**GUIDELINES FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE WORD OF GOD**

"Readers exercise a genuine liturgical function. They ought to discharge their office, therefore, with the sincere devotion and decorum by so exalted a ministry and rightly expected of them by God’s people. Consequently, they must be deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy, in the measure of proper to each one. And they must be trained to perform functions in a correct and orderly manner." *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #29 Vatican II*

Those participating in the Lector ministry are called to proclaim the Word of God for Masses offered on Saturday, Sundays, Holy Days and other special services throughout the Church year. The Lector’s task is to reveal God’s presence in the liturgy of the living Word for our parish community.

The Office for Worship has prepared guidelines for parish laypersons who publicly read scripture, referred to as Lectors. These are to apply to those ministering during Sunday Mass, as well as other liturgical celebrations.

The purpose of these notes is to provide some general observations and principles on this important liturgical ministry of the Church. They define the intention of liturgical law relative to the proclamation of the Word, the demands of proper liturgical practice, and the expectations of the universal and local Church.

Ritual practices may differ from parish to parish, reflecting the variations allowed by law. Determination in this regard comes under the Pastor’s authority. These guidelines, therefore, are not intended to impose absolute uniformity in liturgical customs. Instead, they are produced in a spirit of helping our parishes experience the proclaimed Word of God as a powerful celebration by offering some basic, essential principles required by the very nature of the liturgy.

**THOSE WHO MAY SERVE IN THIS MINISTRY:** A baptized Catholic who attends Mass weekly, lives according to the teachings of the church and has the necessary public speaking ability. The Lector proclaims the Scriptures from the depths of their lived faith.

**COMMITMENT:** Lectors are asked to attend Mass when scheduled. And, as mentioned, you must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Catholic church.

*The lay Christian faithful called to give assistance at liturgical celebrations should be well instructed and must be those whose Christian life, morals, and fidelity to the Church’s Magisterium recommend them. It is fitting that such a one should have received a liturgical formation in accordance with his or her age , condition, state of life, and religious culture. No one should be selected whose designation could cause consternation for the faithful. (Redemptionis Sacramentum 46)*

**SCHEDULE:** The monthly schedules are mailed to your home and copies are located on the bulletin board in the narthex The upcoming week’s schedule is found in the bulletin as a gentle reminder. If unable to serve in this ministry when scheduled, it is the Lector’s responsibility to call someone else listed in the schedule who serves in that ministry and at that Mass time. If you know ahead of time that you will not be available to serve, contact Kim Garrow in the office **before** the 20th of the month. It is best to send her an email, text, or note as keeping track of all verbal communication from so many people is quite difficult. Please be aware that no one is perfect and sometimes you may mistakenly be put on the schedule. If you are listed on the schedule then you are expected to arrive and serve 15 minutes before Mass begins or find a substitute. If you are unable to find a substitute, please inform the sacristan. If you are the substitute serving, please inform the sacristan.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Lectors are fully initiated, practicing Catholics whose lives witness to the Word which they proclaim.
* On special occasions and for pastoral reasons, a young person who is not yet fully initiated (i.e. confirmed and has received first Eucharist) may be permitted to lector during a liturgy. Proper training, however, is expected.
1. All lectors should be commissioned for their ministry.
2. These Readers of God’s Word proclaim the Scriptures and are scheduled for various Masses on a rotating basis. Those who have been gifted with good voices and presence are invited to share their gift with the parish.
3. The words of liturgical proclamation more accurately when viewed as "performative," as accomplishing the work of salvation they describe even as the reader proclaims them.
4. The Word of God is a living and dynamic presence, achieving the very salvation about which it speaks even as the reader proclaims it. The church has taught us this view in the words, "Christ is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the church." And, again, "In the liturgy God speaks to his people and Christ is still proclaiming his gospel.” *(Vatican II, The Constitution on the Liturgy*).
5. In the reader's proclamation, the word of God is alive with power, achieving the sanctification of the people to whom it is proclaimed and rendering glory to the very God whose creative word brought all things into being.

