St. Joseph-on-Carrollton Manor Catholic Church

LECTOR MANUAL

Revised May 2023

"When the Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself is speaking to his people, and Christ, present in his own word, is proclaiming the gospel"
(General Instruction of the Roman Missal #29).

Table of Contents

Welcome…….…….3

Pre-requisites……..……..……..….3

Preparation during the Week……..……..…...3

Dress Code…….……4

Before the Mass…….4

During the Mass…….....5

General Tips……...6

Schedule……..7

Lector Communication……...7

Special Occasions…….…7

Attachments……..……..7

1. Mass Preparation Resources ……...……8

Welcome

Welcome to this important liturgical ministry. We are grateful that you were inspired to share your talents and become a Lector. The purpose of this manual is to share some basic information and helpful hints that will help you effectively proclaim the Word of God.

Pre-Requisites

To become a lector you will need to register on our management compliance website www.virtus.org, as well as read the Archdiocesan Code of Conduct and Statement of Policy. Visit https://www.stjoesbuckeystown.org/cyp/ for the instructions on how to complete the training. If you are a teen ages 14 through 17, you must complete a different training. Please contact Martina Rangel (martina@sjcmmd.org) if you have any questions. This training must be renewed every five years.

Secondly, you must be trained by this parish. Please contact Chuck Grover (cgrover71@gmail.com) to arrange a training session.

Preparation during the Week

1. **Read the Lector Workbook**
   At the beginning of the new liturgical year, you will be provided with a *Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers*. You will be notified by e-mail when and where they are available. This will be your greatest tool. It has all of the readings and detailed explanations to help you understand and deliver the content. Alternatively, the readings may also be found on the St. Joseph Ministry Scheduling website. Simply click on the mass for which you are scheduled to Lector and in the top right side you will see links for the readings.

   There will be two lectors listed. The person listed first will read the 1st Reading, and the person listed second will read the 2nd Reading.

   It is suggested that you familiarize yourself with both readings just in case something happens and you must proclaim both readings at Mass.

2. **Pray**
   With prayer, you will move beyond the technical preparation and have spiritual preparation. This will help you to understand the meanings of the readings and better enable you to proclaim them to the congregation at mass.

3. **Practice**
   About a week before your scheduled reading time, become familiar with what you will read and read it aloud many times. This is necessary because the writers did not speak as we do and there are many run-on sentences and unfamiliar names of people and places. However, we have to deliver the readings as is. By practicing it many times you will best be able to understand how to best proclaim it properly.

   To help you, there is an audio version of the readings on the Ministry Scheduling website for each weekend mass. Take advantage of this resource to help you pronounce unfamiliar names and practice the cadence of the readings.

4. **Memorize First Lines**
   Try to memorize the first couple of lines so that you make eye contact immediately with the congregation. For instance, memorize the introduction to the reading, i.e. "A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians." (See more suggestions below under "Tips.")

Dress Code

Please remember to dress reverently and modestly. Men should wear slacks, shoes, shirt, and a tie. (A jacket is highly recommended). For women, a knee-length or longer dress, skirt, or pants would be appropriate, along with a top that does not have a revealing neckline. You are proclaiming the Word of God, and you should look the part.

Before the Mass

1. Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass. You need this time to prepare spiritually, mentally, and physically for the liturgy. Check in with the Mass Coordinator and let him/her know that you will be proclaiming the Word of God.

2. Secure a seat at the end of the first short pew closest to the organ and the Ambo. We don't want to delay Mass by having everyone wait for you to go to and from the Ambo.

3. Go to the Ambo and make sure that the Lectionary is there and properly prepared. Briefly review reading from that book since it looks different from how it did in your workbook. If the Mass Coordinator tells you that there is no deacon and you'll have to read the Universal Prayer, make sure the Universal Prayer binder is inside the Ambo and there are no words or names you cannot pronounce. If you are not sure about the pronunciation of certain words, please ask Father or the Deacon before the Mass.

During the Mass

1. The lector reading the 1st Reading will proceed to the Ambo as soon as the priest finishes the Collect (formerly known as the Opening Prayer, which is after the Gloria) and as the congregation begins to sit. If there is the Children's Liturgy of the Word, wait until the children are walking to the back of the church, and then proceed to the Ambo. Bow reverently at the bottom of the steps that are diagonal the altar in front of the Ambo, and then proceed up.

