

I. INTRODUCTION (Note: This Procedure Applies Only for St. Charles Borromeo Church Weekend Liturgies)

Your ministry as a Proclaimer of the Word gives voice to God's word as it goes forth achieving the purpose for which God sent it. To fully understand the significance of your role is to recognize that your service is reflecting Christ's presence in the Word that you proclaim during liturgy.

"He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church."
(Sacrosanctum Concilium 7)

Accepting this duty, trust, and privilege requires full preparation and a willingness to grow in your relationship with God. You are agreeing to constantly hone your proclamation skills while inviting the Holy Spirit to work with you, in you, and through you to affect the hearts of the faithful. Attendance at workshops and utilization of various resources to the lector's ministry are essential, such as the *Workbook for Lectors, Gospel Readers, and Proclaimers of the Word*.

In many ways, *"to proclaim, is to pray"* God's Word.

II. GENERAL

The lector is instituted to proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture, with the exception of the Gospel. He/She may also announce the intentions for the Universal Prayer and, in the absence of a psalmist, recite the Psalm between the readings. (GIRM 99)

1. The fact that there is but one Proclaimer scheduled for each Mass, infers the importance of attendance. Repeated absences may warrant removal from the ministry schedule.
2. Lector schedules are published for 3 month periods. The upcoming lector assignments can also be found in the bulletin. You are responsible for keeping track of your assignments and arranging a substitute when needed. ONE Lector will read the announcements, First Reading, Psalm (if not done by the choir), Second Reading, and Prayers of the Faithful (if not recited by the deacon)
3. After the readings, the lector (ordinarily) does not perform any other liturgical functions beyond joining the other ministers at the recessional processional.

III. PREPARATION AT HOME—PRAYER

You have been called forth to serve as a proclaimer of the Word. It is a proclamation in the context of prayer. One way to be attentive to this is to center your preparation in prayer – on your conversation with God.

1. As you prepare the readings, perhaps a week in advance, read over the passages and get a sense of their themes or main points. Listen for what God may be speaking to you.
2. Consider using lector workbooks that are available from sources like Liturgical Press (www.litpress.com) and the resources on the parish website which offer audio homilies of the readings ahead of the weekend masses.
3. As your scheduled service approaches, say the readings aloud three times. Continue to adjust until you are satisfied that the assembly will understand and draw meaning from what you are proclaiming. Ask yourself:
 - a. Did it sound right? Can I articulate the difficult words clearly? If not, what needs to change?
4. Before the readings, converse with God offering yourself as an instrument of the Holy Spirit.

IV. PREPARATION AT CHURCH—BEFORE LITURGY

1. The Lector is to:
 - a. Arrive at least 15-20 minutes prior to Mass to prepare and plan, familiarize with the announcements, Prayers of the Faithful, and Lectionary text. Verify that the collections basket, and prayer intentions are at the back of the church for the Offertory. Verify that the church lights are on (at 3 locations) and that the PA system is in the on position, and that weekly bulletins are in the Minister's room prior to Mass.

- b. Verify that the Book of the Gospel, Lectionary, and Missal are set properly for the Mass. If you are unsure about the Missal, leave it on the sacristy counter for the celebrant to verify, once it is verified, ensure that it is placed either at the presider's table (if deacon will be assisting) or at altar server bench.
- c. Bring the Book of the Gospel from the altar to the entrance of the church for the procession
- d. Determine if choir will be singing the psalm
- e. Inform the celebrant or deacon confirming your presence. This is a key requirement. If you are not present 10-15 minutes before Liturgy, the celebrant or deacon will invite a substitute Lector.
- f. The lector remains with the ministers in the sacristy before Mass. At five (5) minutes prior to Mass, all ministers in the sacristy will walk to the back of the church. The lector remains at the podium to make announcements. After announcements, the lector goes to the back of the church to join the other ministers for the procession. The choir will announce the hymn.

V. PROCESSIONAL

1. The Lector enters in the procession of ministers ahead of the clergy and behind the altar servers. Your body language should communicate reverence, your hands free of personal possessions and in a prayer position. Once everyone arrives at the foot of the altar, reverence the altar with a profound bow and then go to your seat next to the ambo. If you are carrying the Book of Gospels, there is no need to reverence the altar. Just go directly around the altar and place the Book of Gospels in the stand, and then go to your seating in the sanctuary.

VI. DURING THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to favor meditation, and so any kind of haste is to be avoided. In the course of it, brief periods of silence are also appropriate, so that by means of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared. It may be appropriate to observe such periods of silence, for example, before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, and after the First and Second Reading. (GIRM 56)

1. Once the celebrant prays the Collect and sits down, walk up to the ambo. There is no need to reverence the altar or rush to approach the ambo. Before you begin reading, make eye contact with the assembly and take a deep breath.
2. **It is important to transition between readings with pauses and in a relaxed rhythm.** Normally the choir will sing the Psalm. If not, pause a short interval before beginning the Psalm. Once the psalm is complete, pause briefly before beginning the second reading. At the end of the reading, close the lectionary and put it on the lower shelf before you leave. If a deacon is present, return to your seat after the 2nd Reading.
3. Note: In the absence of a deacon, lector reads Universal Prayers. Near the end of the Creed, return to the ambo ready to voice the Prayers of the Faithful. The celebrant will first offer an introductory prayer, then proclaim the petitions. After the petitions, remain in the ambo until the priest has said the concluding prayer and sits down. Then, return to an open spot in the pew to join the assembly for the remainder of the liturgy. Other than the recessional, this will typically conclude your active role as lector.

VII. RECESSIONAL

1. Once Mass has ended, position yourself behind the pastor so to make a profound bow to the altar and then turn (as the priest turns) to process back to the entrance of the Church.

VIII. AFTER LITURGY

1. To fulfill your role as a liturgical minister of the Mass, offer your time and service to any "house-keeping" responsibilities, such as; returning the books, so to make preparations for the next Mass, returning the Offertory basket and prayer intentions, turning off lights, and securing the church and sacred vessels.
2. The Book of the Gospel, Lectionary, and Missal are to be properly stored after each Mass. After, the Vigil Mass and the Sunday 10:30am Mass the liturgical books are to be returned to the sacristy. After the 7:30am Mass, the liturgical books are to be set up for the 10:30am Mass.
3. Continually evaluate your own proclamation skills from people whose opinion you trust.