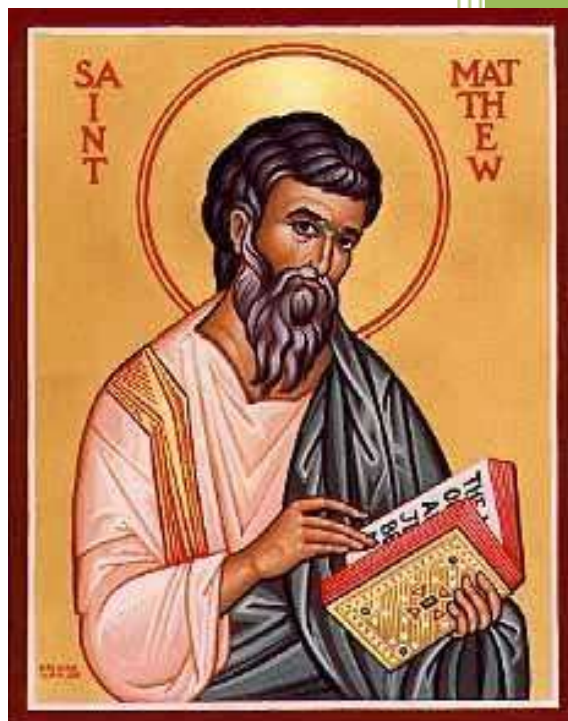


Ministry of Lectors



St. Matthew Catholic Church
Diocese of Fort Worth

(rev. 09-09-09)

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Background | 3 |
| Qualifications | 4 |
| Prepare..... | 5 |
| How to be Successful in this Ministry | 5 |
| Preparation the Week Before Serving | 6 |
| The Lector Workbook | 7 |
| Service at Mass | 8 |
| Duties of the Lectors | 8 |
| Before Mass | 9 |
| The Mass Begins..... | 10 |
| The Readings..... | 10 |
| The General Intercessions and Announcements | 11 |
| Proclamation and Gestures..... | 12 |
| Dress Code | 13 |
| For Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and Lectors | 13 |
| Tips and Suggestions..... | 14 |
| Resources for Lectors..... | 15 |

Background

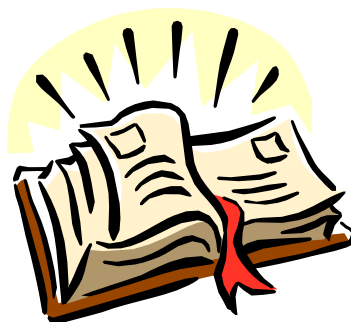
The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, That I may know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. Isaiah 50:4

The Ministry of Lector used to be a Minor Order for those preparing for ordination to the diaconate or priesthood. The word *proclaim* comes from the Latin *pro* meaning “before” and *clamare* meaning “to cry out.” The Lector proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ, making God present to the gathered community.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) has this to say about the Ministry of Lector in #59:

By tradition, the function of proclaiming the readings is ministerial, not presidential. The readings, therefore, should be proclaimed by a lector, and the Gospel by a deacon or, in his absence, a priest other than the celebrant. If, however, a deacon or another priest is not present, the priest celebrant himself should read the Gospel. Further, if another suitable lector is also not present, then the priest celebrant should also proclaim the other readings.

After each reading, whoever reads gives the acclamation, to which the gathered people reply, honoring the word of God that they have received in faith and with grateful hearts



Qualifications

1. Practicing member of the Catholic Church, i.e. is attending Mass regularly
2. Is committed to developing the skills necessary to proclaim the Word such that the Word itself is placed in the foreground and not the proclaimer
3. Eager to engage in ongoing faith formation to deepen their understanding of Sacred Scripture and forge a strong relationship with Jesus Christ
4. Willing to follow the dress code outlined by the Pastor for lay ministers serving in the liturgy
5. Must attend the *Keeping Youth and Children Safe (KYACS)* workshop required of all ministers at St. Matthew Catholic Church and in the Fort Worth Diocese
6. Makes every attempt to attend monthly formation meetings
7. Commits to serving for a full year at a time (6 months for youth)

The Rule of St. Benedict advises us: “anyone can read Scripture in public; only a believer can proclaim them.”



Prepare

How to be Successful in this Ministry

1. Know your own story. Realize that you have responded to a call, not from the Pastor or the Director of Liturgy and Music, but from the Holy Spirit. This is a step in your continued spiritual growth.
2. Know the meaning behind your reading. It is a good idea to attend Bible Study on Thursday night at the parish. If you are not sure what your reading is all about...ask!
3. Believe the Word. The Church teaches that all Sacred Scripture is divinely inspired and as such is Truth. Pray for guidance and for faith. Develop a strong prayer life.
4. Proclaim your reading out of a relationship with God and your community. You will then speak with conviction.
5. Practice without a microphone in front of other lectors. This will help you to speak slowly and promotes good eye contact. Your trainer will be happy to arrange time for this.
6. Don't take yourself too seriously or be show false modesty because others may see a Christ-like quality in you.
7. Be thankful that God has truly used you as a tool in the faith life of the community

Preparation the Week Before Serving

Never forget you are proclaiming the Word of God – not just reading to the congregation. Sometimes we think that because we have heard or read a particular passage over several years, we don't have to study it. WRONG! Going over the readings in advance and properly preparing will show when you proclaim the Word at Mass. It shows for sure when we have *not* prepared well.

