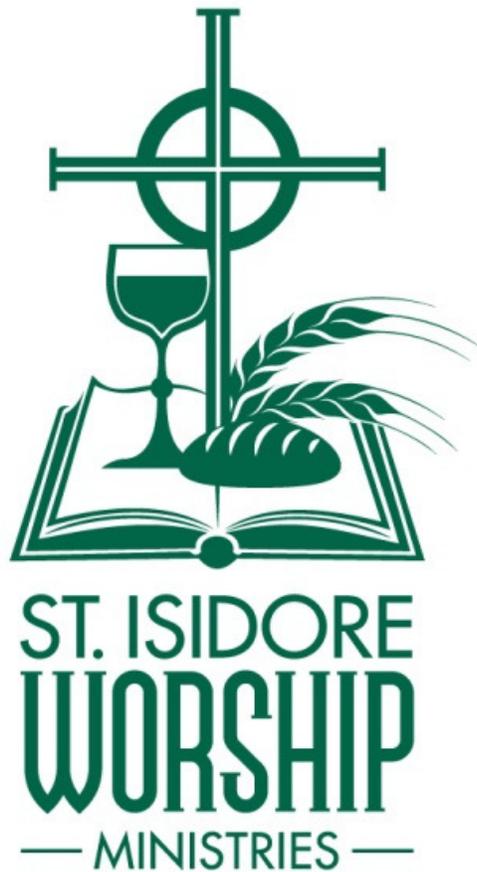


# St. Isidore Parish Handbook for Lectors and Proclaimers of the Word



Updated 2/1/16



## Prayer for Lectors

*Almighty God, cleanse my heart and my lips that I may worthily proclaim your Gospel; bless my efforts to prepare, that I may meditate on your Word, understand it better, and proclaim it faithfully to your people; surround my ministry with your presence, that I may carefully perform the task entrusted to me, preach Jesus Christ to others, announce the Word of God properly, watch it grow in the hearts of listeners and give glory to you, Father, through your Son and in the Holy Spirit.*

*Amen.*

*(From 'Messengers of God's Word:  
A Handbook for Lectors,' Fr. Joseph M Champlin)*

# Spiritual reflections on the Ministry of Reader/Lector

December 11, 2007 by [ordinary guy](#)

Yours is a share in the work of the Lord's Spirit who opens our hearts to God's holy word. Yours is the task of telling our family story, the story of salvation. Yours is to proclaim the true and saving word of God. You are the messenger of God's love for us.

Your task is to proclaim that word, which challenges, confronts, and captures our hearts. You proclaim a word that heals and comforts and consoles. Yours is the ministry of the table of God's word, which feeds the hungers and the longing of our hearts for the truth.

Yours is to offer the story of the "Great Things the Lord Has Done For Us," that we might turn to the table of Eucharist with good cause to give thanks and praise. Yours is nothing less than the ministry of the Lord's voice calling out in the midst of God's people. Come to your work from your personal prayer, praying that the Spirit will open your heart to what you proclaim. Prepare the word which is yours to speak: study the scriptures, understand the passage, let it dwell deep within you.

Come to your work in awesome reverence of the word you proclaim: it is the Lord's word. Come to your ministry as one judged and saved by the word you speak. Anyone can read the scriptures in public; only the believer can proclaim them.

Approach the ambo, the table of the Lord as you would the Lord himself, with reverence and awe. Handle the book of the Lord's word with great care; it is a tabernacle of the Lord's presence. Let your eyes fall often on the faces of the assembly; they are the body of the Lord whose word you proclaim. Let the Lord's peace settle in your heart, that your voice may be clear and steady, let your voice echo the sound of the word, with conviction, with gentleness, with strength, and with wonder.

Remember that the story you tell is filled with a drama you need not supply, but must always convey. Like the prophet, you will sometimes proclaim what no one wants to hear; remember always your own need to hear the hard saying, and never imagine that your ministry places you above what you proclaim.