**A COUPLE MORE POINTS:**

* Be reliable. Each Minister is responsible for serving when scheduled. Please be courteous: if you cannot serve when assigned, please arrange for a substitute
* Dress "UP" neatly and conservatively. (Flip-Flops, tennis shoes, sun dresses, tank tops, Tshirts, low-cut tops, shorts, and blue jeans are inappropriate for Sunday Mass.)
* PARTICIPATE in the liturgy by truly entering into a spirit of prayer. Sing and respond.
	+ This is not the time to be talking among yourselves. You are called upon to set a good example.
* It is expected that those who serve as Lector will arrive a **MINIMUM OF 15 MINUTES BEFORE MASS**.
	+ Arrive at church in enough time before Mass to review the readings. Ask for assistance with the pronunciation of any unusual names or words.
* Note if there is a Deacon at the Mass
	+ If the Deacon is present: He will carry the Book of Gospels in the Procession
	+ If the Deacon is not present: The Lector will carry the Book of Gospels in the Procession
* Check if there are any changes or if you are to read the longer or shorter version of a given scripture.
* Check that the lectionary is on the ambo.
	+ Check that the ribbon is marking the correct readings.
* Check that the sound system is turned on.

**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. (GIRM 55)
* 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. (LM Intro 55)
* Ideally, the assembly should listen to the proclamation of the Scriptures and not read along in a missalette. In the act of communal listening, the worshippers experience not only unity among themselves but also the presence of Christ speaking to them through the Word. Pastors and lectors need, however, to be attentive to special needs of the hearing impaired. (LM Intro 7, 37)

**PREPARATION**

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

**INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

* In recent years sensitivity for inclusive language in the liturgy has been recognized.
	+ However, the lector is not at liberty to change the approved scripture and prayer texts for the liturgy to accommodate a desire for inclusive language. (LM Intro 111)

**MINISTERS OF THE WORD**

* According to the ancient tradition and the teaching of the Church, the readings other than the Gospel are proclaimed by lay ministers. (GIRM 59)

**SYMBOLS IN THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

* God speaks to the faith community at worship through persons, actions and objects.
* To ensure the pastoral effectiveness of the Liturgy of the Word, it is important to pay full attention to the symbols of liturgy. Symbols that are integral to any celebration of the Word are:
	+ The Lector(s)
		- The lector ministers as one of the worshipping assembly and is expected to participate in the entire liturgy. Within the Mass, each lector must participate actively in the entire liturgy. It is inappropriate for a lector to participate actively only in the Liturgy of the Word. (GIRM 91)
	+ The Book(s)
		- The Word is contained in permanent, dignified and well-bound books: the Lectionary and the Book of Gospels. The readings are always proclaimed from these liturgical books. Non biblical readings are never to be substituted for the readings or Responsorial Psalm. (GIRM 57, 349, LM Intro 12, 35, 36)
		- The Word of God is not to be proclaimed from a missalette or participation aid, both of which are transitory or throw-away materials. (LM Intro 37)
	+ The Ambo
		- The ambo is the symbol of the presence of the Word of God in the Church just as the altar is the symbol of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Word takes place at the ambo. The ambo, therefore, should be permanent, solemn, dignified and prominent. Candles and other decorative elements may be placed around it. The ambo is to be used for the proclaimed Word, namely, the readings from Sacred Scripture, the Gospel, and the homily.
		- All readings take place at the one ambo: it is improper to have two ambos. (GIRM 58, 309, LM Intro 16)
	+ The Processions (Ritual Actions)
		- Among the actions in the Liturgy of the Word, processions are important. In a Mass without a Deacon, the lector takes part in the entrance procession; solemnly carrying the Book of Gospels slightly elevated, makes a bow upon reaching the altar and places the Book of Gospels upon the altar. The Lectionary is not carried in procession, but is resting on the ambo at the beginning of Mass. (GIRM 44, 120 d, 195)
		- The lector does not process out with the priest and the altar servers.

**SILENCE**

* In order to enable the assembly to ponder and reflect on the Word proclaimed, “haste that hinders recollection” is to be avoided. A pause should be made after stating “A reading from…” and before “The Word of the Lord”. Another period of silence should be observed after each reading before the lector moves away from the ambo (GIRM 56, LM Intro 28)

**THE SEATING OF LECTORS**

* Lectors need to be seated in a place which allows for easy access to the ambo, among the assembly. At the time of the Liturgy of the Word, the lector approaches the ambo slowly and with reverence. If the lector must pass in front of the altar, he/she bows to the altar before proceeding to the ambo. All movements in the liturgy are performed with dignity and grace; they are never hurried. After the reading, the lector returns to his/her seat in a similar manner. (GIRM 310)
* Whenever entering or exiting the Sanctuary, you should bow to the altar.
	+ When there are two lectors, the first returns to his/her seat after the reading and before the Responsorial Psalm is intoned. The second lector would then approach the ambo after the Psalm and return to his/her seat before the Gospel Acclamation.
	+ When only one lector proclaims both readings, he/she should remain standing, a step behind the ambo,during the Psalm response.