1. Find your reading the week prior to the Mass at which you will serve. You can find this in your Lector Workbook or online at <http://www.usccb.org/nab/>
2. Pray to the Holy Spirit before reading through your passages for guidance and understanding.
3. Is your reading for the week a dialog, a poem, a story, a letter, a warning, or a discourse to a crowd? This will have some bearing on how you proclaim it.
4. Study and practice your reading for at least three hours during the week; pausing to meditate on the Word. If you look up the readings in your Bible, the footnotes will often provide helpful background on the scriptures.
5. Use the *Lectio Divina* prayer method while preparing.

The Lector Workbook

The workbook is a great help to all Lectors. It has a section explaining the pronunciation key on page IX. At the beginning of each reading, there is the phonetic spelling for many of the Biblical names (don't rely on the pronunciation we heard while growing up). At the bottom of the page following each reading, there are explanations and hints on how the particular reading should be proclaimed.

St. Matthew Catholic Church will provide one copy for each lector. However, if you wish to order additional copies, they can be purchased online from Liturgy Training Publications at www.ltp.org. Just be sure to purchase the United States Edition.

Service at Mass

Duties of the Lectors

The first Lector:

- Brings the Lectionary and the white Lector binder containing the Opening Greeting, General Intercessions, and Announcements to the Ambo 5-10 minutes before Mass begins
- Also places the blue Presider binder on the priest's chair if the celebrant desires this
- Checks and adjusts the microphone to their height – make sure it is turned on
- Reads the greeting before the Entrance Processional
- Proclaims the first reading
- Returns the Book of the Gospels, Lectionary, and the white Lector binder to the vesting sacristy following Mass

The second Lector:

- If there is no Deacon, carries the Book of the Gospels in the Entrance Processional, walking immediately before the priest; then places the Book of the Gospels on the Altar
- Proclaims the second reading
- Reads the General Intercessions, unless a Deacon is present
- Reads the announcements

*** Under no circumstances should only one Lector be serving at Mass ***

Before Mass

Arrive at least 20 minutes before Mass is to begin. Sign in and proceed immediately to the vesting sacristy. If we have a visiting priest, be sure to introduce yourself. Make sure the Lectionary and Book of the Gospels are properly marked for the day's readings. Make sure the Gospel is in English 😊

Read through the Opening Greeting and General Intercessions to familiarize yourself with them. Pay special attention to the names of the sick and deceased. Father will be happy to help you with pronunciation. Pray the Prayer for Lectors posted in the sacristy. Review your reading again in the Lectionary if time permits.

Five to ten minutes before Mass begins; the first lector will bring all the books to the Ambo, reverencing the Altar as the Sanctuary is entered. Place the Lectionary on the Ambo opened to the first reading. Place the white lector binder inside the Ambo, opened to the greeting. The first lector will then sit behind the Ambo until the procession lines up in the narthex. When the procession lines up, the lector then proceeds to the Ambo and waits for the music to end. The organist cannot see the narthex over the music stand and takes their cue to stop playing when you step up to the Ambo.

The Mass Begins

First Lector

Read the Opening Greeting, place the lector binder inside the Ambo, and then proceed to your pew, remembering to reverence the Altar as you leave the Sanctuary. The Entrance Processional then begins.

Second Lector

In the absence of a Deacon, carry the Book of the Gospels to the Altar, holding it slightly elevated, just enough so you can see under it. Walk behind the Altar servers, but in front of the priest. When you arrive at the Sanctuary, take your place at the foot of the steps to the right side. Do not bow when the priest bows because you are carrying the Book of the Gospels. Enter the Sanctuary at the same time as the priest to place the Book of the Gospels on the center of the Altar, propped up on the pillow. Do not stand it on its cover as this will destroy the binding over time. Place the Book from behind the Altar to avoid disturbing the Altar cloths, flower arrangements, etc. Proceed to your pew, reverencing the Altar as you leave the Sanctuary.

The Readings

Both Lectors should approach the Sanctuary together, pause at the last pew, bow profoundly to reverence the Altar, and then proceed into the Sanctuary. The second lector will sit behind the Ambo, next to the Altar servers. The first Lector will go directly to the Ambo.

