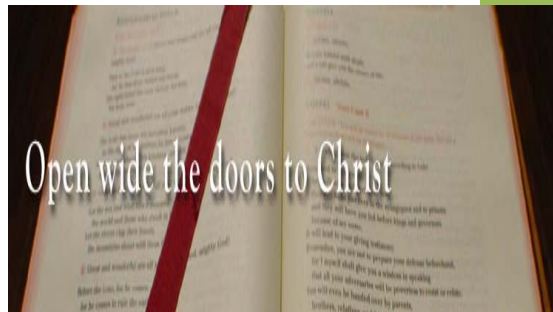


Ministry of Lectors



Church of the Resurrection
Chapel of the Ascension
Tampa, Florida

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Background

The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, that I may know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. Isaiah 50:4

The Ministry of Lector used to be a Minor Order for those preparing for ordination to the diaconate or priesthood. The word *proclaim* comes from the Latin *pro* meaning “before” and *clamare* meaning “to cry out.” The Lector proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ, making God present to the gathered community.

The General Instruction of the Missal has this to say about the ministry of Lector in #59:

By tradition, the function of proclaiming the readings is ministerial, not presidential. The readings, therefore, should be proclaimed by a lector, and the Gospel by a deacon or, in his absence, a priest other than the celebrant. If, however, a deacon or another priest is not present, the priest celebrant himself should read the Gospel. Further, if another suitable lector is also not present, then the priest celebrant should also proclaim the other readings.

After each reading, whoever reads gives the acclamation, to which the gathered people reply, honoring the word of God that they have received in faith and with grateful hearts



Qualifications

1. Practicing member of the Parish, i.e. is attending Mass regularly
2. Is committed to developing the skills necessary to proclaim the Word such that the Word itself is placed in the foreground and not the proclaimer
3. Eager to engage in ongoing faith formation to deepen their understanding of Sacred Scripture and forge a strong relationship with Jesus Christ
4. Willing to follow the dress code outlined by the Pastor for lay ministers serving in the liturgy
5. Makes every attempt to attend the lector formation meetings
6. Commits to serving for a full year at a time (renewing every Advent)

The Rule of St. Benedict advises us: “anyone can read Scripture in public; only a Believer can proclaim them.”



Prepare

How to be Successful in this Ministry

1. Know your own story. Realize that you have responded to a call, not from the Pastor or the Deacon, but from the Holy Spirit. This is a step in your continued spiritual growth.
2. Know the meaning behind your reading. It is a good idea to attend a Bible Study . If you are not sure what your reading is all about...ask!
3. Believe the Word. The Church teaches that all Sacred Scripture is divinely inspired and as such is Truth. Pray for guidance and for faith. Develop a strong prayer life.
4. Proclaim your reading out of a relationship with God and your community. You will then speak with conviction.
5. Practice without a microphone in front of other lectors. This will help you to speak slowly and promotes good eye contact. Your trainer will be happy to arrange time for this.
6. Don't take yourself too seriously or be show false modesty because others may see a Christ-like quality in you.
7. Be thankful that God has truly used you as a tool in the faith life of the community

Preparation the Week before Serving

Never forget you are proclaiming the Word of God – not just reading to the congregation. Sometimes we think that because we have heard or read a particular passage over several years, we don't have to study it. WRONG! Going over the readings in advance and properly preparing will show when you proclaim the Word at Mass. It shows for sure when we have *not* prepared well.

1. Find your reading the week prior to the Mass at which you will serve. You can find this in the weekly bulletin from the previous Sunday or online at <http://satucket.com/lectionary/> or <http://www.textweek.com>.
2. Pray to the Holy Spirit before reading through your passages for guidance and understanding.
3. Is your reading for the week a dialog, a poem, a story, a letter, a warning, or a discourse to a crowd? This will have some bearing on how you proclaim it.
4. Study and practice your reading for at least three hours during the week; pausing to meditate on the Word. If you look up the readings in your Bible, the footnotes will often provide helpful background on the scriptures.
5. Use the *Lectio Divina* prayer method while preparing. (this is found on the Resurrection website)

The Lector Workbook

The workbook is a great help to all Lectors. It has a section explaining the pronunciation . At the beginning of each reading, there is the phonetic spelling for many of the Biblical names (don't rely on the pronunciation we heard while growing up). At the bottom of the page following each reading, there are explanations and hints on how the particular reading should be proclaimed.

If you wish to order additional copies, they can be purchased online from Liturgy Training Publications at www.ltp.org. Just be sure to purchase the US edition.