**PROCLAIMING**

* 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…”
* Extraordinary 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 the Lectionary on the ambo and rest his/her hand on it.
	+ 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 Lectionary or the Book of Gospels should not be lifted off the ambo while saying: “The Word of the Lord”.
* The lector should never do anything to draw attention to her/himself at any time.
* Clothing should be appropriate for the occasion, modest and in keeping with the dignity of the ministry.

**MINDSET**

* In order to put yourself in the perfect frame of mind, you should arrive at the church early and leave the entire outside world behind you. Your cares, your problems, aspirations, anxieties, plans, hobbies, hopes, and what's for dinner - all must stay outside. Find a quiet spot and sit or kneel and pray to the Lord whatever is in your heart. You might ask that He make you a worthy vessel for proclaiming His message and that His people hear His voice and not yours. Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you, that His flame be bright in your heart as you joyfully proclaim His Word.

**BODY LANGUAGE**

* The moment you step forward you are sending signals to your listeners. Are you reverent, dignified and sincere or hurried and anxious or cavalier? These signals come from how you carry yourself and what you wear.
* You should adopt a good posture, if physically able to do so, and walk with hands folded or kept naturally at your side. Walk at a reverent pace, slower than usual. Do not bounce, swagger or sachet and above all, do not run or appear hurried. One can usually tell how a reading will go based on the lector's approach to the ambo (lectern). Those who race to the ambo will generally race through their reading. On the other hand, those who approach in a focused, deliberate manner will also proclaim that way.

**POSTURE**

* Upon reaching the ambo stand squarely behind it. Stand on two feet, not one. Place your hands lightly on the lectionary or ambo or you may hold the book if you feel comfortable doing so. It is as if you are caressing and embracing God's Word just as He caresses and embraces us continually throughout scripture.
* Again, always strive to appear dignified, not nervous or casual. Do not put your hands anywhere other than on the lectionary or ambo or comfortably at your sides. Do not put your hands in your pockets, on your hips, behind your back or in folded arms. These gestures are cavalier, uninviting and distracting. Above all, do not use your hands at any point during the reading. It is theatrical, inappropriate and will annoy your listeners.

**ANNOUNCEMENT LINE**

* The lead-in or announcement line tells the listeners from whom or from where the reading comes, i.e. the prophet Isaiah or the Book of Psalms. Proclaim the announcement line loudly and clearly. You will get the assembly's attention if you start out in a positive, determined manner. Also, make sure your mind is one step ahead of your mouth. Flub the announcement line and you're likely to mentally kick yourself throughout the rest of the reading. Why? Because quite often as goes the beginning, so goes the rest of the reading.
* And always pause..for a few healthy seconds after the line is read. This will give the assembly a chance to place the prophet, era or Biblical location in their minds and ready them to actively listen to the passage.

 **EYE CONTACT**

* You may be doing everything else right - proper pace, effective pausing, speaking in a clear, engaging manner and so on, but if you do not look at your listeners, you will not connect with them. Anyone can stick his nose in a book and read, knees knocking together or not, but only those with the ability to look their assembly right in the eye will exude confidence and win credibility for the message they so urgently wish to embed.
* Now let's consider some of the best times to look directly at the assembly:
	+ when you first get to the ambo
	+ when you proclaim the announcement line
	+ at the end of a sentence
	+ during key words or phrases
	+ when changing gears (e.g. changes in mood, time, place, character, relationship, etc.)
	+ just before the closing line (i.e. "The Word of the Lord")
	+ during and after the closing line

 **PRONUNCIATION**

* There are basic pronunciation guides available that phonetically spell out the pronunciations of the Biblical names of people and places. For instance, Barrabus may be listed as buh-RAB-us or Capernaum as kuh-PER-num.These are found in the Lector Workbook.
* Also, the Lector Workbook provides guidelines for pronunciation for many, though not all, historical names and places in the readings. Please consult this source as you prepare your reading and practice so you feel comfortable with the pronunciation. The congregation will appreciate your smooth handling of difficult words.
* On the other hand, lack of preparation is never as obvious as the lector who comes to a difficult word, stops and then stumbles through it. This can be easily avoided with careful attention to detail in advance and practice!

