

The Ministry of Proclaiming the Word



St. Philip the Apostle Parish

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Carol Schubert
Director of Liturgy

Thank you for listening to the call to become part of the Liturgical Ministry of St. Philip the Apostle Parish. The intent of this handbook is to lay out specific guidelines for your ministry.

All volunteers 18 and older are required to go through the Protecting God's Children Workshop either here at the parish or at other locations throughout the Diocese. You can access Virtus on-line to see when workshops are scheduled and register for the workshop.

To Register:

1. Register on-line at www.virtusonline.org
2. On the left side of the screen click on "Registration"
3. Click on "View a list of sessions"
4. Click on "Joliet Diocese"
5. Select session to register

If you do not have access to the Internet, please call Shar Mirabelli in the Parish Office at 630-628-0900 x0 and she will be able to register you.

Thank you,

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General Principles

Reading and explaining the Word of God 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. The readings of God's word must therefore be listened to by all with reverence; they make up a principal element of the liturgy. In the biblical readings, God's word addresses all people of every era and is understandable to them, and a fuller understanding and efficacy are fostered by a living commentary on it, that is to say, by the homily, understood as an integral part of the liturgical action (GIRM 29).

You are a storyteller telling stories of our Salvation History and then making the Scriptures come alive today! You are the bridge between the Scriptures and the faithful.

Vocal Expression of the Different Texts

In texts that are to be delivered in a loud and clear voice, whether by the priest or deacon or by the lector, or by all, the tone of voice should correspond to the genre of the text, that is, accordingly as it is a reading, a prayer, an instruction, an acclamation, or a liturgical song; the tone should also be suited to the form of celebration and to the solemnity of the gathering. Other criteria are the idiom of different languages and the genius of peoples.

Silence

The liturgy of the word must be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation. For this reason, any kind of haste which impedes recollection must be clearly avoided. Brief moments of silence are appropriate during the liturgy. Such moments should be suitable for the gathered assembly, in which the Word of God is taken into the heart by the fostering of the Holy Spirit, and its response is prepared through prayer. Such moments of silence are opportunely observed after the first and second reading, and then, at the completion of the homily.

Keep in Mind

- To be an effective lector calls for adequate preparation that includes study, prayer, and practice.
- Unless the readings are done well, people will not hear God's voice speaking through these texts and be truly nourished at the Table of the Word.
- The ministry of lector continues the missions of preaching the Word by proclaiming it in the liturgical assembly.
- Lectors are called to a deep relationship with God specifically through the words of Scripture. This treasured legacy that has been preserved and handed down for thousands of years.

Scripture Readings

In the readings, the Table of God's Word is laid for the faithful and the riches of the Bible are opened to them. Hence, the arrangement of the biblical readings must be observed, whereby the unity of each Testament and of the history of salvation is demonstrated; nor is it permitted that the readings and responsorial psalm, which contain the word of God, are substituted by other, non-biblical texts.

In the celebration of the Mass with a congregation, the readings are always given from the ambo.

By tradition, the office of reading the Scriptures is a ministerial, not a presidential function. The readings should be delivered by a lector, the Gospel being proclaimed by the deacon or by a priest other than the celebrant. If, however, a deacon or other priest is not present, the priest celebrant proclaims the Gospel. Further, if a suitable lector is not present, then the priest celebrant also delivers the other readings. After each reading, whoever does the reading proclaims the acclamation. Responding to it, the gathered people honor the word of God which they have received with faith and grateful hearts.

The lector is instituted to proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture, with the exception of the gospel reading. He may also announce the intentions for the *General Intercessions* and, in the absence of the psalmist, sing or read the psalm between the readings. In the celebration of the Eucharist, the lector has specific duties which he alone ought to perform, even though ordained ministers may be present.

Lectionary at Mass

From the Council of Trent (1545-1563) to the Second Vatican Council (1963-1965), the readings in most Catholic Churches varied very little from year to year and were proclaimed in Latin. Second Vatican Council changed the Latin to the vernacular and a three-year cycle of readings that allowed fuller selections of readings. The Second Vatican Council document on The Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy invited the laity into liturgical ministry.

Keep in Mind

- Words are the basic building blocks of both communication and community, both of which have to do with communion, coming together in unity.
- Tradition and Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God, which is entrusted to the Church.
- The Bible offers us a dynamic portrait of God's word in various activities: creating, redeeming, instructing, correcting, encouraging, sanctifying, and shaping a people of faith, hope and love.
- The Church is nourished spiritually at the Table of God's Word and at the Table of the Eucharist: from the one it grows in wisdom and from the other in holiness.
- A deliberate pacing is called for in the Liturgy of the Word to assure that the community hears the word of God: listening, silence, response (Responsorial Psalm), listening, silence, preparation for the Gospel (Alleluia), listening, preaching, silence, prayer of the faithful.
- God's Word waits to become flesh—first, the flesh of the lector, then the flesh of the community.

