

LECTORS' GUIDE



Dear Readers:

Thank you for your special service to the Lord, to the Church, and to our parish community. The Word of God is living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword! At no time is its proclamation more grace-filled than at Mass. Your service is not simply a job, but a great privilege and responsibility. You must first of all listen to God's Word, understand it, and live it, so as to proclaim it to others. The same Lord who speaks will lead you to worship Him truly present in the Most Holy Eucharist. Your reverence must be expressed externally in each moment, posture, and gesture, so as to honor Our Lord and to inspire our people to worship Him.

This ministry at times requires sacrifices from you and your family; for example, the sacrifice of arriving early and showing up when you are assigned to a time that is inconvenient. I thank you for being dependable, so that the community may rely upon your faithful service. When circumstances make it really impossible for you to read at your assigned time, be sure to get a reliable substitute in advance. The Lord will reward you many times over.

May this guide lead you to faithful fulfilment of your important role and to grow in God's love.

Fr. Larry and the Oblates of St. Joseph

Our Lady of Guadalupe Copatroness of the Unborn

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PREPARE

During the week prior to reading, review all the readings for the Mass. Find them in the Bible and study their meaning in the context of the books from which they are taken. Find out the pronunciation of any unknown words. Pray to understand what the Lord is saying. Think of the message for your life, and how you would share it with someone in your own words, without looking at the text. Realize that **God** wants to communicate his Word to his people through **you!** If you do not understand the message, you will not be able to communicate it to others.

Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the Mass at which you are to read. Say a **prayer** to prepare your mind and heart. Reflect on the message you are about to proclaim. Observe **quiet** in the ministers' sacristy, talking only in a whisper when necessary. A sign displayed there will remind you of the reason for this.

Put on an alb before entering the sanctuary. **Genuflect** to the Blessed Sacrament whenever crossing the center. (A bow is not the proper reverence to the Blessed Sacrament present in the tabernacle. Only while the Mass is being celebrated are you to bow to the altar rather than genuflect to the Blessed Sacrament.) See that your microphone and Lectionary are in place at the ambo and open to the proper page. When adjusting the microphone height and direction, always hold it by the neck and move it gently; do not touch the actual top of the microphone which is delicate. The Missalette will usually indicate to you the proper reading to be found in the Lectionary. Always carry the Lectionary with both hands, respectful of the sacredness of this book. Agree with the other Reader about who will proclaim which reading. On Sundays and Solemnities, see also that the stand for the Gospel Book is on the altar.

Do not enter the priests' sacristy. The priest will usually bring the Gospel Book to you when he has it prepared. If he does not, you may ask him for it when the five minute warning chimes sound. If the microphone is not on, you may ask a communion minister or the priest to turn it on. If there is a procession down the center aisle, when the five minute warning chimes sound and all is ready, proceed

to the front of church through the side exit door.

DURING MASS

Avoid any distracting movement. Lead the people in observing the proper posture with reverence, in listening to the Word, in answering all the prayer responses, and in worshipping the Lord. When standing or kneeling, hold hands always flat together pointing upward in prayer. When sitting place hands apart flat on knees or thighs.

PROCESSION

The Reader not carrying the Gospel Book follows behind the Candle Bearers and in front of the Communion Ministers. The Reader carrying the Gospel Book follows behind the Communion Ministers and in front of the priest. He carries the book reverently with both hands, the front cover facing himself about eye level. He walks straight up to the altar and places it in the stand with the front cover facing the people. He waits there and together with the Celebrant and other ministers reverences the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle by genuflecting on the right knee. (He should not walk backwards from the altar, nor should he make any bows or reverences prior to arriving at his spot for the group reverence.) Afterward, all enter the sanctuary and take their places.

READING

When proclaiming your reading, walk reverently to the ambo. Position the Lectionary in such a way that your face may be directed to the people and not down toward the book. However, always treat the book with reverence. Never hold it in a way that will twist or strain the binding.

Announce the book from which the reading is taken exactly as printed in black: "A Reading from ..." Do **not** read "First Reading" or the summary theme of the passage. Your role is only to read the Word of God, without adding any words of your own or from any other source.

Read clearly and distinctly, not simply words, but communicating the meaning and message of the passage. You should not draw attention to yourself by your manner of reading. It is the message that should be remembered, not the one who reads it. Do not rush. Pause briefly at the commas, a little longer at the periods, and longer yet at the end of a paragraph. If a page must be turned during your reading, have your finger on the page ready to turn it, so that you do not have to interrupt reading while you do so. Try to have some eye contact with the people so that they have a sense that you are speaking to them and not simply to the book in front of you.

When you finish the reading, make a nice pause to savor the message proclaimed. Then while looking at the congregation, announce

slowly, clearly, distinctly, and gratefully “The Word of the Lord,” pausing to await their response of praise. (Do not lift the Lectionary to show the people while you say “The Word of the Lord”).

When the Gospel Book is used, remove the Lectionary from the ambo. Return reverently to your place.

COMMUNION

You should be spiritually and morally prepared to receive Holy Communion. You should never receive Communion unprepared simply because you are up front or concerned what others might think. Step forward together with the other ministers to indicate that you wish to receive.

During the distribution of Communion, stand at the ministers’ side to watch that each communicant receives the host. If anyone carries the host away without consuming it, please follow him and ask him to receive it or return it to you, so that the sacred species not be desecrated.

After Communion remain standing until the Blessed Sacrament is returned to the tabernacle. When the priest genuflects before closing the tabernacle, genuflect along with him towards the Tabernacle, and then be seated.

EXIT PROCESSION

After the final “Thanks be to God,” proceed ahead of the priest to your place at the foot of the altar step for the final genuflection. The Gospel Book is not carried out, since the Word from the book is now in our hearts. Both Readers walk side by side behind the Candle Bearers and in front of the Communion Ministers.

AFTER MASS

Keep your albs on and return all the things you used to their proper place in the sacristy, or prepare them for the next Mass if there is another Mass soon following. If not needed for a subsequent Mass, the Lectionary, microphone, and stand for the Gospel Book are returned to the cabinet marked for the Readers. The Gospel Book should be returned to the priest’s sacristy. Do not touch anything at the table of the priest beside his chair. Remember the same procedures for reverence as for before Mass and the quiet to be maintained in the sacristy. Hang your albs carefully in their place.

Thank God for the opportunity to have proclaimed his Word. Go forth to live what you have proclaimed.

Praised be Jesus Christ! Now and forever!