamation involves the delivery of the message with clarity, conviction, and appropriate pace. It demands the ability to evoke faith in others by demonstrating one's own faith. Proclamation is a special ministry which presupposes faith. It also rouses faith in those who hear the Word proclaimed.

Preparing to Proclaim the Word

To make the service of the Word effective, all lectors are expected to be prepared for their ministry. Preparation should be spiritual, scriptural, and practical. Spiritual preparation involves prayer over the text and reflection on its message. Scriptural preparation involves understanding the text. Practical preparation involves mastering difficult words, learning the right pronunciations, and practicing the delivery of the text aloud, ideally in the presence of someone who is able to critique the delivery.

Immediate preparation before the Mass is also expected of all lectors. This requires arriving in ample time before the liturgy, locating the readings in the Lectionary, arranging the microphone, and making sure that the sound system is properly functioning.

Proper Reverence when Proclaiming the Word

- ✧ Lectors begin to read by saying, "A reading from the Book of Exodus" as written in the Lectionary. **It is inappropriate to add words such as: "The first reading..."**
- ✧ If the Responsorial Psalm is recited, lectors should begin the recitation with the antiphon. Announcing "Responsorial Psalm" is unnecessary.
- ✧ Ministers of the Word should not add or change any words of the texts.
- ✧ The title of the reading such as "A reading from the Book of Exodus" and the ending, "The Word of the Lord", should be distinguished from the reading itself. Lectors do this by observing a pause of about three seconds after the former and before the latter phrase. The same tone of proclamation should be maintained for "The Word of The Lord".
- ✧ While proclaiming the Word, a lector may place their hands on the ambo. Anything that might distract from the proclaimed Word, such as leaning on the ambo, hands in pockets, or shuffling from one foot to the other should be avoided.
- ✧ The lector should never do anything to draw attention to oneself at any time.

Procedures During the Mass

Before Mass

- ⦿ Dress appropriately to serve as a liturgical minister at the Sacrifice of the Mass. Modesty is key. Lectors should dress as to not bring attention to themselves and with the understanding that they are proclaiming in the raised Sanctuary. Examples of appropriate attire for men should include slacks and a collared shirt. For women, attire can include dresses, skirts, or slacks of an appropriate length. Tops worn by lectors should appropriately cover the torso.
- ⦿ Familiarize yourself with both readings prior to Mass.
 - ✘ Refer to the Lector workbook located in the server sacristy.
 - ✘ Refer to the USCCB website for links to reflections on the readings (<https://bible.usccb.org/daily-bible-reading>)
 - ✘ Refer to the link to the reading in the MSP Web terminal.
- ⦿ Check in with Ministry Scheduler Pro in the narthex at least 15 minutes before Mass.
- ⦿ Lectors (and their families) sit on the ambo side of the nave. There are signs denoting seating for lectors.
- ⦿ Return to the narthex 10 minutes before Mass for prayer with all liturgical ministers.
- ⦿ Check to see if there is a Deacon at the Mass. If he is not present, Lector 1 will process in with the Book of the Gospels raised over their head. Immediately take the Book of the Gospels to the altar, place it in the holder, and return to the bottom of the sanctuary steps to bow with the celebrant and servers.

During Mass

- ⦿ The Lectionary, located on the Ambo, will be open to the first reading. Leave the ribbon.
- ⦿ Check to make sure the green light is on at the base of the microphone. If not, press the button on the base of the microphone.
- ⦿ Lector 1 will read the first reading. After the Collect prayer, bow to the altar and make your way to the ambo. After proclaiming the first reading, turn the page to the second reading. Walk down the steps and bow again to the altar before returning to your pew.
 - ✘ In the absence of a cantor, Lector 1 will recite the responsorial psalm.
- ⦿ Lector 2 will read the second reading after the Responsorial Psalm. Bow to the altar and make your way to the ambo. After proclaiming the second reading, close the lectionary and place it on the shelf of the ambo. Walk down the steps and bow again to the altar before returning to your pew.
 - ✘ Should only one Lector be available, the Lector should plan to read both readings.
- ⦿ If there is not a Deacon present, Lector 2 will lead the Universal Prayer after the Profession of Faith.
 - ✘ Head up to the ambo after the words “I believe in the Holy Spirit...” are said.
 - ✘ The binder containing the Universal Prayer is located on the shelf of the Ambo.
 - ✘ The priest will open and close the Universal Prayer; therefore, stay at the ambo until the priest says the closing and all sit for the offertory. If a Deacon is present, Lector 2 will not need to say the Universal Prayer.

Friendly Reminders

- ✧ Bow to the altar prior to going into the sanctuary up to the Ambo; after you complete your reading and are returning to your seat once again bow to the altar.
- ✧ Do not move the microphone at the Ambo; moving the microphone makes a terrible noise that is heard throughout the church. If you speak clearly, enunciate, and project your voice, the microphone will pick it up.
- ✧ Do not rush through the reading and remember to pause after announcing the reading and before “the Word of the Lord.”

