PROCLAIMING THE WORD

At Mary Mother of the Church

**PRIVILEGE**

Faith grows when it is well expressed in liturgical celebration. By participating well in our liturgies, proclaimers of the Word contribute significantly to the growth of our community’s faith. This is a great privilege.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

Ministers who read sacred scripture during Mass are called proclaimers. The word “proclaim” comes from the Latin, “to cry out”. The task of the proclaimer goes beyond just reading words on a page. Our ministry involves bringing God’s Word to life, so that all may hear and be nourished. This is a weighty responsibility.

To carry out this responsibility well, proclaimers need to grow continually in our ministry. Our own private prayer is the foundation of our growth as proclaimers.

Like music ministers, proclaimers require unusual skills and inclinations. A love for the Word of God is essential. We need to learn as much about the Bible and the Sunday Lectionary as we can. An ability to read comfortably in public and be understood is another needed skill. And the desire to learn how to proclaim effectively is a third essential requirement for our ministry.

The Second Vatican Council teaches in the documents on Sacred Liturgy that *it is God who speaks when scripture is proclaimed.* However, if God is to be properly heard, ministers of the Word must be properly prepared. We must be courageous and unafraid to read with conviction and vigor – not dramatics but with authentic feeling. We can only do this if we have spent sufficient time in prayer and in studying the text. When we have understood the reading ourselves we can then convey the meaning of the sacred text to our community.

Texts that are proclaimed poorly not only fail to reach the assembly – they can also reduce the impact of the preaching that will follow. Good strong proclamations invigorate the homily.

**BLESSING**

We who serve as proclaimers of the Word find our lives greatly enriched when we offer our time and talent to this purpose. We are blessed for helping make the liturgy what it ought to be: the source and summit of the Christian life.

Please take time to study the attached instructions for proclaiming God’s Word at Mary Mother of the Church.

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“Be faithful in the work you do, for through it the Lord saves his people.”

- from *Yours is a Share*, by Austin Fleming

**Directions for Proclaimers of the Word at Mary Mother of the Church**

**1. BE A RESPONSIBLE MINISTER**

◆ Consult your monthly emailed schedule to see when you are to read, and write it

on your personal calendar.

◆ If you are not available that day, arrange for a replacement from your list of fellow

readers. If you are unable to find one, contact your ministry coordinator, Janet Gudel, at 204-275-6479 or [jgudel@shaw.ca](mailto:jgudel@shaw.ca) or [mmoclectors@gmail.com](mailto:mmoclectors@gmail.com).

**2. PREPARE YOUR PROCLAMATION**

◆ The week before you are scheduled to proclaim, confirm the readings for your

Sunday by checking the “Workbook for…Proclaimers of the Word” or your Sunday

Missal.

◆ If there are any choices of text, practice both and then confirm with the presider

when he arrives in the sacristy.

◆ Spend adequate time at home, thirty minutes to an hour, prayerfully preparing your

reading. Pray for the help of the Holy Spirit before you begin.

◆ Use the “Workbook” or some equivalent resource online, for help. Study your

reading in context. In your own Bible, read what comes before and after, perhaps

even the whole chapter. Make notes about insights you have gained.

◆ Double check the pronunciation of words that aren’t familiar to you or that you are

unsure of. Mispronounced words are a distraction.

◆ Practice reading your text out loud until you feel comfortable with it.

◆ Pray again after your work is done, thanking God for the privilege of proclaiming,

and ask for help to proclaim effectively.

**3. ARRIVE EARLY**

◆ Arrive at least fifteen minutes before mass begins.

◆ Check off your name on the proclaimers’ schedule in the sacristy.

◆ Find a seat for yourself in the church. Gather in the church entrance five minutes before mass begins.

**4. PROCESSION** that includes the Deacon

◆ The Lectionary will be on the ambo, open to the correct page.

◆ Proclaimers process in together, following the cross bearer; the other altar servers follow the proclaimers.

◆ At the altar, bow together, a small bow, mainly of the head and shoulders.