Settle in for a moment, take a breath and smile, look up to make eye contact with the people, then announce your reading: "A reading from ..." At this point, continue to look up and pause for a slow three-count, then proceed with your reading. At the end of your reading, look up, pause for a slow three-count, then proclaim "The Word of the Lord." Do not move until the response is completed. Turn the page in the Lectionary to the second reading, place the Lectionary inside

the Ambo, and then be seated behind the Ambo while the cantor/psalmist sings the Responsorial Psalm. The second Lector then approaches the Ambo only after the cantor has returned to the choir area. The lectors and the cantor should not be moving to/from the Ambo at the same time. Proceed to proclaim the second reading in the same manner as the first reading, including the three-count pauses.

When you have finished the second reading, remove the Lectionary from the Ambo, close it, and hand it to the first altar server. Both lectors leave the Sanctuary together and reverence the Altar, and then take their seats in the congregation.

The General Intercessions and Announcements

The General Intercessions are said at the end of the Creed and will be read by the Deacon if he is present. If there is no Deacon, the first lector should be at the Ambo ready to read by the Amen of the Creed. If there is a Baptism, begin approaching the Ambo when the baby or newly Baptized person is introduced. Stop to reverence the Altar before entering the Sanctuary, and then proceed to the Ambo. ** Note that during Easter, the Creed will take the form of the Profession of Faith – be aware of the slightly different form **

When reading the General Intercessions, take care to look up when saying “We pray to the Lord.” Wait for the response, then pause a moment before moving to the next line. Each prayer is distinct and should be made so in your reading. Step back from the Ambo while the priest recites the final prayer.

If there are announcements, approach the Altar after the congregation is fully seated following the General Intercessions. Read the announcements, place the lector binder back inside the Ambo, reverence the Altar as you leave the Sanctuary, then return to your seat in the congregation.

Proclamation and Gestures

The focus of the congregation should be on the Word of God and not on the Lector. As such, while the scriptures are to be proclaimed boldly with conviction, you should not cross the line into overly-dramatic acting. Practice and self-review will help you to determine where this line is for you. So as not to draw undue attention to yourself and thus away from the Word, only three gestures are appropriate by the Lector:

1. Carry the Book of the Gospels slightly elevated during the Entrance Processional, in the absence of a Deacon
2. Hold the Ambo or place your hands on the Lectionary during the proclamation
3. Make occasional, well-planned eye contact with the congregation while proclaiming the Word



Dress Code

For Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and Lectors

Fr. Hector would like all ministers serving in the Sanctuary to observe the following dress code:

- No excessive metallic ornamentation – aka “bling-bling.”
- Pants and shirts should cover the stomach. Skirts and dresses need to be a respectable length – to the knee. Shoulders should not be bare. Chests should be covered appropriately.
- Blouses and shirts should be tucked in unless they are the jacket type.
- No jeans on Sundays or Solemnities – jeans are OK on weekday masses only.

We should dress appropriately to serve in the Sanctuary but not draw undue attention to ourselves. Let us honor the Lord by following this code please. Thank you.

Ministers should be in the church and signed in at least 20 minutes before the start of the Mass at which they are to serve. Please respect and follow the Pastor’s dress code; it is required.



Tips and Suggestions

- Begin to prepare for your reading at least a week in advance. Please do not wait until Friday night to being preparations. It will make all the difference when you are to proclaim.
- St. Matthew offers Bible Study on Thursday nights at 7pm in the Music Room. The group reviews the readings for the coming Sunday, so this is an excellent said to assist you in your preparation.
- Make use of the Lectio Divina study method – praying with the scriptures. Reading is one thing; understanding is another, connecting with Christ through His Word takes you to a whole new level. See your coordinator for a handout on how to use Lectio Divina in your studies.
- Build a habit of daily Bible reading. The lector who is familiar with the Bible is more effective when proclaiming it. If you wish, your coordinator can supply you with a handy guide for reading through the entire Bible and Catechism in one year.
- Take advantage of the monthly formation meetings. Doing so gains you access to information about the ministry, training sessions to help you grow, reference materials you can borrow, and the monthly schedule.
- Check the parish website regularly for updates and announcements:
www.stmattcc.org

Resources for Lectors

CONTACTS

Joseph Moreno – lector trainer and coordinator - lectors@stmattcc.org or 817-313-6343

www.lectorprep.org – website of notes on the readings by a Catholic lector of 20+ years

St. Matthew Catholic Church website – www.stmattcc.org

MEETINGS

Lector formation meetings are held every last Saturday of the month, from 9:30am to 10:30am in Room 11. Breakfast snacks are provided. Please attend whenever possible to help you grow in your ministry as a lector.

VIDEOS

On occasion, you may be videotaped while reading to provide “live” feedback. Only you, your trainer, or a priest will see this video. It is provided to help you see yourself as others see you, to reinforce good practices, and to help you identify where you need to improve. You may also request to videotape yourself – this is highly encouraged.

LIBRARY

We have a small library of lector resources, reference materials, and training aids. It will be present at the monthly meetings so lectors can borrow them for a month at a time. Please sign them out when you take them and return them the following month. We will purchase multiple copies of those materials deemed most helpful by lectors.