

*Prince of Peace Catholic Church*

## **LECTOR AND COMMENTATOR INSTRUCTIONS**

Welcome to the Ministry of Proclamation of the Word. You have chosen to be part of an important ministry that reaches each person in the assembly. This is a ministry where you allow the Holy Spirit to guide you and take on the spirit of the author you are proclaiming. Lectors and commentators are not actors on a stage. They are proclaimers of God's Holy Word. Allow only your well prepared and practiced voice to proclaim the Word of God.

Before getting into the General Instruction, we will review why we follow certain guidelines.

Who may be a lector?

Any member of the faith community who has been confirmed and attended a Lector Training Session may be placed on the schedule to proclaim the Word of God. It is also necessary that those who wish to proclaim be comfortable and at ease speaking before large groups and have a pleasant and accurate speaking voice.

Sacred Silence and why we observe it

The American Conference of Catholic Bishops promotes and emphasizes the importance of *Sacred Silence*. This period of time allows the assembly of worshipers to prepare for what is to come and to fully take into their hearts and minds that which has been proclaimed. Again we ask all lectors to fully embrace the importance of *Sacred Silence* and faithfully observe it. The first *Sacred Silence* is observed prior to the first scripture reading. The first lector is seated with the congregation and the priest. After being seated for a few seconds, the first lector will then rise and proceed to the ambo and proclaim the reading. When there is a Children's Liturgy of the Word we ask you to wait until all the children have entered the chapel before walking to the ambo. The second lector may walk to the ambo after the cantor has left the sanctuary and returned to their seat following the Responsorial Psalm.

When and how to bow

Lectors will bow as they reach the bottom of the steps leading to the sanctuary to proclaim the Word. This bow should be a respectful bow of the head from the neck and then proceed to the ambo.

When the procession at the beginning of Mass reaches the steps of the sanctuary, the crossbearer will move to the right, the two candlebearers will stand in the middle leaving room for the priest, the lector carrying the Book of the Gospels will stand to the left beside the candlebearer. If there is a Deacon present, the Deacon brings in the Book of the Gospels and the lector will not be a part of the procession. When the priest reaches the

center position, he will genuflect and the lector, candlebearers and crossbearer will all bow a simple bow of the head at the neck. The priest will ascend the steps followed by the candlebearers and the lector carrying the Gospels. The Book of the Gospels will be placed on the altar. At this point no one bows. The candlebearers will exit the sanctuary to the right. The lector will walk left to their pew.

Commentators bow only once at the beginning of the Mass as they go to the ambo.

*As a reminder, lectors/commentators never bow a profound bow. A profound bow which is a bow at the waist, is reserved only for the priest. Remember the lector's bow is a simple and respectful bow of the head from the neck.*

Commentators need to be timely for the Universal Prayer (Prayers of the Faithful)

It is important the commentator ensures they are at the ambo and ready to pray the Universal Prayer (Prayers of the Faithful) immediately as the priest finishes his prayer. All commentators should walk to the ambo at the beginning of the last sentence of the Creed and have the portfolio opened and be prepared to pray the petitions. *Remember when there is a baptism the Creed will not be recited. When the priest returns to his chair he will begin his prayer before the prayer petitions. The lector should go to the ambo as the priest returns to his chair.* Additionally the commentator remains standing at the ambo through the priest's continuation of the prayer and the amen. Following the entire prayer and amen, the commentator returns to his/her seat.

Seating of lectors and their families

All lectors/commentators are to sit in the first few front pews in the section next to the cantor and piano (2nd section from the south). Your families are more than welcome to sit with you in this section. For consistency and appropriate flow of movement to and from the ambo we ask that you observe this traditional seating arrangement. Moving from other locations other than where lectors are to sit is distracting to the assembly.

Appropriate attire for lectors and commentators

Please follow the Parish Dress Code which is distributed to all Liturgical Ministers at training.