Service at the Liturgy

Duties of the Lectors

- Check in with the Deacon or Verger, inspect the Lectionary on the Ambo 10-15 minutes before Mass begins
- Checks and adjusts the microphone to their height – make sure it is turned on (when in use)
- Proclaim the readings you are appointed to render
- Returns the Book of the Gospels, Lectionary, and the white Lector binder to the vesting sacristy following Mass
- Prays the General Intercessions, unless a Deacon is present

Before Mass

Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass is to begin. Check in immediately at the vesting sacristy. If we have a visiting priest, be sure to introduce yourself. Make sure the Lectionary and Book of the Gospels are properly marked for the day's readings double checking with the Verger or Deacon.

Read through the Lesson again and the General Intercessions to familiarize yourself with them.

Be sure all the books for the liturgy are on the Ambo, reverencing the Altar as the Sanctuary is entered. Place the Lectionary on the Ambo opened to the first reading. The lectors are to sit near the ambo if not in the procession.

The Lessons or Readings

Both Lectors sit in the Sanctuary together to show that this is a ministry of and with the people. When it comes time to read, exit the last pew, bow profoundly to reverence the Altar, and then proceed into the Sanctuary and the Ambo.

When arriving at the Ambo settle in for a moment, take a breath and smile, look up to make eye contact with the people, then announce your reading: "A reading from ...". At this point, continue to look up and pause for a slow three-count, then proceed with your reading. At the end of your reading, look up, pause for a slow three-count, then proclaim "The Word of the Lord." Do not move until the response is completed. Turn the page in the Lectionary to the second reading.

The General Intercessions and Announcements

The General Intercessions are said at the end of the Creed and will be read by the Deacon if (s)he is present. If there is no Deacon, the lector should be at the Ambo ready to read by the Amen of the Creed.

When praying the General Intercessions, take care to look up when saying "We pray to the Lord." Wait for the response, then pause a moment before moving to the next line. Each prayer is distinct and should be made so in your reading. Step back from the Ambo while the priest recites the final prayer.

Proclamation and Gestures

The focus of the congregation should be on the Word of God and not on the Lector. As such, while the scriptures are to be proclaimed boldly with conviction, you should not cross the line into overly-dramatic acting. Practice and self-review will help you to determine where this line is for you. So as not to draw undue attention to yourself and thus away from the Word, only three gestures are appropriate by the Lector:

1. Hold the Ambo or place your hands on the Lectionary during the proclamation
2. Make occasional, well-planned eye contact with the congregation while proclaiming the Word



Dress Code

For Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and Lectors

Fr. Kevin would like all ministers serving in the Sanctuary to observe the following dress code:

- No excessive metallic ornamentation – aka “bling-bling.”
- Pants and shirts should cover the stomach. Skirts and dresses need to be a respectable length – to the knee. Shoulders should not be bare. Chests should be covered appropriately.
- Blouses and shirts should be tucked in unless they are the jacket type.
- No jeans on Sundays or Solemnities – jeans are OK on weekday masses only.

We should dress appropriately to serve in the Sanctuary but not draw undue attention to ourselves. Let us honor the Lord by following this code please. Thank you.

Ministers should be in the church and signed in at least 20 minutes before the start of the Mass at which they are to serve. Please respect and follow the Pastor’s dress code; it is required.



Tips and Suggestions

- Begin to prepare for your reading at least a week in advance. Please do not wait until Friday night to begin preparations. It will make all the difference when you are to proclaim.
- Deacon David offers Bible Study periodically to review the readings for the coming Liturgical Season, so this is an excellent aid to assist you in your preparation.
- Make use of the Lectio Divina study method – praying with the scriptures.
 - Reading is one thing; understanding is another, connecting with Christ through His Word takes you to a whole new level. See the parish website for a handout on how to use Lectio Divina in your studies.
- Build a habit of daily Bible reading. The lector who is familiar with the Bible is more effective when proclaiming it. If you wish, your clergy can supply you with a handy guide for reading through the entire Lectionary.
- Take advantage of the quarterly formation meetings. Doing so gains you access to information about the ministry, training sessions to help you grow, reference materials you can borrow, and the schedule.
- Check the parish website regularly for updates and announcements:
www.christislife.org

Resources for Lectors

CONTACTS

Deacon David – Deacon dbrookman@msn.com

Col. Walt Tatum – Lector coordinator - QBWalt@aol.com

Website of notes on the readings by a lector of 20+ years – www.lectorprep.org

Church of the Resurrection website – www.christislife.org

MEETINGS

Lector formation meetings are held quarterly at both locations. Please attend whenever possible to help you grow in your ministry as a lector.

VIDEOS

On occasion, you may be videotaped while reading to provide “live” feedback. Only you, your trainer, or a priest will see this video. It is provided to help you see yourself as others see you, to reinforce good practices, and to help you identify where you need to improve. You may also request to videotape yourself – this is highly encouraged.