

**Guide for Lectors**  
**Sacred Heart Parish**  
**Nekoosa, Wisconsin**

September 2017

## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for responding to the call to serve as a Lector! The lector performs a great service to the Church by proclaiming the readings from Sacred Scripture, announcing the intentions for the Universal Prayer as appropriate, and, in the absence of a psalmist, reciting the Psalm between the readings.<sup>1</sup> It is an honor and a privilege to serve in this capacity and, of course, careful preparation on the part of the lector is required.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance, Church teaching, and helpful tips that will make you better suited to carrying out this function, “so that by their hearing of the readings from the sacred texts the faithful may conceive in their hearts a sweet and living affection for Sacred Scripture.”<sup>2</sup>

This document is not all-inclusive. If, after reading it, you have any questions, contact Father John or Deacon Mark for guidance.

## PREPARATION

Practice, practice, practice! The ambo is not the place for you to read the readings for the first time. Plan to review the readings several times before you come to Mass. That way you’ll have time to learn a little bit about the subject of the readings, look up the pronunciation of difficult words, etc. Several websites can help you prepare (lectorprep.org, lectorworks.org, and others) or learn pronunciations (<http://www.netministries.org/resources/resource-pronunciation-guide> and others). There is also a workbook for lectors in the server sacristy that you can look at as you sit and prepare for Mass. Taking the time to practice will make you more knowledgeable, confident, and capable. You’ll be more effective in proclaiming God’s Word. You’ll notice – and so will the folks in the pews.

## DRESS

As a Lector, you proclaim the word of God and represent His Church. As such, you should dress in a way that is dignified and shows respect for the ministry you are carrying out.

- Clothes should be neat, clean, modest, tasteful, not casual (no jeans, t-shirts, flip-flops, tank tops, etc.) and should reflect proper reverence.
- Clothing that intentionally draws attention to yourself or is distracting to other parishioners should not be worn.

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<sup>1</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) paragraphs 99, 196, and 197

<sup>2</sup> GIRM, paragraph 101

## PUNCTUALITY

Arrive at least 15 minutes early. This gives you time to review the readings one last time before you proclaim the Word of God. It also gives time for the Priest or Deacon to talk to you about any special situations that will occur during the Mass. For example, if the Deacon is going to be giving the homily, he may ask you to place the lectionary on a shelf of the ambo after you finish the second reading. Or he may ask that you read the names from the Book of Life. Perhaps the organist will ask you to lead the Responsorial Psalm if the choir won't be singing it. There are a number of small changes that could occur. If you arrive early you'll have time to prepare and won't be caught off guard. People DO notice when you aren't fully prepared, and it distracts from the Mass. In addition, you'll want to take time to:

- Make sure the lectionary is set to the correct page (arriving early will give you time to ask the Priest or Deacon if you aren't sure). NOTE: Do not remove the lectionary from the ambo. *Lectors DO NOT process out of the sacristy with the lectionary.* This action is only proper to the *Book of the Gospels* as part of the entrance procession.<sup>3</sup>
- Make sure that the "Pastoral Patterns" booklet is set to the proper date. It is usually paper-clipped to the correct page, but it's a good idea check it and make sure. Both the calendar date and the liturgical calendar date (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, First Sunday of Lent, etc.) are listed at the top of the page. Silently read the introduction so that you are familiar with it. Also review the prayer intentions you will read during the Universal Prayer.
- Adjust the height of the microphone to suit your reading position.
- Make sure the microphone is on. If you don't see a green light at the bottom, it's not on. Just press the little button at the bottom of the microphone stalk and it'll power up.
- Review the names from the Book of Life if you will be reading them as part of the Universal Prayer. Ask the Priest or Deacon for help if you are unsure about pronunciation. It can be very embarrassing for you and for friends and relatives of the deceased if you struggle with a name or mispronounce it during the Mass!
- Review the Mass Intentions (located on a clipping from the bulletin on the right side of the ambo) if you will be reading them as part of the Universal Prayer. Ask the Priest or Deacon for help if you are unsure about pronunciation to avoid the embarrassment of mispronouncing it during the Mass. Also make sure you the names you look at are for the Mass you are attending!
- Take note of the number of the hymn that will be used for the entrance procession. You can bookmark the correct hymn in the songbook, make a little note to put on the ambo, memorize it; whatever works for you and helps you avoid the embarrassment of nervously turning around to see the number when you're trying to announce the hymn.
- Pray! As you are quietly waiting in the server sacristy for Mass to begin, take a moment to thank God for calling you to proclaim His Word. Offer your service as lector as a gift of love

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<sup>3</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) paragraphs 120 d. and 172

to God. Ask that the Holy Spirit be with you to guide your thoughts, words, and actions. Then trust Him to be there for you as you proclaim His Word.

## GESTURES

In addition to proclaiming God's word, a lector can also help lead the assembly by his or her actions. There are a few times during the Mass when it is appropriate to make a bow of the head or to make a *profound bow* (a bow of the body). A bow signifies reverence and honor shown to the persons themselves or to the signs that represent them. <sup>4</sup>

- The bow of the *head* is made when the three Divine Persons are named together and at the names of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saint in whose honor the Mass is being celebrated.
- A bow of the *body* is made to the tabernacle (before the start of Mass) or to the altar (during Mass), and in the Profession of Faith (or Apostle's Creed) at the words, "And by the Holy Spirit...and became man."

