

Guidelines for MINISTERS OF THE WORD

The Office for Worship, together with the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, has prepared the following guidelines for the ministry of lectors at Masses. They are produced in a spirit of helping our diocesan faith communities to experience the Word of God as a powerful and prayerful celebration. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Third Typical Edition (GIRM)* tells us that the Liturgy of the Word “is to be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation, and so any sort of haste that hinders recollection must clearly be avoided.”

The Ministry of the Word

1. The proclamation of the Word of God is truly a ministry in the Church. Lectors, in taking the Word and proclaiming it to the assembly, are, in large measure, responsible for the extent to which the people of God grow in their faith. They are the medium through which the living Word of God is received and absorbed by the faithful. This ministry is practiced with the highest level of reverence and dignity. Assure that attire is appropriate. A term of three years is suggested.
2. Although missalettes are used, the hearing members of the assembly are invited to *listen* to the proclamation of the Scriptures rather than follow them in the printed text. Worshippers experience not only unity among themselves, but also the presence of Christ speaking to them through the Word. The Word of God is proclaimed from the ambo, which is the symbol of the presence of the Word of God in the Church, just as the altar is the symbol of the Eucharist.

Requirements of Lectors

3. The ministry of the Word of God requires skill in public reading, and is proclaimed, that is, it is presented to the assembly with the power, conviction, interpretation and seriousness which the Word demands. Lectors must be well prepared for their ministry. This preparation is threefold: spiritual, technical, and exegetical.
4. **Spiritual preparation** is the acknowledgement of one’s role as a proclaimer of God’s Word, and involves prayer over the text and reflection on its message.
5. **Technical preparation** involves practicing delivery of the readings aloud, attending to matters of articulation, emphasis, inflection, pace, and mastering difficult words and pronunciations. Care is taken never to proclaim the Word of God in a dramatic or theatrical way, since this would draw attention to the one reading and take away from the content. The *GIRM* instructs it is also appropriate to include brief periods of silence both prior to the first reading, and after the first and second readings. It is helpful to prepare for the readings well in advance of Mass. Locate the readings in the Lectionary, review the hymns and the Prayer of the Faithful, and arrange the microphone. Please do not blow into the microphone as this can damage it. Just gently tap on the microphone to assure it is on.
6. **Exegetical preparation** requires that the lector become thoroughly familiar with the text. An understanding of the historical context is helpful.
7. The introduction to the reading (“A reading from the Book of”) and its closing (“The Word of the Lord”) are distinguished from the readings itself. The lector does this by establishing eye contact with the assembly, introducing the reading, pausing, and then proclaiming the Word.

A New Role

8. Here at Saint Maurice, the vestment and altar server’s areas in the Sacristy are not physically separated. In an effort to provide for safe environments for youth, resident and visiting priests, there will be a change in location where lectors await the start of Mass. Like the 7:30 a.m. Mass, all Masses will begin the same. Lectors, if physically able, are requested to stand by the open vestibule door before Mass. Here, lectors can use their sensory perception to assure the well-being of both clergy and altar servers. This helps our parish to create and maintain safe environments.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO THE PARISH COMMUNITY OF SAINT MAURICE