**ENUNCIATION**

* Enunciation is different from pronunciation. The latter involves using the tongue, lips and teeth to phonetically make the correct sounds of a word. Enunciation means that the speaker clearly articulates all the sounds that make up the word. For instance, a common mistake in enunciation is to drop the "d" or "t" sound from the end of a word. This is a dangerous practice in proclaiming because very often, it is precisely the inclusion of the "d" or "t" that separates one word from another. For instance, "mend" has a totally different meaning than "men". Likewise "sent" without a clearly enunciated "t" might be interpreted by listeners as "sin".

**RATE**

* What do you think are the two biggest complaints about lectors' performance? You probably guessed at least one of them if not both.
	+ One is rate and the other is volume,
		- "They read too fast"
		- "I can't hear them."
* Rate refers to how quickly or slowly one speaks.
	+ It does not mean how much time one takes between thoughts or phrases; that's pausing.
* The best rate for a particular passage depends on the content of the reading but as a general rule, lectors should proclaim at one-half their normal speaking voice. That's right, one-half.
* Slowing down accomplishes several things.
	+ First of all, people do not listen as fast as you may speak.
		- People need time to digest what you are saying to them. Unless you slow down, they may not be able to keep up and will simply tune out. At that point, you've lost them and all that practice and preparation would have been for naught.
	+ Secondly, slowing down helps achieve clearer pronunciation and enunciation.
	+ Very importantly, slowing down brings an added dimension of power to the reading. Try it and see the difference for yourself.

**VOLUME**

* The other of the two most common criticisms that listeners have of lectors is they cannot be heard.
	+ The other one is reading too fast.
* Sometimes, the problem is equipment-related but more often than not, it has to do with the lector's ability to project, voice quality and/or their use of the microphone.
* Not all lectors or aspiring proclaimers have the ability to create effective volume. Some have small or naturally soft voices; others do not breathe correctly and still others may not realize that the volume they hear in their own voice at the ambo is not nearly as loud beyond the first few pews as they may think.
* In addition, elements throughout the worship space will absorb sound from carpeting to winter coats.
* The key to projecting effectively is
	+ proper breathing
	+ a natural gift of volume
	+ correct microphone usage
	+ confidence

**MICROPHONE USAGE**

* It is crucial to find just the right spot or zone that will enable you to maximize your volume without creating explosive or popping sounds.
	+ These distracting and unwelcome noises occur most often on "p" and "t" sounds and are created by speaking too closely to the head of the microphone. The rush of air that comes from your mouth on these consonants (and others as well) generates a strong force of air that is magnified unpleasantly through the sensitive head of the mike.
	+ This can be easily avoided by positioning the microphone head a little above your mouth (nose level) or a little below (chin level) so the rush of air goes above or below the head. You can also stand just to the right or left of the head or stand a little back but not too far or your voice may fade out.
	+ Chin level is preferred to nose level because the microphone may block the view of your face and facial expressions are an important component of proclaiming, but ultimately, you have to go with the mike position that best projects your voice.

**PAUSING**

* Silence is golden
	+ at least in the right spots
* The proper use of pausing is essential to effective proclaiming.
	+ This is the one tool that eludes many a lector.
* Let's consider some obvious places to use the pause:
	+ to provide a segue when the reading is changing direction
	+ to allow listeners to absorb an important point
	+ to provide space between multiple thoughts in the same sentence
	+ to take a breath
	+ before and after quotes to offset the quote from the character or narrator
	+ after the announcement line "A Reading from..."
	+ before the closing line, "The Word of the Lord"
* Please keep in mind that pauses used too frequently within a sentence or paragraph will create a choppy effect.
	+ Strive for smoothness and fluidity.
	+ Pauses that interrupt a phrase or grouping of words in the wrong places can change the meaning or intended feeling.
	+ Pauses that are too long or too frequent can kill the pace of the reading and create drag.
* Coaching and practice will help you recognize and overcome these challenges.

