



St. Clare of Assisi Catholic Church

Liturgical Ministry Guidelines

Readers

Fr. Jim Deiters, Pastor
Stephen Eros, Director of Liturgy and Music

Revised September 2023

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

– Colossians 3:16

General Information

Arrive at least 20 minutes before Mass begins and sign in on the iPad kiosk near the sacristy.

New schedules are made up approximately every three months and are distributed via email. You will receive an email from the parish office explaining how to navigate our ministry scheduling software. The schedule will always say Reader 1 (first reading) and Reader 2 (second reading).

Attire

Appropriate dress is expected of all liturgical ministers. Jeans, t-shirts, sleeveless dresses or tops, immodest clothing, and the like are strongly not allowed. Men are encouraged to wear a sport coat while serving. Shirts with large logos or messages draw attention to you and away from the sacrament—Cardinals, other sports teams, graphics, and even religious messages (Merry Christmas, Noel, He is Risen, etc.). Please refrain from wearing these shirts while in public ministry.

Before Mass

After signing in, **Reader 1** should go to the ambo to make sure the microphone is in place and the Lectionary is on the correct page. **This is not a time to read through your reading. If you would like to review your reading, please use the Lectionary on the counter on the sacristy.**

During Mass

Procession Both readers process with the other ministers and priest at the beginning of Mass.

Reader 1 will carry the Book of Gospels in the procession **in the absence of a Deacon**. Fr. Jim will always coordinate the procession, so you may follow his lead. Generally, the Readers follow the servers, or the baptismal family (if present).

The Readers process to the inlaid tile cross in the floor and reverence the altar together with a profound bow (from the waist).

If Reader 1 is carrying the Book of Gospels, s/he walks up the ramp and places it on the altar. **Please place the book at least 12" in and centered on the top of the altar, directly over the image on the altar cloth. The binding should be on your left.** No need to reverence the altar again. Then proceed to the Reader pew, the first row in the section of pews near the ambo.

Reader 2 goes to the left of the sanctuary and stands in the Reader pew. If the Deacon is carrying the Book of Gospels, Reader 1 follows Reader 2 to the pew. Families are encouraged to sit in the pew with you.

When the role of Lector was restored to the official status of a ministry in the Church by Pope Paul VI in 1972, he wrote...

"Let the reader be aware of the office he or she has undertaken and make every effort and employ suitable means to acquire the increasingly warm and living love and knowledge of Scripture that will make him or her a more perfect disciple of the Lord."

Liturgy of the Word

Reader 1 proceeds to the ambo **after** the priest takes his seat after the Collect or Dismissal for the Children's Liturgy of the Word. If there is a dismissal of children, approach the ambo as the line is almost out of church, and allow a few seconds of silence to pass before beginning the reading.

Make eye contact with the assembly as you say (ex.) "A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah" **This sentence should always be memorized.** **Please say this as one sentence with no pauses.**

At the end of the scripture reading, **pause** before saying "The Word of the Lord." **Again, this sentence should always be memorized. Please say this as one sentence with no pauses.**

Do not turn the page or adjust the microphone. After the reading, step back, bow your head and be perfectly still for an appropriate interval of time out of reverence for the Word you proclaimed.

The cantor will come to the ambo to proclaim the responsorial psalm. Reader 2 will proceed to the ambo as the cantor is exiting the sanctuary.

Reader 2 follows the same procedure as above. **After your moment of reverence, close the Lectionary and place it on the shelf below the ambo.**

Recessional

Stand and begin singing the recessional hymn with the assembly.

As the servers proceed to the front of the sanctuary, follow them to process out of the church. You will process in the same order as you did at the beginning of Mass. The Book of Gospels is not carried out.

The Structure of the Lectionary

Three Cycles—A (Matthew), B (Mark), C (Luke)

The Gospel of John is heard during Lent, Triduum, the Easter Season, and during Cycle B.

Liturgy of the Word at Sunday Mass

Old Testament (Acts of the Apostles in Easter Season)

Responsorial Psalm

New Testament (writings of the apostles or Revelation)

Gospel

Readings are arranged either semi-continuously or thematically (Advent, Lent, Easter).