## SUBSTITUTES

It is the responsibility of the lector/commentator to secure their own substitute in the event they cannot perform their ministry. If you are a substitute, it is your responsibility to honor the commitment you have made to the person for whom you agreed to substitute. Since ministry schedules are prepared ahead of time, please notify the parish office if you know that you will be on vacation or have another commitment and cannot be scheduled. If your name is on the ministry schedule you must find your own substitute or give notice on the scheduler so others may fill in.

## **PERFORMING THE MINISTRY OF PROCLAMATION**

### **PREPARATION**

**It is indeed an honor to proclaim the Word of God at the Celebration of the Mass. The lector should prepare well prior to the scheduled Mass and double-check their assignments; i.e., Commentator, Lector 1 or Lector 2.**

**If you have been assigned to be the commentator, there is no advanced preparation. You should arrive at church early to review the Introduction, Universal Prayer (Prayers of the Faithful), and any additional notes left for the commentator. You will find the notebook containing this material on the ambo. Always arrive early enough to review the notebook. If you are unsure of how to pronounce a person's name that might appear in the petitions, be sure to ask someone prior to Mass about pronunciation. A person's name is important to them and to their family (especially at the time of a death) and we want to make sure we pronounce correctly.**

**Lector readings are available in the Missalette or on the 'www.usccb.org' website. As you begin to prepare it is wise to read through the scripture several times to become comfortable with it. Consider the connection between the scriptures. In a day or two find the readings in your Bible and read the chapter before and after your specific reading. Your reading is part of a larger picture and story.**

**Remember, prayer is also an important part of preparation for lectors. Prayer during your week of preparation allows the Spirit to work within you to help you know and understand the scripture you will be proclaiming. This helps you make the words you read, God's proclamation to his people at the Eucharist. Be sure to practice both readings just in case! There are times you may find your lector partner or their substitute does not make it to Mass. Better to be prepared than to get nervous at the last minute when you have a reading you may not be familiar with. No need to be nervous....just know both readings well. Another point to remember is that if one lector does not come to Mass, the commentator is not to do one of the readings. These are two separate functions of the Liturgy of the Word. The lector in attendance will proclaim both readings.**

**In the event that the person scheduled for the 'Commentator' role is unable to attend Mass, Lector #2 will make the opening announcements and Lector #1 will proclaim the Universal Prayers (the petitions).**

**Make sure the ribbon marker is on the correct page before Mass begins. It can be embarrassing to find you have the wrong page as you are in front of the faith community and ready to proclaim God's Word! You might also note the page number before Mass begins.....just in case!**

## **GATHERING**

**Commentators and lectors should arrive at church at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the Mass. When you come into the church, please report to the Ministry Room to write in your name on the ministry schedule so we know you have arrived and are ready to participate in the Eucharistic Celebration. If you are substituting for another lector show that you are the substitute for the scheduled lector.**

**The commentator should find their material at the ambo and review it. The individual who has been assigned as Lector #1 is responsible for checking the Lectionary to ensure it is properly marked for the correct readings and placed back on the ambo. Lector #1 is also responsible for taking the Book of the Gospels to the back of the church for the procession, unless a Deacon is present for the Mass whereas that is his role. The commentator and lectors will meet in the Daily Chapel approximately ten minutes prior to Mass for prayers with the presiding priest, the altar servers, and other ministers. Following prayer the commentator and Lector #2 will return to the first pews in the section of pews next to the piano, to await the priest's signal to begin the welcome for Mass. Lector #1 will join the celebrant and the altar servers in the vestibule/lobby for the procession into church, unless a Deacon is present. The role of the Deacon is to process with the Book of Gospels since he proclaims the Gospel from it.**

**Once the presiding priest has indicated to the commentator that it is time to begin, the commentator should proceed to the ambo for the welcome. The commentator should move to the steps and bow respectfully from the neck before ascending the stairs to the ambo. The welcome to be used at all Masses is inside the notebook. Please read the welcome as it is written. At the completion of the introductory script, return to the pew.**