**"THE WORD OF THE LORD"**

* The closing line is actually the most important line in every reading because it reminds us that God is speaking directly to us.
	+ He may be using a human voice but the words and the message are His. Take care with this line. Speak it loudly and clearly. Please do not hurry through it or mutter it as an afterthought.
* As with the announcement line, separate it from the body of the reading with a strong, healthy pause.three to four seconds.
* Look the assembly in the eye when you proclaim the ending; do not rush away.
* Give its significance time to sink in. After all, this message that you proclaimed is directly from God. It should leave them with a sense of awe.

**LECTOR DRESS**

* Ask yourself this question and be honest. How should you dress in the house of the King of Kings?
	+ If you went to Buckingham Palace or the White House, what would you wear? Why should you dress with any less respect for the only King that matters?
* Also, what you wear sends signals to the assembly about how seriously you take your ministry. Dress how you proclaim - with dignity and respect. Never wear anything that will detract from the scripture.
* The focus must always be on the reading, not the reader.

**ACTION WORDS**

* When proclaiming, it should always be your goal to bring the Word to life. In order to do this, you should among other things, take advantage of action words.
* Action words have inherent life because people can generally envision the actions indicated.
* However, action words will remain dormant if you gloss over them, mumble or rush past them.
* Let's give them the attention they deserve.
	+ Some words may require increased energy or force
		- Others gentility or quietness
	+ Some may be drawn out
		- Others hastened
* Remember, action words are verbs
	+ but not all verbs are action words
	+ and not all verbs are worthy of emphasis
* Try to find those words that will help paint a picture for your readers.
* Determine the key words and consider how you might emphasize them to help bring the passage to life.
* Be careful though not to overreach in your attempt to add color.
	+ Otherwise, you may appear theatrical or insincere and that would be distracting for the listener.
* Also, be selective in what you emphasize; if you choose everything to stress, the result is that nothing is stressed.

**LISTENER APPRECIATION**

* Do not underestimate the congregation's appreciation of the lector who thoroughly and meticulously prepares his or her reading.
* They know that you have done this for them and they will be glad in their hearts
	+ though they may not actually tell you or thank you personally.
	+ However, the Lord knows, and He will smile down upon you!

**IN GENERAL, LECTORS CARRY THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

* After the opening prayer go to the ambo.
* Introduce the readings by saying: “A reading from…”
	+ (note: we do not say: “The first reading is a reading from…” Simply read what it says, without including chapter and verse.)
* Read slowly, clearly and loud enough to be heard.
* Adjust microphone.
* Do not kiss or reverence the lectionary in any way these venerations are reserved for the Book of the Gospels.
* Between the two readings, if the responsorial psalm is being sung by a cantor, step back from the microphone behind the ambo
* At the end of the second reading, if there is a deacon present and he will use the Book of the Gospels, place the lectionary on the shelf of the ambo and then proceed to sit with the congregation.
* If no deacon is present the priest will use the Book of the Gospels
* If there is no deacon, the priest will read the Prayers of the Faithful (petitions).
* The Church has honored the Word of God and the Eucharistic mystery with the same reverence.... The Church is nourished spiritually at the twofold table of God's word and of the Eucharist: from the one it grows in wisdom and from the other in holiness.
* In the Word of God the divine covenant is announced; in the Eucharist the new and everlasting covenant is renewed.
	+ On the one hand the history of salvation is brought to mind by means of human sounds, on the other it is made manifest in the sacramental signs of the Liturgy.
	+ It can never be forgotten, therefore, that the divine Word read and proclaimed by the Church in the Liturgy has as its one purpose the sacrifice of the New Covenant and the banquet of grace, that is, the Eucharist.
	+ The celebration of Mass in which the Word is heard and the Eucharist is offered and received
		- forms but one single act of divine worship. That act offers the sacrifice of praise to God and makes available to God's creatures the fullness of redemption.
* Please be sure to get a substitute if you are not able to be at the Mass when you are scheduled.
* Please practice the readings before Mass. A copy of the readings can be found in the lector workbooks
	+ Workbooks are found in the sacristy
* Always begin with prayer. Since you are entering the realm of the inspired Word of God, a brief prayer of praise and thanksgiving will enable you to begin your task in a spirit of openness, humility and gratitude. If you like, use the prayer at the bottom of this booklet
* Use the "Workbook for Lectors..." to understand the text and how to proclaim it. The margin gives helpful hints as well as a pronunciation guide.
* Read through all the texts to get a sense of the dominant themes of a given Sunday. The reading you will proclaim is not isolated but is part of the texture of the whole celebration.
* Practice reading the word aloud just as it will be read at the ambo, full voice and all. Allow yourself to be critiqued by a trusted friend or family member who will be honest and objective.
* Good ministry is best evaluated by those who are served, not by those who serve. Surrender any hypersensitivity to criticism.