Take your seat.

**PROCESSION** that does not include the Deacon

◆ One of the proclaimers carries in the Book of the Gospels.

◆ If you are carrying the Book of the Gospels and you are able to hold it high, be sure to keep it perfectly vertical for best appearance. Otherwise simply carry it

reverently in front of you.

◆ Stop at the foot of the altar. If you are carrying the Book of the Gospels go to the

far side of the altar so you are facing the assembly, and place the book carefully in

the centre of the altar.

◆ Return to the foot of the altar. Both proclaimers bow to the altar and then proceed to your place in the assembly.

**5. PROCLAMATION**

WHEN TO APPROACH THE AMBO:

FIRST READER

◆ **After the opening prayer give the assembly time to get settled. This is very**

**important. Frequently the first reading is well underway before people have**

**have had time to get themselves and their children ready to listen. Use this**

**time to pray, asking God to help you proclaim well for the sake of the people.**

◆ Then proceed to the ambo in a reverent manner. Do not bow. The bowing that is done at the altar as part of the procession is done on behalf of the entire assembly. No other bowing is required of ministers during the rest of the mass. Proceed to the ambo to proclaim the Word.

SECOND READER

◆ At the end of the Responsorial Psalm, wait until the cantor has returned to their

place. Then proceed to the ambo without bowing, as above.

PROCLAIMING:

FIRST AND SECOND READERS

◆ **Ushers try not to seat people during the Liturgy of the Word. But if**

**latecomers do happen to be entering at this point, do not begin proclaiming**

**until they are settled. Do not be embarrassed. You are doing the community**

**a service by waiting until all can listen without distraction.**

◆ Adjust the microphone to your height.

◆ Introduce your text strongly, using only the words that are in the Lectionary. We

are asked to avoid cluttering the liturgy with unnecessary words. So do not say,

“The first reading is…” or “The second reading is...” Everyone knows it is the first or

second reading.

◆ At this point it is important to pause. Give the assembly time to absorb which book

of the Bible your reading is from.

◆ Proclaim the reading, pacing yourself and pausing at appropriate places.

Punctuation marks are one guide. Another indicator of when to pause is whenever

there is a change of thought, or a change in who is speaking in the reading.

◆ Make eye contact with the assembly at the end of sentences.

◆ **Slow down. Listeners need time to take in what you are saying. The people**

**have come to listen to God’s Word and they have mandated you to**

**proclaim it for them. Do not cheat them by rushing through your text. Give**

**God’s Word time***.*

◆ At the end of the reading, pause. Then say, “The Word of the Lord” with conviction.

Do not drop your voice or your strength here. This is the conclusion to the text. Keep

it strong to the end. People will be much more inclined to respond, “Thanks be to

God” when you have invited them strongly to do so.

◆ **The Lectionary instructs us to observe a moment of silence at the end of**

**each proclamation. So remain at the ambo, head bowed, and pray quietly,**

**contemplating your text or thanking God for the privilege of proclaiming his**

**Word. Your gesture will invite the assembly to pray quietly also.**

◆ Do not be embarrassed to stand there for as long as five to ten seconds. This

silence is a way of giving the Liturgy of the Word the time it needs, slowing

things down so that people can absorb what they have heard. As a proclaimer you

have the opportunity to see that these precious moments are honoured.

◆ If you are the second reader, after the silent prayer at the end of your proclamation

close the Lectionary and place it on the lower shelf of the ambo.

◆ Each proclaimer returns to their seat without bowing.

**6. PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

◆ If you are scheduled to read the Prayers of the Faithful, please see separate

instructions for this ministry, titled “Directions for Readers of Prayers at

Mary Mother of the Church”.

**7. CONCLUSION**

◆ Proclaimers do not take part in the closing procession.

NOTE: Some procedures may change during the liturgical seasons. At such times a notice will be sent out with instructions. If in doubt at any time, please ask.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MINISTRY TO OUR COMMUNITY!

Directions for Proclaimers / 2019.11.04