

## DIRECTIVES FOR READERS

April 12, 2005

1. By tradition, the office of reading the Scriptures is traditionally a ministerial and not a presidential function. The reading should be proclaimed by readers, the Gospel by the deacon or by a priest other than the principal celebrant.
2. The Reader, man or woman, is a fully initiated member of the Church who has received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Readers are formally commissioned, ideally at Sunday Mass, with the Order for the Blessing of Readers in the Book of Blessings, Chapter 61, Numbers 1827-1846.
3. Readers are people with a deep love of scripture. Readers prepare the Sunday readings with prayerful reflection. They are instruments of God, for when scripture is proclaimed at Mass, God Himself is speaking to his people.
4. Ideally, there is an appointed reader for each sacred text at Liturgy. At Sunday Mass there are two readings, one from the Old Testament (Acts of the Apostles in the Easter season) and the other usually from a New Testament letter. Each reading should have a separate reader. In 1966 the Bishops of the United States highly recommended this practice, and the 2002 third edition of the *Roman Missal* applauds this practice.
5. All Scripture is proclaimed from the same ambo – First Reading, Psalm, Second Reading, and Gospel. Readers always

proclaim the word from the *Lectiionary*; it would be improper to read from a booklet, piece of paper, or missalette.

6. In the procession to the altar, when the deacon is present and carrying the *Book of the Gospels*, the readers walk behind the deacon and in front of the priest. If there is a psalmist (someone other than the cantor), the psalmist joins the readers in the opening procession.
7. In the absence of a deacon, one of the readers may carry the *Book of the Gospels* elevated slightly.
8. Upon reaching the altar the Readers (and Psalmist) make a profound bow and go to their pew in the congregation.
9. If a Reader is carrying the *Book of the Gospels*, the Reader enters the sanctuary, pauses in front of the altar but does not bow, goes to the right around the altar, places the *Book of the Gospels* flat on the altar table, bows, and then goes to his pew in the congregation.
10. Readers need to be familiar with the technology of the sound systems in our worship site so that quality proclamation can be maintained at all times in the Liturgy. They should be skilled in clear and distinct pronunciation, strong projection, voice tone, pausing, eye contact with the assembly, and prayer proclamation.

11. Your effectiveness as a reader greatly depends upon the time and effort you devote to preparing to proclaim the Readings. Your looking over the *Lectionary* before Mass should not be the first time you are seeing the Readings you are about to proclaim. Use the workbook for *Lectors and Gospel Readers* in your preparation. It is good to go over them several times during the preceding week and to reflect on their meaning in your life so that you may proclaim them with understanding and conviction. Going over the Readings in advance also gives you the opportunity to learn the correct pronunciation of words with which you are not familiar.
12. Readers should arrive at least 20 minutes before the beginning of the Liturgy and use the time to prepare. Since sound from the sacristy is a source of annoyance to those praying in the church, conversations in the sacristy should be minimal and in subdued tone.
13. Be sure to place the Lectionary on the ambo and open it to the proper place. Note that the *Lectionary* is never carried in the opening procession.
14. Read over the General Intercessions/Prayers of the Faithful, and make sure you are clear on pronunciation of the wording of the same. Place the intercessions on the table near the ambo.  
(Note: If the Deacon is present, he will present the intercessions.)
15. The Liturgy of the Word must be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation. Any kind of haste which would impede

recollection must be avoided. A reverent period of silence (approximately 10 seconds) is to be observed after the First and Second Readings.

16. If the microphone needs adjustment, carefully do so.
17. The Reader introduces the Reading by using only the words printed in the Lectionary, namely: *A Reading from...* The Reader never says: The First Reading is a Reading from....
18. Once the First Reading is concluded, the Reader says: "The Word of the Lord." The Reader should stand at the ambo for the prescribed reverent period of silence (approximately 10 seconds).
19. When the Responsorial Psalm is sung by the Cantor, step away from the ambo until it is completed. Then step forward and proclaim the Second Reading.
20. When there is no cantor present, the Reader proclaims the Responsorial Psalm.
21. After completing the Second Reading remain standing at the ambo for the prescribed reverent period of silence before returning to your seat.
22. Return to the ambo when the Creed is nearly completed. After the Creed the Presider invites the congregation to prayer, and the Reader presents the General Intercessions/Prayer of the Faithful.

After the Presider's concluding prayer the Reader returns to his/her place.

23. Remember to bow at the altar before entering and exiting the sanctuary.
24. Please be open to assignment with a willingness to participate at Masses when needed. Preference to a particular Mass may be requested, but be open to help out at other times in response to need.
25. Readers, please use good taste and good sense by dressing in attire that is modest, reverent, and befitting the celebration of the Eucharist.
26. Readers are formally commissioned, ideally at Sunday Mass, with the *Order for the Blessing of Readers* in the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 61, Numbers 1827 - 1846.
27. If you have any questions, ask the priest celebrant.