**PROCEDURES:**

* **Preparation:**
	+ One readers is assigned to every Lord's Day Mass.
	+ Prayerfully prepare all the readings at home using your Workbook for Lectors.
	+ Be sure that the lectionary is at the ambo and the ribbon marks the correct page.
	+ If no deacon is present, wait in the lobby area with the Book of the Gospels.
* **Procession:**
	+ Crossbearer
	+ Other servers
	+ Deacon or Lector
		- Carries The Book of the Gospels
			* Carry it out from your body, about ten inches and at chest level. You should be able to see over the top of the book. If you are “older”, please carry the Book of the Gospels at a level that is comfortable and safe.
	+ Priest
* **At the altar:**
	+ Crossbearer puts cross in stand and goes to the side pew.
	+ Other servers bow to the altar, place candles on credence table and go their pew.
	+ When you reach the front of the Church, the lector carrying the Book of the Gospels will stop briefly but DOES NOT BOW OR GENUFLECT. (You are holding a sacred object.) The lector carrying the Book of the Gospels will proceed up the steps and to the front side of the altar and place the Book of the Gospels there. Come back and bow then proceed to your seat.
		- Do not wait for the priest.
			* Priest bows to the altar, kisses the altar, then goes to the presider's chair.
	+ **When the Deacon ministers at Mass:**
		- He carries the Book of the Gospels in the procession
* **After the Opening Prayer:**
	+ The new General Instruction of the Roman Missal places even more emphasis on the importance of silence in the liturgy. The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in a way as to promote silence and reflection and prayer. “The liturgy should include brief periods of silence, accommodated to the gathered assembly, in which, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared. These are observed before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the first and second reading, and at the conclusion of the homily.” (GIRM 56)
	+ Lector approaches lectern
	+ Walk to the altar, bow to the altar, then proceed up to the sanctuary and then to the ambo
		- cross between the altar and the ambo, if approaching from the middle
		- If you need to use the rail, cross on the floor to the railing side of the ambo
	+ Proclaim the first reading in a meaningful way.
	+ When finished, take a step back behind the ambo and wait.
	+ Cantor sings the psalm
		- If no Cantor is present, our priest sings
		- Lector participates in the Responsorial Psalm along with the congregation
	+ Lector returns to ambo and proclaims the second reading in a meaningful way
	+ When finished reading, close the lectionary and place it inside the ambo
	+ Reverse your steps, going back to the floor turn and face the altar, bow, and return to your pew. Sit with your family.
* **Recessional**
	+ The Book of the Gospels is not carried in the recessional
	+ The lector does not process out with the priest and the altar servers

**REFLECTION AND SELF-EVALUATION:**

* As important as it is to prepare well for proclaiming the sacred scripture, it is equally important to reflect on your proclamation immediately afterward to evaluate how well you are doing in your ministry. Neither preparation nor reflection is effective without the other.
	+ During your service as a lector over the coming years, you will find that if you are to serve the assembly well and continue to grow in your ministry, neither can be eliminated — even if you are tempted to think you know what you're doing and have done it all before.

**PRAYER OF A MINISTER OF THE WORD**

Lord, invest me with your power as I prepare to proclaim the marvel of your message. I have prepared my reading, I have tried to take within me the meaning of what I am about to proclaim. Help me to proclaim, not just with my lips, but with my whole heart and soul. Lord, make me a hollow reed so that your voice will be heard by all who hear me. Free me of excessive concern over my performance. Convert my feeling of nervousness and turn all my apprehension into an energy for proclaiming your Word with power and authority. May your Spirit live in me and fill the Holy Word that I proclaim. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.