

## Standard Procedures for The Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul Lectors

- **Be there!** If you are unable to attend your scheduled Mass, you are responsible for notifying the lector coordinator and finding your own substitute. If there is another Lector assigned to your Mass, you may ask them if they could do both readings.
- **Prepare!** Preparation and rehearsal are critical. Remember, we are proclaiming the Word, not just reading it. If you are only scheduled for the first or second reading, prepare for both readings, in case the other scheduled Lector is missing. A couple of websites you may find helpful:
  - <http://www.usccb.org/bible> (provides the readings for any given day's Mass)
  - <http://www.Lectorprep.org> (provides a variety of preparation materials for the readings)
  - <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings-audio.cfm> (provides a podcast of the reading - you can listen to someone else do the readings)
- **Prior to Mass:**
  - Arrive at least 15 minutes before the Mass begins. If applicable, check with the Celebrant and/or Deacon for any special instructions. The Lector Coordinator will usually be the one to provide any special instructions via email prior to your Mass date.
  - Lectors should sit towards the front of the church on the center aisle unless instructed otherwise. The first pew on each side of the Church are reserved for lectors. Please try to sit here so that your lector partner and/or the priest and Deacon can easily identify the lector and know you are present.
  - Before Mass begins, the Lector for the 1st reading (Lector 1) should proceed up to the low ambo and locate the readings in the lectionary (weekend masses) book and mark them with the ribbon. Often this has already been done by the Deacon, but it is good to check for yourself.
  - Before Mass begins, if there is no Deacon for Mass (indicated on the Lector Schedule or communicated to you by the Lector Ministry Coordinator), the Lector for the 2nd reading (Lector 2) should proceed up to the ambo to check for the Prayers of the Faithful (located on the shelf in the ambo). If not found, please find the Celebrant and ask. Also, any second collection will be listed at the bottom of the Prayer of the Faithful sheet.
- **First Reading (Lector 1):**

1. After the Celebrant/Priest has read the opening prayer and the congregation begins to sit down, the 1st Lector proceeds up the center aisle towards the altar, pausing to briefly bow towards the altar before proceeding to the ambo.
2. Once at the ambo, adjust the microphone. Announce "A Reading from ..." and then pause briefly before beginning the actual reading.
3. After completing the reading, pause momentarily, look at the congregation and announce, "The Word of the Lord".
4. (5:30 pm Mass only) Unless otherwise instructed, the 1st Lector will read The Responsorial Psalm with the congregation responding.
5. As a courtesy, turn to the page in the lectionary where the 2nd reading begins.
6. Step down from the ambo, pause facing the altar and briefly bow towards the altar before returning to your seat.

- **Second Reading (Lector 2):**

1. Upon conclusion of The Responsorial Psalm, the 2nd Lector stands and proceeds up the center aisle towards the altar, pausing to briefly bow towards the altar before proceeding to the ambo.
2. Once at the ambo, adjust the microphone if needed. Announce "A Reading from ..." and then pause briefly before beginning the actual reading.
3. After completing the reading, pause momentarily, look at the congregation and announce, "The Word of the Lord".
4. Step down from the ambo, pause facing the altar, and briefly bow towards the altar before returning to your seat.

- **Prayers of the Faithful in the Absence of a Deacon (Lector 2):**

1. At the beginning of the last paragraph of the Nicene Creed ("We believe in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church..."), the 2nd Lector proceeds up the center aisle towards the altar, pausing to briefly bow towards the altar before proceeding to the ambo.
2. At the conclusion of the Priest's introduction to the Prayers of the Faithful, read the intercessions. After each intercession, announce "We pray to the Lord."

3. After the last intercession, wait until the Priest gives his final intercession (or prayer) and then announce the second collection if there is one that day.
  4. Step down from the ambo, pause facing the altar, and briefly bow towards the altar before returning to your seat.
- **Best practices for proclaiming the Word:**
    - Be prepared. Spend time during the week leading up to Mass looking over the reading you have been assigned. Use the Workbook for Lectors as you prepare. Use the available websites to get an understanding of the reading and the historical context. This will help you proclaim the Word as it was intended.
    - Break the reading down and determine where you may need to provide more emphasis, perhaps an extended pause, to allow the congregation to reflect on the reading.
    - Start strong and confidently. Project your voice. Memorize the introduction to the reading (e.g. "A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians.") Memorize the first line of the reading so that you can begin the reading maintaining good eye contact with the congregation.
    - Read SLOWLY. People tend to read too fast. Deliberately pause at natural breaks in the reading to allow the congregation time to absorb the reading.
    - Your goal should be to proclaim the reading in such a way as to have the congregation listen to you, rather than read along in their missals.
    - As Lectors, we are not intended to be actors. Do not be overly dramatic in proclaiming the reading as that can be distracting to the congregation.