**When processing into church for the beginning of Mass the order is as follows:**

- 1. Crossbearer**
- 2. Candlebearers**
- 3. Deacon or Lector #1 (carrying the Gospels)**
- 4. Presiding priest**

**As the procession begins, be sure to walk into church slowly and reverently. Please allow a half aisle space from those processing in front of you. The lector processing in with the Book of the Gospels walks one half aisle behind the candlebearers. Lector #1 will be carrying in the Book of the Gospels. The Book should be held as high as is comfortable for the individual. Once those in the procession reach the altar steps, the crossbearer will stand to the right about where the front step begins to curve; the candlebearers will simply move forward to the steps, the lector will turn left and stand to the left of the candlebearers. The presiding priest will walk to stand in the center. He will genuflect while the others will bow a respectful bow of the head from the neck. The crossbearer will then place the cross behind the altar; the priest will ascend to the altar; the candlebearers**

will walk to the altar; and the lector will walk to the altar and place the Book of the Gospels on the altar. The lector should open the book slightly so it will stand up. No one bows on the altar. The candlebearers will then turn to the right and process out of the sanctuary to take the candlesticks to the table close to the credence table. Once they have begun to walk, the lector walks to the left in front of the ambo and to his/her pew.

## PROCLAMATION OF THE SCRIPTURE

Following the priest's opening prayer, the congregation is seated. Lector 1 is likewise seated to observe Sacred Silence. After a few seconds Lector 1 stands and walks to the sanctuary. At the foot of the steps pause for a bow of the head from the neck and then proceed to the ambo. Following the reading return to your pew. There is no bowing at the end of the reading nor at the bottom of the steps.

The second reading begins following the Responsorial Psalm. Lector 2 will allow the cantor to return to their seat before rising and walking into the sanctuary. When reaching the steps pause to bow a respectful bow of the head from the neck before going to the ambo. When Lector 2 has completed the proclamation, place the lectionary on the shelf under the ambo and return to your pew. Do not bow at the end of the reading or after leaving the altar.

In the event you make a mistake during your reading, simply go on. Do not make any signs, visual or verbal, of your frustration with the mistake.

## COMMENTATOR

The Commentator is very important in welcoming the faith assembly to the Celebration of the Eucharist and praying the prayer petitions. It is important that the Commentator be alert and follow carefully at all times. If a Deacon is present, the Deacon will proclaim the universal prayers and NOT the Commentator.

At the beginning of Mass the commentator should watch for the presiding priest's signal to begin and then walk to the ambo for the Introductory Script and Mass Intentions. When you reach the bottom of the steps, pause a moment to bow your head from the neck and then continue to the ambo. The introductory script and Mass intentions will be found in the notebook that you have already reviewed when you came to church. Read from the notebook as it is written. Do not add your own comments to this welcome unless directed to do so by the presiding priest. When finished the commentator will return to their pew.

The commentator will return to the ambo (without bowing) for the Universal Prayer (Prayers of the Faithful). During the last sentence of the Creed, the commentator will quietly go the ambo and prepare to pray the petitions. The commentator must be alert and pay close attention. By being at the ambo, with notebook open, the commentator is ready to pray as soon as the priest has concluded his prayer. It is very distracting to the priest and to the faith assembly if the commentator is not in place at the correct time. This is a

**very prayerful time of the Mass and the priest and the faithful should not have to wait for the commentator. It is a prayer time that should flow easily from the priest to the commentator.** Be sure to pause following the petition and then say **WE PRAY (TO THE LORD)**. Remain at the ambo following the final petition and wait for the priest to finish his final prayer before returning to your pew.

## **LECTOR RESOURCES**

- Lector Workbooks for the upcoming liturgical year will be ordered once a year. Watch for an announcement in the bulletin usually in late August. You may order a workbook at your cost.
- A Pronunciation Guide is available on the counter in the Sacristy. This may be checked for most Biblical pronunciations.

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