

Guidelines for Readers



The Gospel Acclamation

The Alleluia (or the Lenten Gospel Acclamation) should normally be sung. If there is no cantor or choir and you cannot start off the singing, someone in the congregation will be able to do so. You should then read the scripture verse before the singing of "Alleluia" is repeated (unless the choir is also singing the verse).

Check with the priest before Mass begins if the Psalm and the Acclamation are being sung. The practice of reading the Gospel Acclamation is discouraged.

If a Deacon has carried in the Book of the Gospels, before leaving the ambo you should remove the Lectionary and place it on the shelf.

The General Intercessions (Bidding prayers)

Towards the end of the Creed you should leave your seat in the Church and proceed towards the sanctuary.

The priest will introduce the intercessions. You should announce the **response** for the congregation to repeat.

During each prayer, you should pause briefly after announcing each prayer intention (e.g., "For the sick...") and pause for a longer time before inviting the response (e.g., "We pray to the Lord").

Wait until the priest has concluded the final prayer before leaving the ambo. At the bottom of the sanctuary steps, bow before the altar before return to your seat.

"God's word, listened to and celebrated, above all in the Eucharist, nourishes and inwardly strengthens Christians, enabling them to offer an authentic witness to the Gospel in daily life."

(Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, November 2013, #174)



Reading at Mass is about proclaiming God's holy word. In this, more is involved than simply reading a text aloud. The reader is a channel for communication of the inspired word of God in the scriptures to the whole congregation. These guidelines are intended to help you to proclaim God's holy word to His people.



Preparing to Read

You should prepare yourself as far in advance as possible, reading all the scripture texts for the Mass, reflecting on them and praying about them. Ideally you should try to read the text aloud a number of times to become familiar with it. This will enable you to raise your head from the printed page to make eye-contact with members of the congregation from time to time.

You should aim to arrive in church 10 minutes before Mass begins, and make your presence known to the priest in the sacristy. You should check that the Lectionary is in place at the ambo and opened at the correct page for your reading.

Ideally there should be one reader for each scripture passage being read and one more for the General Intercessions. Please confirm ahead of Mass who is reading which texts.

Processing to the sanctuary

On Sundays, you should participate in the procession of priest, deacon and altar servers through the church towards the sanctuary. At the sanctuary steps, you should stop and, together with the priest, bow to the altar before proceeding up the steps.

At other times, before Mass begins, you should take a seat at the side of the sanctuary before the priest comes on to the sanctuary.

The Readings

You should wait until the congregation have settled before beginning to read. Communication requires the full attention of the people. Doing this may require practice to become natural to you.

Your pace of delivery should not be rushed and good use of variations of pace and emphasis will help to convey the meaning of the text. It takes confidence (and practice) to read much more slowly than your normal conversational pace but this will ensure that words are not jumbled for the listeners at the back of church.

Begin the proclamation with "*A reading from . . .*" Please do not say: "*The First Reading is a reading from*".

You should pause for a few seconds at the end of the passage before saying, "*The Word of the Lord*".

The Responsorial Psalm

After the first reading, you should pause before beginning to read the Psalm, to give time for people to reflect on the reading.

On Sundays, the Psalm is normally sung by a cantor with the people responding. If speaking the Psalm, you should begin with reading the response line which the congregation will then repeat. Please do not say: "*The response to the Psalm is . . .*". As you read each verse, look up to prompt the response each time.