

GUIDELINES FOR READERS

Proclamation of the word of God is truly a service to the Church. Readers bring the living word of God to the assembled faith community. *When the Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself is speaking to his people...*The ministry of the word, therefore, should be treated with great dignity.

The word of God is not merely read, but proclaimed, within the liturgy. Effective proclamation involves the delivery of the message with clarity, conviction and appropriate pace. It demands the ability to evoke faith in others by demonstrating one's own faith. As a ministry which presupposes faith it should rouse faith in those who hear the word proclaimed.

Ideally, the assembly should listen to the proclamation of the scriptures and not read along in a participation aid. In the act of communal listening the worshippers experience not only unity among themselves, but the very presence of Christ speaking to them in his word.

To ensure the pastoral effectiveness of the liturgy of the word, it is important to pay attention to the symbols of the liturgy. Symbols that are integral to any celebration of the word are: the reader(s), the book(s), the ambo, and processions.

The reader ministers as one of the worshipping assembly and is expected to fully participate in the entire liturgy. It is inappropriate for a reader to participate actively only in the liturgy of the word.

The word is contained in permanent, dignified and well-bound books: the *Lectionary for Mass* and the *Book of the Gospels*. The readings are always proclaimed from official liturgical books. *Because of the dignity of the word of God these books...are not to be replaced by other pastoral aids, for example, by leaflets printed for the preparation of the readings by the faithful or for their personal meditation.*

The place for the proclamation of the word of God is the ambo. The ambo is reserved for the readings, the responsorial psalm, and the Easter proclamation (the *Exsultet*). *It may rightly be used for the homily and the prayer of the faithful.*

Processions are important liturgical actions. Readers may take part in the entrance procession. The deacon (or reader if there is no deacon) should solemnly carry the *Book of the Gospels* which is always placed on the altar. *The Lectionary for Mass is never carried in procession and should*

have been placed beforehand on the ambo.

The gospel procession is an important ritual action in the liturgy of the word even though it may not be expressed fully at every liturgy. After the second reading and the pause thereafter, the deacon, or priest when there is no deacon, carries the *Book of the Gospels* from the altar to the ambo in procession. He may be preceded by the censer bearer, and, when appropriate, by servers with candles. When incense is used, the *Book of the Gospels* is incensed after the introductory dialogue and before the gospel is proclaimed. The *Book of the Gospels* is not carried out in the recessional.[vii]

GUIDELINES FOR SAINT HELEN'S

1. The reader should arrive in good time for Mass and wait in the Parish Meeting Room.
2. Before Mass, her or she should ensure that the Lectionary is placed on the ambo and is open at the correct page.
3. The reader should also ensure that the Book of the Gospels is marked at that day's Gospel.
4. Using the Parish Mass Book, the reader should spend the few moments before Mass reflecting once more on the readings for Mass.
5. At the time for Mass, the procession will gather in the hallway outside the meeting room and sacristy.
6. The reader carries the Book of the Gospels in a dignified manner, slightly elevated, so that the people may see its significance.
7. On arriving at the Altar, only the Celebrant and any servers need genuflect.
8. The Reader should go up the steps, allow the Celebrant to venerate the Altar before approaching the altar **from the front** and placing the Book of the Gospels reverently in the centre of the Altar.
9. The Reader then takes his or her place near the Ambo.
10. The Reader proclaims the readings clearly and with a prepared understanding of the context. The Reading should be introduced only with: "A reading from..." and concluded with "This is the Word of the Lord." If there is a second reading, introduce this in the same way, **do not say**: "The second reading is...". The part given in italics in the Lectionary should never be read.
11. After proclaiming the readings, Readers should place the Lectionary on the shelf of the Ambo, allowing space for the Celebrant to place the Book of the Gospels on the Ambo after the procession from the Altar.
12. The Reader remains near the Ambo, sitting or standing appropriately during the Proclamation of the Gospel, the Homily and the Recitation of the Creed.
13. After leading the Prayers of the Faithful, the Reader returns to a place in the Assembly.