**Notes:**

- There are three cycles to the lectionary (A, B, & C). These cycles are rotated each liturgical year. There are some special times when the cycles are merged into one cycle, for example during Lent (in conjunction with RCIA in particular) and the Triduum (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of Holy Week). Be prepared to receive special instructions for readings during Christmas, Lent, and Easter.
- There are times when the readings are offered in a short or long version. Use the long version unless otherwise instructed.

- The Workbook for Lectors will assist you in preparing your assigned reading(s). It also includes an introduction with basic principles and techniques of the ministry and is an effective resource for ongoing formation. However, the workbook is only a resource aid. **Always use the Lectionary to proclaim the Word at Mass. Do not bring up your own materials.**
- Communicate any change of email or phone number to the Lector Ministry Coordinator.
- Respond promptly to communications from the Lector Ministry Coordinator! Check your email and text messages.

#### **Prayer of Preparation for Lectors:**

*Dear Lord, Make me an instrument of your peace, through my tongue, heart and love for you. Help me to convey Your Word so that your message can be heard and felt by your people. Help me to do your will through the gift of speech that you have given me. Come to me, Holy Spirit, to proclaim The Word of God to your people. Amen.*

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#### **Basic Thoughts on "Lector Theology"**

1. A reflection on the mission of the lector (reader) using Isaiah 50:4,7. Training is necessary. Note the mission is to rouse and strengthen others. The servant (lector) is eager to learn from God.

*The Lord GOD has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear; And I have not rebelled, have not turned back ..... The Lord GOD is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame. [Is 50:4,7]*

2. Become formed by the Word (Christ). Revealing the face and person of Christ. We become John the Baptist preparing the way for the work of the Word.
  - a. The reader must be changed by encounter with the Word
  - b. Establishing a relationship with the Word is key
  - c. Reflect on the Hebrew word *dabar*, meaning both "word" and "deed"

- d. The Word is the creative power of God (see Genesis creation story)
  - e. Faith must be part of the lector's ministry - demonstrate your faith when proclaiming the Word in the assembly.
3. A Theology of the Lector:
- a. Not everyone can proclaim Scripture - it takes skill
  - b. Proclaiming must mean something - more than just reading the words
  - c. Seek a proper balance at Mass: Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist
  - d. Christ is present in the Word
  - e. Know who you are as a lector; prepare for your proclamation
  - f. Facilitate a meaningful encounter with the living Word - a herald
4. Thoughts about preparing to proclaim the Word:
- a. The Word must live for you before it can live for anyone else
  - b. Must interpret the words, not just read them
  - c. Begin with prayer, not with commentaries or scripture scholars
  - d. Come early to church to prepare and focus (prayer) before Mass begins
  - e. Rely on the Holy Spirit
  - f. Proclamation is demonstrating (sharing) your faith before the assembly
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### **Ten Steps for Preparation**

**[Fr. Michael Sparough, SJ]**

1. Begin your preparation early. You should begin to work on your proclamation at least 5-7 days in advance of your reading. Live with the reading. Read it over and over again.
2. Bring the text to prayer. Pray with the text and the text stays with you.
3. Study the Scripture commentaries. Do your homework. Don't assume you already know the passage.
4. Check unfamiliar pronunciations and meanings. Make sure you also understand denotation and connotations.

5. Consult an interpretation guide (such as Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers).
  6. Build your own interpretation of the text.
  7. Invite a trusted friend to listen and give you a critique.
  8. Tape yourself doing the reading.
  9. Carefully and prayerfully, do your final preparation and proclamation. Make sure you arrive at the church at least 15 minutes early to attend to this final preparation.
  10. Review and critique your interpretation.
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## References for Lectors

### (1) Online Resources:

- [www.lectorprep.org](http://www.lectorprep.org) - complete site for review of readings, reflections, other resources
- [www.textweek.com](http://www.textweek.com) - Lectionary, Scripture Study, Worship Links & Resources
- [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) - US bishop's website. Daily readings (and more)
- [www.lectorworks.org](http://www.lectorworks.org) - thoughts about the readings as an aid to preparation/prayer
- [netministries.org/Bbasics/bwords.htm](http://netministries.org/Bbasics/bwords.htm) - online pronunciation guide

