

## **LECTORS/READERS**

### **Archdiocese of St. Louis**

*“How can they believe if they've not heard?”*  
–Romans 10: 14

There is probably no greater need within the Catholic community than to hear, understand and appreciate the Scriptures. In this informational age of spoken and published words, however, there is probably no greater challenge than to proclaim the readings in an attractive and interesting way. Readers need to know they are neither taking the priest's place (GIRM, No. 59) nor simply reading a required text. They are fulfilling a role properly their own by reason of baptism and skill, a role of proclaiming and bringing to life the story in which we find our identity as God's people.

In addition to training sessions and published materials for the readers, liturgy commissions might consider the following practical reminders:

1. Whether personally invited by pastor or commission or obtained by volunteering, readers need to possess a gift for reading in public and an appreciation of the scriptures.
2. Ideally readers are not scheduled as communion ministers within the same period of time. Where resources are limited they may serve in both ministries but never within the same liturgy.
3. Readers, once chosen and prepared, may be installed in a brief public ceremony (BB, Chapter 61). This might include presenting each reader with a copy of the readings or a small lectionary to encourage reading and preparation at home. (Materials are readily available for guiding readers in understanding and preparing the readings.)
4. Both the law of the Church and the strong encouragement of the Archbishop extend this ministry to both women and men. Obviously anyone chosen for a public ministry is presumed to be living a public life in harmony with the teachings of the Church.
5. Readers are encouraged to prepare the readings well in advance. Last minute preparation is disrespectful of both the Word of God and the members of the community.
6. Readers are normally part of the entrance procession. They may be seated near the pulpit or sit with the assembly. They are normally not vested but are suitably dressed for their public role in the liturgy.
7. Readers are to proclaim the readings only from a worthy lectionary, never from a missalette or looseleaf lectionary.
8. When possible there may be a different reader for each of the readings. The different voices may be helpful to lend greater attention to the scriptures.
9. Eye contact with the community during the reading better communicates a sense of sharing in the word. Pausing between the end of the reading and the statement, “The word of the Lord,” gives proper emphasis to the latter as important and as a statement of faith and better invites a stronger response from the community.
10. Normally the reader proclaims only the readings. The responsorial is best led by the choir or cantor or spoken by another voice. Regardless of who leads the responsorial, even if it were the lector, *a period of silence, a pause, follows the readings*. Also, if not sung, the Alleluia is omitted – it is not spoken. The reader may lead the general intercessions (prayer of the faithful) but another person normally makes any necessary announcements at the appropriate time.

11. An adequate sound system and familiarity with proper use of microphones are essential to the proclamation of the readings.

NOTE: Some parishes have rightfully encouraged parishioners to listen to the readings rather than follow them in the missalettes. Others have considered missalettes that do not contain the readings. Before either of these steps is taken parishes must be sure the readings are *well* proclaimed!