Spiritual Preparation

Step One: Pray

Step Two: Listen to the Word

Step Three: Study the Word

Step Four: Praying with the Word

Keep in Mind

Preparing to lector involves not only speech preparation but also spiritual preparation.

1. Begin with prayer to the Holy Spirit
2. Read the text aloud slowly, digesting it.
3. Study the text with the help of biblical commentaries.
4. Pray with the text in the days before you read it to the community.

Speaking Preparation

The first suggestion is to read all the biblical texts slowly and prayerfully. Each text is unique, offering a particular experience or thought to the listener.

1. The Story
2. The Letter
3. Prophecy
4. Wisdom Literature
5. The Responsorial Psalm

Keep in Mind

- To communicate a work of literary art “in its intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic entirety” demands a personal commitment from the lector.
- The lector is called to be a “holy interpreter” who lays down his/her life for the text, dying to self by giving one’s body, mind, heart, and spirit so that the text might live.
- Lectors deal with various literary genres—the story, the letter and the poem.
- Each makes its own demands on the reader. Some suggestions:

Story: Watch for the movement of the story and where it builds to a climax; the interplay of narrator and characters; the emotions of the characters: anger, hurt, fear, love, jealousy, confusion, wonder, suspicion. Don’t let fear of overdoing it lock you into a lifeless reading.

Letter: See what you can learn about the letter’s background: its audience, Paul’s relationship with them and the situation that provoked the letter. Give listeners time to absorb complicated thought often expressed in complicated sentence structures.

Poetry: While often found in three forms in Scripture: prophecy, wisdom literature, and psalms, poetry speaks to the heart and the imagination as well as the mind. Be sensitive to the imagery and feelings poetry express.

Checklist of Reading Requirements that Benefit Your Listeners

- Voice Quality: a clear, natural, full voice
- Vocal Variety: a range of voice that avoids monotony and singsong or overly repetitive vocal patterns
- Rhythm: recognizing what words are to be stressed and unstressed; certain poetic forms are given a rhythm of three or four beats per line
- Intonation: there are two basic tunes or melodies that carry our words and help bring variety to speaking
- Diction: clear articulation of consonants and enunciation of vowels
- Pace: provide variety in speed but neither too slow nor too fast
- Pause: allowing time for listeners to comprehend what has been said
- Person contact rather than eye contact when appropriate to the text
- Correct your mistakes when necessary to dispel confusion or misunderstanding.

Functions of the Lector

Introductory Rites

In the procession to the Altar, when no deacon is present, the lector, may carry the *Book of the Gospels* elevated slightly. In that case, the lector walks in front of the priest, otherwise with the other ministers. Upon reaching the Altar, the lector makes a profound bow with the others. If the lector is carrying the *Book of the Gospels*, the lector goes to the Altar and places the *Book of the Gospels* on it. Then, the lector returns to their seat.

Liturgy of the Word

At the ambo the lector proclaims the readings that precede the gospel reading. If there is no psalmist, (at different times during the Liturgical Cycle at 7:30 a.m. Mass) the lector will recite the responsorial psalm after the first reading. After the priest gives the in-

introduction to the *General Intercessions*, the lector will announce the intentions from the ambo when no deacon is present. If there is no opening liturgical song or communion song and the antiphons in the Missal are not said by the faithful, the lector may recite them at the appropriate time (at different times during the Liturgical Cycle at 7:30 a.m. Mass).

Liturgy of the Eucharist

At the conclusion of the Mass, the lector does not process with the *Book of the Gospels*. The Lectionary is never carried in procession.

Responsibilities

1. Please read and pray your scripture throughout the week. There is a difference between reading and proclaiming. Be sure you know the Scripture reference. The Lector Workbook has guidelines for proclaiming the Word that are very helpful for your preparation.
2. The way you dress reflects your commitment to the ministry you have been called to and also reflects your love and respect for our Lord. Please dress appropriately (business casual attire and preferably no flip-flops, shorts, spandex). This is not a fashion show! Please do not wear anything that will detract the listeners' attention from listening to the Word of God.
3. If you are unable to proclaim on your scheduled day, please find a substitute well enough in advance for them to prepare.
4. Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass and go into the Vesting Room to look over General Intercessions and Announcements and to check in. Go to the back of church to walk in the procession after the Altar servers. Father will bow to the Altar. Once Father moves to the Altar, then go to your seat. When carrying the Book of Gospels, you do not have to bow. Pause and proceed to place the Book of Gospels on the Altar.
5. If the Deacon is present at Mass, he will read the General Intercessions. You will read the Parish Announcements at the end of Mass.

Cardinal Newman Prayer

God has created me to do Him some definite service.

He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.

I have a mission.

I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for naught; I shall do good.

I shall do His work; I shall be an angel of peace, a minister for the Lord.