### (2) Print Resources:

- Workbook for Lectors & Gospel Readers (LTP)
- A Well-Trained Tongue - Aelred Rosser (LTP)

### (3) Other:

- Lector & Gospel Reader's Workshop (DVD) - Audrey Summers
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## **Lector Skill Building Session: Articulation & Word Stress**

- Diction is very important, and includes articulation and word stress
- Focus on diction to avoid becoming a mush-mouth lector
- Our task is to be understood by the assembly

- This is the key to their understanding of the message
- But don't exaggerate when you proclaim, either

Tongue Twister & Diction Exercises:

*on two thousand acres, too tangled for tilling  
where thousands of thorn trees grew thrifty and thrilling,  
Theophilus Twistle, more thrifty than some  
thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb.*

*an ice house .... not a nice house  
the summer school ..... not the summer's cool  
your two eyes ..... not you're too wise  
five minutes to eight ..... not five minutes to wait  
give me some ice .... not some mice his acts .... not his axe*

Use a simple sentence exercise to explore the importance of word stress: *I didn't tell you she could kiss him ....*

Avoid a bland proclamation; otherwise we lose the impact of the Word. Lector workbook can help select which words to stress.

Avoid punching the prepositions

Your choice of word stress depends on an understanding of the text. Be aware of our natural tendencies to stress words

Consider using a particular technique(s) to stress words, such as pausing, tone or elongation

Determine the key sentence (the topic sentence) and stress that

Objective is to send the key message to the assembly through your proclamation

Practice multiple techniques for word stressing

*More suggestions & information can be found at [www.lectorprep.org](http://www.lectorprep.org)*

## Brief Summary of Lectio Divina

Lectio divina is Latin for "spiritual reading." It is a method of reading and praying on Scripture and other classics of spirituality like Augustine's Confessions and The Imitation of Christ. It has deep roots in the history of monasticism. There are four basic steps in lectio divina: reading (**What does this text say?**), meditation (**What does this text say to me?**), prayer (**What do I want to say to God through this text?**) and contemplation or action (**What difference might this text make in my life?**).

Reading (**lectio**) the text involves basic literary analysis - that is, looking at its context, words and images, characters, literary form and structure.

Meditation (**meditatio**) takes account of both the content of the passage and the present dispositions of the reader. What this text says to me will also depend to some extent on my state of soul as I read it.

Prayer (**oratio**) flows from reading and meditating on the text. This step, of course, is very personal.

The fourth step may take the form of contemplatio (relishing the spiritual experience and praising God for it) or actio (discerning some course of action).

Lectio divina is profoundly simple and eminently flexible. While rooted in monastic practice, it is also part of the larger heritage of Christian spirituality. It can help greatly in integrating biblical scholarship and the devotional life.

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## The Ministry of Lector

*The Lord GOD has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear; And I have not rebelled, have not turned back ..... The Lord GOD is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame. [Is 50:4,7]*

This passage from the prophet Isaiah captures the essence of what it means to be a lector. The lector is the storyteller of the faith community. But before there can be an effective telling of the story, the teller must plunge into it, learn about it, know the characters and times and places. The lector comes to know these not as Bible history, but as the story that gives meaning to our lives. The special gifts and skills of the lector have to do with drawing everyone into the Scriptures so that we all become aware that we are part of the story.



For the lector, the scriptures must live for them before they can live for anyone else. Hence, the role of a lector is not for everyone; effective proclamation is both a gift and a skill that must be developed before it can be used for the benefit of the faith community. The ministry of lector is about service to the community, and as such lectors must be persons who have a deep love of scripture and are open to ongoing formation in the Word and in the methods and techniques that ensure effective proclamation of that Word to the gathered assembly at Mass.

When you answer the call to be a minister of the Word (one who proclaims the Bible readings to the assembled faith community), you enter a deeper relationship with the word of God as revealed in sacred scripture. You take upon yourself the duty and privilege of bringing the printed word to life - making it flesh, so to speak. Your ministry as reader gives voice to God's healing and strengthening word as it goes forth irrevocably to the ends of the earth, achieving the purpose for which God sent it. In a very real sense, you become a prophet - one who speaks for God. Written by Aelred Rosser