

Ministers of the Word – Helpful Guidelines

Thank you for serving in our parish as a Minister of the Word. It is hoped that the following information and guidelines will help you in your ministry. It is understandable that it may take some time to change habits but over time hopefully all will be adopted especially the use of inclusive language.

During the liturgy, the Proclaimer is fulfilling a mission from God for sisters and brothers. It is a sacred duty that involves a sharing of one's own faith. This does not mean that one should read stiff or formal, but rather putting oneself into Jesus' position and sharing the Word of the Father with people. It is something special and requires meditation, prayer, belief, and a surety that one is sent.

Please be faithful to the Rota by fulfilling your assigned duty. If you cannot fulfill an assigned commitment, please secure a substitute. Do not wait until the last minute to do this. Your substitute will need time to prepare.

Preparation at home

The Proclaimer's preparation begins at home well in advance of the liturgy. Become familiar with the scriptures you are to proclaim. Reflect, first of all, on their meaning. You must believe in what you are reading more than in the techniques that you use. Read naturally, that is, according to the nature of speech, yet with discipline and conviction. Do not over dramatize, but don't be boring or wooden either, put feeling into the words. The word of God is alive and active! If you believe what you are reading, your faith and sincerity will be your most effective tools.

What are you reading – is it a story, is it a letter, is it a list of instructions, is the psalm a lament, or love poem, or song of praise- your voice should match.

Understand the reading. Considering what the writer is trying to say; what it means to me and my community; how it relates to the other readings and prayers at Mass; considering what God is saying in this word today.

Practice the proclamation of the reading, speaking the words out loud, to see what challenges the work of proclaiming has in store; considering how to speak it so as to give fresh and authentic voice to God's living word.

Spend time in prayer. Expressing one's love for God, and learning to trust in God's love for us. Praying for the community one is called to serve, that together, and through God's word, all might come to live in unity with God and with each other?

Arriving at church

On arrival at church all ministers should arrive in good time for the celebration of Mass. The reader should arrive at church in good time to check the Lectionary is open at the right place and ensure that the microphone is switched on and in the right position. Early arrival will also allow musicians and other ministers to advise if there are any last minute changes to what had been previously planned.

During Mass

After the conclusion of the Opening Prayer the reader should approach the sanctuary, bow to the altar and then proceed to the ambo.

If there is more than one reader and or a psalmist, all may approach at the same time and bow together.

A suitable period of silence should follow each of the readings and the psalm to allow all to reflect upon the word that has been proclaimed.

Inclusive language

It is important to use inclusive language. The scriptures are not historic texts. When read at Mass it should be as if they are being read for the first time directed to everyone.

Lectionary	Appropriate changes
My dear brothers	My dear brothers and sisters
Happy the man who trusts in the Lord	Happy the one who trusts in the Lord Happy the person who trusts in the Lord Happy the People who trust in the Lord
You are all sons of the Father	You are all sons and daughters
Brothers, when I came to you, it was not with any show of oratory	Brothers and sisters, when I came to you, it was not with any show if oratory

Unnecessary pieces to read

Do not say – “First reading”

Do not say – “Response to the psalm”

Do not say- “Second reading”

Do not say – “Gospel acclamation or stand to acclaim the gospel”

Guidelines

Before Mass

1. Go to ambo and check microphone and lectionary. See that all is ready for you.

.Liturgy of the Word

2. When the priest sits down the reader leaves their seat
3. Bow at the altar
4. Announce the reading “A reading from...” (Look at the people when saying it)
5. Pause (count to 5)
6. Continue reading
7. At end of reading pause (count to five) before saying ‘ **the Word of the Lord**’. (Look at the people saying it)
8. Count to 8 before beginning the psalm
9. Look at the people when telling them the response
10. Then read the verse

11. Look at the people when you want them to respond and read the response very softly to help them along if necessary
12. If there is no second reader pause (count to 8) before saying a reading from...(Look at the people when saying it)
13. Pause count to 5
14. Continue reading
15. At end of reading pause (count to five) before say the word of the lord. (Look at the people saying it)
16. Stay at the ambo, and the Choir/priest, after a short period of silence will sing alleluia
17. At the appropriate time read the scriptural piece (But do not say 'alleluia', or Praise to you lord Jesus Christ during lent))
18. If the Book of the Gospels is on the altar close the lectionary and place it on the shelf
19. Leave the altar and bow before returning to your seat.