

Lectors

WHY BE A LECTOR

Our Lectors play such an important role in our liturgy and in the life of the Church. They are asked to fulfill a sacred duty that involves living, exhibiting, and communicating one's faith. In the opening of the First Letter of Saint John, the writer announces, "What we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you" (1 John 1:3), and it is a continuation of that very tradition that our Lectors act out at each liturgy, proclaiming the Good News for all to hear. This is truly a sharing of the Word of God with his people, an opportunity that allows that Word to more deeply enter into the minds and hearts of those present at Mass. The readings from Sacred Scripture that have been chosen each week provide a unique and important spiritual message to the members of the congregation, and it is the duty of the Lector to proclaim the Scripture passages in such a way that those messages might meaningfully reach the ears of the faithful men, women and children ready to hear them. What a blessed opportunity it is, then, for a Lector to have the chance to purposely and faithfully proclaim the Word of our loving God.

MINISTRY GUIDELINES

In our attempt to create a holy and prayerful atmosphere in our liturgies at Saint Patrick Church, we ask that you adhere to the following guidelines in your personal ministry:

DRESS

The basic dress code for liturgical ministers can most likely be best described as "business casual." While we do not require our ministers to be formally dressed to participate in the liturgies, we do ask that you wear clothing that is respectful and respectable. This will help set a tone of importance both for yourself and for those who see you in the ministry being done.

BE AN EXAMPLE

All liturgical ministers should strive to be a positive example of attitude and behavior to one another and to the whole congregation. With this in mind, liturgical ministry should be performed with a combination of understanding, solemnity, and joy. All of our ministers should have a satisfactory understanding both of the tasks of their ministry and of the basic theological reasons for it. With this understanding, ministers should then be able to reflect both the solemnity and joy of participation in the liturgy.

Reflecting the necessary solemnity involves showing an adequate respect for the moment by having taken the adequate steps and time to prepare yourself before the liturgy and then refraining from any misbehavior, avoiding extraneous talking, and paying attention during the liturgy. As these are truly holy and solemn moments, we ask that you be a reminder to others that there's something special happening.

It is also extremely important that a sense of joy is never lost in our task of reflecting solemnity. It is perfectly okay to smile and enjoy your chance to be a liturgical minister. Our liturgies are a time when we find ourselves joining in the amazing sacrifice that Jesus made for us, and that awesome and miraculous reality gives us something to joyfully celebrate as a whole community of faith.

ASK QUESTIONS

If you have any questions about your general duties or about something particular and specific for that day, feel free to ask the deacon or priest for help and clarification. This might include certain pronunciations, the choice of reading, and any aspects unique to the liturgy on that particular day. We want everyone to be on the same page and to be comfortable with the liturgy being celebrated.

TIMELINESS

Whenever you are serving as a Lector, please arrive at least 15 minutes before your liturgy begins. Upon arrival, Lectors are asked to come to the Sacristy prior to the beginning of Mass. This timeliness will allow you to be in place, prepare yourself to participate in your ministry, and receive any extra direction needed for that particular Mass.

TEAMWORK

Especially on Sundays, you will generally be part of a larger group of servers and ministers. Things will always go best and the most smoothly when the whole group works together. Please show respect to each other before, during, and after the Mass and help each other in whatever ways you can.

WHAT TO DO AT SUNDAY MASS

BEFORE MASS

- ◆ Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass starts.
 - ◇ If possible, it would be good to arrive earlier and spend some time in prayer, centering yourself with the Lord (whose Word you will soon be sharing with the congregation).
- ◆ Upon arrival, go to the Sacristy to meet with the clergy and other ministers for the Mass.
- ◆ Be available to help the priest or deacon, if needed.
 - ◇ This includes ensuring that all needed items for your role (especially the Lectionary) and potentially for other aspects of the Mass are prepared and in the proper place.
- ◆ If there are options for the readings that day, confirm with the priest which he would prefer.

DURING MASS

- ◆ Prior to the Entrance Procession, the Lector will join the Priest, Deacon, and other servers/ministers in making their way to the spot at which the procession will begin at the entrance or back of the church.
- ◆ After processing forward to the sanctuary, the Lector will go to his or her chair, which is on the ambo side, and will remain standing there until the priest prays the Collect. As he and the congregation are being seated, go to the ambo.
- ◆ Take a moment to prepare yourself to read. This might include:
 - ◇ Finding a comfortable standing position close to the ambo and microphone
 - ◇ Reviewing where the reading begins and ends on the page
 - ◇ Adjusting the microphone to match the height of your mouth
- ◆ Beginning with “A reading from...”, clearly proclaim the First Reading of the Word of God. As you do so, some things to consider are:
 - ◇ Speaking clearly and deliberately
 - ◇ Enunciating words and phrases
 - ◇ Making a choice regarding whether you will look at the congregation or not
 - ◇ Projecting your voice so as not to be totally reliant on the microphone
- ◆ After the final words from Scripture in the reading, pause for a brief moment. Then, conclude the reading with “The Word of the Lord.”
- ◆ Return to the Lector’s chair and be seated during the Responsorial Psalm.
- ◆ Following the Responsorial Psalm, repeat the guidelines from the First Reading for the Second Reading. If needed, following the Second Reading, the Lector can turn the page to the Gospel reading to assist the priest or deacon who will be reading it.
 - ◇ At Masses in which there is more than one Lector, these duties/actions are split up between the multiple Lectors.
- ◆ Return to the Lector’s chair for the Gospel and homily.
- ◆ During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, stand, kneel, and pray along with the congregation.
- ◆ Receive Holy Communion from the Priest or Deacon along with the altar servers and Eucharistic Ministers. After receiving, return back to the Lector’s chair.
- ◆ After the final prayers of the Mass and the Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood, the Lector will join the Priest, Deacon, and altar servers in the Exit Procession.
 - ◇ When the recessional music begins at the conclusion of the Mass, the Lector will go with the servers to stand on the ground level in front of the sanctuary, facing the altar.
 - ◇ Once the Priest and Deacon have revered (kissed) the altar, have come down, and have genuflected toward the sanctuary, the Lector will process out in the Exit Procession, which will generally take place in the following order: Altar Servers, Lector, Deacon, Priest

AFTER MASS

- ◆ Assist with clean up or preparing for the next liturgy, if needed.
- ◆ If you are the Lector at a Mass that is not the final Mass of the day, you can ensure that the Lectionary and any other materials are neatly positioned on the ambo for the next Lector.