2. Make sure the microphone is at the correct height, set your feet about shoulder's width apart, and make eye contact with the congregation. After you proclaim the introduction, pause about two seconds and then begin the reading. After completing the First Reading, follow with a distinct pause, and acclaim, "The Word of the Lord." **DO NOT close the lectionary.** After a brief pause, walk down to the base of the steps, bow with the cantor, and then return to your seat.

3. If there is no Psalmist, the Lector will proclaim the Responsorial Psalm. Pause for a moment after the First Reading and then begin the Responsorial Psalm.

    a. Do not say, "Responsorial Psalm" at the beginning. Start with the Refrain.
    b. There is no need to raise your hand to signal the congregation to repeat the psalm.

4. When the Responsorial Psalm has concluded the 2nd lector should go to the base of the steps as the cantor steps down, bow with the cantor, and then proceed to the Ambo to proclaim the Second Reading. When you are finished with the reading, follow with a distinct pause and acclaim, "The Word of the Lord." Then, place the Lectionary on the left side of the lower shelf of the Ambo and proceed back to your seat after bowing. *If the priest has notes in the lower shelf, be sure not to cover them, or the Universal Prayer binder, with the Lectionary*.

5. If a deacon is not present, the 2nd lector reads the Universal Prayer.

    a. To read the Universal Prayer, start walking to the Ambo near the end of the Nicene Creed when you hear the line "We believe in one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic church…" so that when it is time to read the intercessions you will be ready to begin without making the congregation wait.
    b. Don't read them as announcements, but as prayers of the people.
    c. After reading the final intercession, turn and face the Priest while he says the concluding prayer. As the congregation sits, step down, bow to the altar, and return to your seat.

General Tips

1. Throughout the week, ask the Holy Spirit to use you as an instrument to reach the hearts of others. Try to say a final prayer as you walk to the Ambo.

2. Periodically record yourself at home as you practice your readings and listen to yourself or have a family member listen. Can you hear and understand every word? Are you modulating your voice to keep your listener interested?

3. Let your emotions show through your voice. Ask yourself, "What are the most important points I am trying to convey here?" Then, emphasize those. Listen to your recording with your eyes closed and see if you can hear the wisdom come through. Let yourself become the voice of the person who wrote what you are reading. Don't just read it to us; remember you are *proclaiming God's holy Word*!

4. Enunciate every syllable, and pause at appropriate places to help the congregation better understand what you are trying to say. If there is a comma in your sentence, let the listener hear it in your voice. Practice difficult words (names, towns, etc.) throughout the week.

5. Don't read too quickly or too slowly just because there is a microphone before you. However, take into account the acoustics to allow your words to strike home with the listeners.

6. Make eye contact with the congregation, but keep your finger on the spot where your eye left the page. If you feel uncomfortable doing this in the middle of a passage, try to memorize the beginning and ending lines and deliver those while looking at the congregation.

7. A great link to help prepare is: http://Lectorprep.org.

Schedule

Our scheduling is done online through our St. Joseph-on-Carrollton Manor Ministry Scheduling website. Approaching the end of each month you will receive an e-mail asking you go online and update your availability for the next month. **It is extremely important that you do this so that you are not scheduled when you are out of town or otherwise unable to serve**.

Once the schedule comes out, please take note of the date(s) that you are assigned to lector. In the event that you are unable to lector as scheduled, please go onto the scheduling website and request a sub as soon as possible. Consider contacting another lector directly if nobody accepts your sub request in a timely fashion. A list of all lectors is available on the scheduling website by clicking on the "Rosters" tab. While emergencies and sudden illnesses happen, last minute substitutions should be avoided due to the extensive nature of the preparations required.

Lector Communication

The Lector Coordinator may send e-mail notices to lectors that includes special instructions, notices, substitute requests, etc. Please feel free to contact him with any questions, concerns, or suggestions at:

Chuck Grover
cgrover71@gmail.com

Special Occasions

On special occasions, such as Christmas, Easter, and Holy Days of Obligation, we will need additional lectors. Typically these are not assigned as Sunday masses are. When the schedule for that month comes out you will be asked to go to the scheduling website and volunteer for these masses if you are willing and able to serve. The Lector Coordinator will send you the readings if they are not available in the Lector's Workbook.

Credits

The format, style, inspiration, and much of the text was taken or modified from the Lector Manual of St. John Neumann Catholic Church in Austin, TX (Paul A. Juarez, *Liturgy Coordinator*). It is used with permission, for which we are grateful.