## ACTIONS DURING THE MASS

### The Beginning of Mass

- When the bells announcing the start of Mass begin, take a moment to discard any thoughts or emotions that could distract you. Give yourself completely to God. NOTE: The bells ring for approximately one minute and fifteen seconds.
- When you leave the server sacristy, proceed to the ambo in a dignified manner, pausing to bow to the *tabernacle* on your way.
- When you reach the ambo, greet the people with:
  - "Good Morning (or evening). Welcome to Sacred Heart Parish as we celebrate the (whatever the Liturgical Date, Holy Day, or Feast Day is)."
  - Then read the short paragraph found in the "Pastoral Patterns" booklet.
  - "Our celebrant is Father (name)." If the Deacon is present, add "assisted by Deacon (name)."
  - "Our opening hymn is number (number), (name of hymn)."

An example of a full greeting would be something like this: "Good morning. Welcome to Sacred Heart Parish as we celebrate the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time. (Statement from the Pastoral Patterns booklet). Our celebrant is Father John, assisted by Deacon Mark. Our opening hymn is number 795, (name of the

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<sup>4</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) paragraph 275

song).” NOTE: You do not have to use this *exact* format, but for consistency you should say something similar.

- Then proceed to your chair, stand in front of it, and join in the singing of the hymn.

### **The Readings**

- After the Priest has finished the Collect prayer, proceed to the ambo for the first reading. At 10:30 Mass there is usually a children’s homily; if this is the case, you may choose to stay at your chair until after the Priest gives a blessing to the children before proceeding to the ambo.
- Announce the First Reading by saying, “A reading from (whatever the reading is).” Do not say, “Our first reading is...” If the people have been paying attention, they should know which reading they’re about to hear. The same applies to the second reading. Just say, “A reading from...”
- After you’ve finished the reading, pause briefly and then say, “The Word of the Lord.” After the people have responded with “Thanks be to God,” you may proceed back to your chair and sit down, unless you will be leading the Responsorial Psalm.
- If you are leading the Responsorial Psalm, it is not necessary to raise your hand to prompt the people’s response unless there appears to be some confusion.
- At the 5pm and 7:30am masses you will be leading the Responsorial Psalm; at 10:30am mass the choir will lead the Responsorial Psalm.
- After you have completed the second reading, return to your chair and stand in front of it for the reading of the Gospel. **NOTE:** *If you were asked* by the Priest or Deacon to place the lectionary on a shelf of the ambo, be sure to do so before returning to your chair.

### **The Homily**

Remember that when the homily is being given, you are seated very close to the homilist and are plainly visible to most of the assembly. Please pay attention to the homily and do not fidget or do anything that could be distracting.

### **The Profession of Faith, Universal Prayer, and Collection**

After the homily comes the Profession of Faith. Following the Profession of Faith, the Priest will introduce the Universal Prayer (sometimes also referred to as the *Prayers of the Faithful* or the *Petitions*).

If the Priest is standing at the ambo:

- Proceed to the ambo and read each of the petitions from the “Pastoral Patterns” booklet, saying “We pray to the Lord” after each one. NOTE: If offering a petition for our personal intentions (the “Pastoral Patterns” booklet says, “For all the prayers we hold in the silence of our hearts...”), be sure to pause for a moment before saying “We pray to the Lord” so that people may make their silent prayer to God.
- After the last petition is read, return to your chair and remain standing until after the Priest says the prayer concluding the Universal Prayer.
- After the hymn for the offertory has been announced, pause briefly until after the Priest has bowed before the altar, then bow to the altar, exit the sanctuary through the server sacristy, and return to your pew.

If the Priest is standing at his chair:

- Proceed to the ambo and read each of the petitions from the “Pastoral Patterns” booklet, saying “We pray to the Lord” after each one. NOTE: If offering a petition for our personal intentions (the “Pastoral Patterns” booklet says, “For all the prayers we hold in the silence of our hearts...”), be sure to pause for a moment before saying “We pray to the Lord” so that people may make their silent prayer to God.
- After the last petition from the “Pastoral Patterns” booklet, you will make a petition for the Mass intentions by saying “For (name(s), for whom this Mass is being offered, we pray to the Lord.” The name(s) can be found on a little clipping from the bulletin, which is normally placed on the right side of the ambo. Be sure to read only the name(s) for the current Mass!
- After the Mass intentions, announce “From the Book of Life we read the names of all those who have died on this date in the history of our Parish.” Then retrieve the Book of Life from the table behind the ambo and read each name and the year of death. NOTE: Make sure you read the names from the correct page! The left-hand page lists deaths, and the right-hand page lists births.
- After you have read the names from the Book of Life, say “That they may have eternal life in the glory of the Lord (or something similar), we pray to the Lord.”
- Return the Book of Life to its table and then return to your chair and remain standing until after the Priest says the prayer concluding the Universal Prayer.
- After the hymn for the offertory has been announced, bow to the altar, exit the sanctuary through the server sacristy, and return to your pew.

### **Communion**

If you will also be serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC), please make sure you are familiar with the information contained in the *Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion*.