Ordinary Time readings chosen because of their relationship to the Gospel.

Qualifications of a Reader

Deep faith - strong conviction in the power and message of God's Word so as to be able to call forth a similar conviction in the assembly.

Love for Scripture and a willingness to grow in knowledge of it through prayer and study.

Humility and integrity so that the Word can be spoken in us without our getting in the way.

Sufficient maturity and life experience to understand the context and import of the Scriptural message. Poise and clear speech.

Basics for Proclamation

Good diction – clear, articulate speech

Control and good use of breath

Ability to project one's voice

Good judgment on making appropriate pauses

Comfort with making eye contact

Vocal Preparation

Warming up, or engaging, one's voice before proclamation is essential.

If you clear your throat habitually or due to phlegm being on the vocal folds, please be conscious of this habit.

Doing a “siren” on the following vowels or consonants can promote vocal engagement...

mmm (as in a hum)

v (buzz top teeth on bottom lip)

ah (as in “Father”)

Doing these at home or on the car ride to church will help you, and provide a little entertainment for your family or friends!

Lastly, you are permitted to keep a small bottle of water in the pew with you under the following conditions.

Place it in the pew before Mass.

Be situationally aware of when you are taking a drink.

(i.e. not immediately before your reading)

The bottle isn't noisy.

(disposable bottles are more likely to make noise)

This does not break your fast before receiving the Eucharist.

Effective Preparation for Proclamation of the Word

Pray

A week before – sit quietly; close your eyes; breathe deeply; clear your mind; let thoughts gently go and then ask God to help you to be open to the Word you are about to read.

“O God, send your Spirit into my heart. Plant your word within me, that I may proclaim it effectively to your people.”

Prepare

Read through the Gospel of the day. What strikes you?
What questions do you have? How are you challenged?

Read the 1st reading. What is the message?
How does it provide a background for the Gospel?

Read the 2nd Reading. What impressed you? What is the writer saying about the life and worship of a Christian community?

Consult the workbook and other commentaries to understand the context in which the passage is situated, and any other meanings therein.
Our parish's Thursday email for liturgical preparation is a great resource as well.

What is the main idea of the passage **you** will proclaim?
What is the emotion of the passage?

Practice

Read the passage out loud – ideally, in church, with another who can give you feedback – or into a recorder. Allow yourself time to linger over the words, to reflect on what they mean to you, to be grateful to God for the message therein. As you are preparing your reading, **always remember to proclaim joyfully.** Even in the challenging readings, there is always good news to share!

Effective Proclamation Techniques

Poise – Your body is part of your proclamation – your dress, posture, approach, stance, and facial expression. Move fluidly and gracefully, but without attracting undue attention.

Clear, Articulate Speech – You must exaggerate the use of your mouth and face, and speak more slowly than in ordinary conversation. Word endings, especially d's and t's, n's and g's must be heard and distinguishable. **We must check the pronunciation of unfamiliar words so as to avoid travesties.** “Use the lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue” - “B D F L M P T V”

Melody and Expression – Allow the pitch of your voice to rise and fall appropriately. Stress action; prepositions get the least attention. Be conscious of the verbs as you prepare and try stressing them. **Don't be afraid of emotion; be tender when needed, and angry when needed.**

Projection – This is dependent on our effective use of breath. Think “proclaim” rather than “read.” Your own voice may seem loud from the ambo, but remember the speaker is directly behind you. Don't be afraid of that volume.

Pacing and Pauses – Pause between speakers in the reading, and when there is a definite transition within the text. Silence can be very effective!

Eye Contact – Look at the assembly at the beginning and end of the reading (memorized sentences), and at the end of important thoughts or sentences. You may keep your place by running your finger down the side of the page. Also, try sliding the Lectionary up the ambo, closer to the mic. This makes for a more comfortable situation to make eye contact.

Passion and Conviction – It must be obvious that you are convinced about the importance of what you are proclaiming.