

The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that a richer share in God's Word may be provided for the faithful.

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 51



Practical Hints

- Read slowly
- Be heard
- Be understood

The dignity of the Word of God should be indicated by the quality of the books from which the Word is proclaimed. A service leaflet or piece of paper is not of suitable dignity for the proclamation of the Word of God. In cases of unusual pastoral necessity the papers need to be temporarily attached to the page of the Lectionary.

WHO CAN BE A READER?

- A person of sound character who is in full communion with the Catholic Church
- Men, women or young people who are serious about the practice of their faith
- Someone with a willingness to be trained.

Anyone seeking to serve in this ministry normally participates in a Parish formation process.

All experienced and new readers, no matter how well-educated or trained, can benefit from formation in the ministry of proclaiming God's Word.

**Now Lord...
grant to your servants
to speak your Word with all
boldness while you stretch out
your hand to heal...**

Acts 4:29

**Let the Word of Christ
dwell in you richly.**
Colossians 3:16

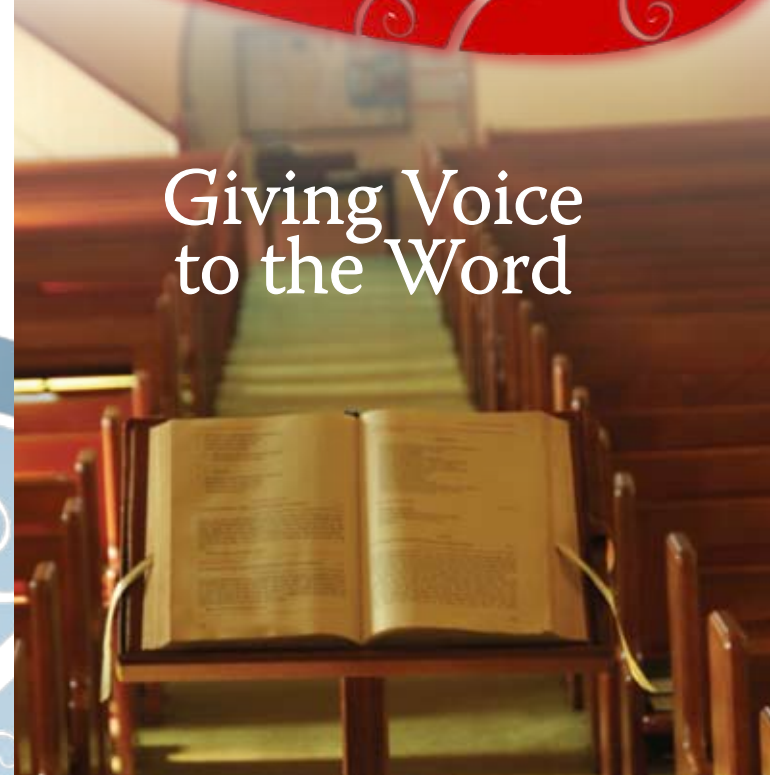
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The Reader in the Celebration of the Eucharist

Giving Voice
to the Word



The Liturgy of the Word at Mass

The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation, and so any sort of haste that hinders recollection must clearly be avoided.

General Instruction of the Roman Missal [GIRM], 56

After the opening prayer has been completed, the reader moves toward the sanctuary, reverences the altar, by bowing and goes to the ambo (lectern) for the first reading.

BEGIN: Wait for the assembly to settle, then, making eye contact, confidently announce the reading with ‘**A reading from...**’

DO NOT change this formula in any way. For example, **DO NOT** begin “Our first reading today is...” or any similar beginning.

END: Particular significance is to be given to a brief period of silence after reading the Word of God and saying ‘**The Word of the Lord**’ (*Verbum Domini*). (**NOT** ‘This is the Word of the Lord’)

PSALM: Linking the readings, the response to the Psalm is the key to the liturgy of the word. In a simple statement it sums up the meaning of the readings. Ideally, the psalm is led by the Cantor either from the lectern or from another location at the front of the assembly in order to lead their response. *When not sung, the psalm after the reading is to be recited in a manner conducive to meditation on the word of God.* (*Introduction to the Lectionary, 22*)

DO NOT SAY ‘Responsorial Psalm’ or ‘The Response to the Psalm is...’

Instead, look at the congregation and announce the Response with confidence.

DO NOT SAY ‘response’ at the end of each verse. As you read the last line of the verse lower your tone and look up at the congregation. They will come in with the response.

When there is a second reading it is proclaimed at the lectern as described above, but hopefully by a different reader for variety and the inclusion of more people.

“For in the readings God speaks to his people... offering them spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful through his Word.” GIRM, 55

Gospel Acclamation

A period of silence is to be observed before the singing/reading of the Gospel Acclamation. This is often led by a cantor from a microphone separate from the ambo to facilitate the procession of the Gospel Book from the altar to the lectern.

Silence: so that “the Word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared” GIRM, 56

How do I become a good reader? - Prepare! Prepare! Prepare!

Steps for effective preparation

Prayerfully read the Scriptures on a regular basis in a small group or as a private study with resources.

Visualise the congregation. Ask God to touch their hearts. Be a witness to God’s Word.

Consider how your assigned reading relates to the Gospel. Literature is available to help with this preparation e.g. *Break Open the Word* (Liturgical Commission, Brisbane).

Read your text silently several times, getting a sense of the pace and flow.

Identify the type of passage you are to read, eg a story, a prophecy, a parable, an instruction, a song or poetry.

Consider the meaning: What does the text mean in its context? Where is its climax? What is its tone and spirit: comforting, warning, informing, intimate?

Four problems are frequently pointed out about readers:

- **Cannot be heard** (not using the microphone effectively; not projecting voice)
- **Cannot be understood** (unclear diction; reading too fast; not obeying punctuation)
- **Cannot give adequate expression** or emphasis to the text so fail to arrest the attention of listeners
- **Cannot pronounce** proper names correctly

Check pronunciations and words of emphasis. Decide important phrases or words to emphasise. *Verbs are a good choice because they are active words. Prepositions are not.* Give every word its value. Drop your voice at a full stop.

Practise reading aloud. *Several times!* Read to another person or into a tape or voice recorder for feedback.

On your assigned day arrive ahead-of-time so that you can enter into a spirit of prayer before the liturgy begins. Make certain that the Lectionary is correctly marked and that the microphone is adjusted properly.

What is proper dress for readers?

The dignity of the Sacred Liturgy requires that those accepting the call to such public ministry dress so as to reflect the profound nature of the call to proclaim God’s Word.