

# ***Church of St. Mary***

## **Lector Ministry**

### ***Guidelines as of February 2009***

1. **Prepare and study the readings** for the Sunday from the *Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers*. (If you do not have a copy at home pick up a copy in the sacristy.)
2. **Arrive in the sacristy** fifteen minutes before Mass and let the Sacristan know that you are present. St. Mary's goal is to have two lectors and a cantor assist in the proclamation of God's Word at each Mass. (On rare occasions, a lector may be required to proclaim more than one reading.)
  - A. **The first lector** scheduled is asked to proclaim the First Reading and in addition, the first lector is asked to carry the Book of Gospels up the aisle in the Entrance Procession. (This book is not carried out after Mass.)
  - B. **The second lector** is asked to proclaim the Second Reading and read the Prayers of the Faithful from the Ambo after the Creed.
3. **The Book of Gospel carrier** (first reader) walks slowly up the aisle behind the Cross Bearer and Servers with the Book of Gospels raised at a comfortable level in front of you, preferably above eye level. When you arrive up front, pause, then **keep moving** around to the back of the altar, (the side away from the assembly, at this point you should be facing the people) place the book in the center of the altar on the stand. Return to the front of the altar at the bottom of the steps, turn, bow (with Father if he is waiting there), and then be seated. Note: You do not bow while carrying the Book of Gospels since you are carrying the Word of the Lord.
4. **After the opening prayer**, when all sit down, the first reader walks slowly to the front steps at the center of the sanctuary, bows head in reverence, and then walks up to the ambo. Pause 2-3 seconds, embrace the crowd with your eyes and then, looking at them, say, "A Reading from the Book \_\_\_\_\_", from memory. Then continue to proclaim the reading. Just before you say, "The Word of the Lord," pause 2-3 seconds and look at the assembly in the same manner. Keep looking at them until you hear, "Thanks be to God." Stepping back one step, bow your head and pause. (Your pause should be a reverent silence of 10 seconds, or about the time it takes to pray a Hail Mary.) Then walk down to the center aisle where you will meet the cantor, bow your heads in reverence and then return to your seat. (Note: The cantors are also being instructed in this procedure.)

5. **The Cantor** pauses for the music to begin and then proclaims the psalm. At the end of the Psalm, the cantor steps back from the ambo, pauses for a reverent silence of 10 seconds, meets the second lector in the middle aisle, both bowing reverently and then cantor returns to his/her seat.
6. **The second reader** follows the same procedure as the first reader. As you approach to proclaim meet the cantor in the middle aisle. As you complete your reading, after the silent reflection, please place the closed Lectionary in the shelf of the ambo thus giving Father a clear space on the ambo for the Book of Gospels.
7. **For the Intercessions** the second reader leaves his/her pew towards the conclusion of the Creed and proceeds to the ambo, brings the Book of Intercessions out from the shelf in the ambo, and waits until Father has introduced the prayers. At the end of the intercessions, the lector should lift the book as indicated and then place the book back on the shelf. He/she pauses at the ambo until Father has concluded his prayer and then return to your seat.

**Notes:** The Word of the Lord is received by the assembly during the liturgy and thus neither the Book of Gospels nor the Lectionary is carried out after Mass. The Sacristan returns these to their designated places before the next Mass.

The pauses indicated above are important for a dignified presentation. The reading should be slow, but steady, emphasizing key parts. Bring the reading to life, but try not to be melodramatic. Practice is important and the footnotes and side notes in the workbook are a big help in understanding the context

The key to being a great lector is to be a storyteller, one who takes time to practice, practice, practice!

Thank you, Lectors, for your ministry of proclaiming God's Word.

You are greatly appreciated.