If you are the best of the parish lectors, be gentle in helping others to improve. If you are the least of the parish lectors, seek out that help which others can give. If you do not know how well you read, ask: be grateful to constructive criticism and humbled by any praise you receive. Every lector wants to read on Palm Sunday but not all will be assigned: be patient in waiting your turn and nourish by the word that others proclaim.

Let no minister of the word think that there is nothing left to learn; another commentary and another workshop cannot but help the open mind and heart. When your brothers and sisters praise and thank you for your work, take delight in the word that you have heard and rejoice in the work the Lord has accomplished through you.

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

# St. Isidore Parish Lector Guidelines

## General Information

Lectors are members of the Assembly who proclaim the Word in the first two scripture readings. They also assist in creating a hospitable and prayerful environment by praying the Prayers of the Faithful.

Training and preparation are necessary for those persons wishing to be Lectors. Proclaiming the Sacred Scripture is different from other kinds of public speaking. Not only do Lectors need to be effective communicators, but they need to absorb and express the spirit of the Liturgy as well.

Speaking of readers at the Liturgy, Vatican II said, "They exercise a genuine liturgical function. They ought, therefore, to discharge their office with the sincere piety and decorum demanded by so exalted a ministry and right expected of them by God's people. Consequently, they must all be trained to perform their functions in a correct and orderly manner... Christ is present in His word since it is He Himself who speaks when the Holy Scriptures are read in the church."

## Preparation

Always check the schedule and coordinate a replacement if you are unable to read when assigned. The schedule is also posted on the parish web site.

Prepare readings at home carefully and thoroughly. Read them aloud while practicing. Also, read the notes in the margin of your workbook to help you understand the texts. Use the pronunciation guide for difficult words. If in doubt, ask Father before Mass begins.

Each lector should prepare both readings in case of a no-show by the other lector.

Business casual dress is required for men and women. No jeans or logoed shirts.

## ARRIVAL

Arrive 20 minutes prior to the start of the Liturgy. Please sign in so the other Lector knows you have arrived. Take a moment to check the Lectionary and verify the correct page of your reading. If you are Lector #1 and there is no Deacon scheduled make sure you review the petitions, which are located in the binder on the ambo.

Lector #1 shall place Lectionary on ambo. Book of Gospels goes to the rear of the Church (or Chapel).

Please check to see if the Deacon is present. The Deacon will process in with the Book of the Gospels, place it on the rear of the altar, and move to his seat. If there is not a deacon present Lector #1 will assume these duties.

## MOVEMENT DURING MASS

### Lector #1

If there is no deacon present Lector #1 will carry in the Book of the Gospels in the entrance procession. Lector #1 will line up behind the candle bearers and walk down the aisle. At the front of the Church simply nod your head in reverence to the altar and follow Father onto the altar. The Book should be placed on the back of the altar in the center. Return to your seat.

When the congregation sits down after the opening prayer (called the Collect), Lector #1 calmly proceeds to the altar. Always approach the altar from the south side of the Church. Reverence the altar with a slight bow of your head at the base of the steps, and proceed to the ambo. Adjust the microphone if necessary and read slowly and clearly. Do not turn the page of the lectionary unless your reading continues on to the next page. At the end of your reading, pause, then say, "The Word of the Lord". Congregation responds, "Thanks Be to God." Remain standing at the ambo until the music begins for the responsorial psalm and then return to your seat.

If there is a deacon present he will read the petitions, otherwise Lector #1 shall begin to approach the altar during the Profession of Faith at the words "**proceeds from the Father**". Remain at the ambo until Father finishes the prayer following the petitions. When the congregation says "AMEN", close the binder, place it on a shelf and return to your seat.

### Lector #2

When the responsorial psalm ends please stand and walk calmly to the altar. Reverence the altar with a slight bow of your head at the base of the steps, and proceed to the ambo. Adjust the microphone if necessary and read slowly and clearly. Do not turn the page of the lectionary unless your reading continues on to the next page. At the end of your reading, pause, then say, "The Word of the Lord". Congregation responds, "Thanks Be to God." Remain standing at the ambo until the music begins for the Gospel, either piano music or the ringing of the bell during Lent. Please close the lectionary book and place it on one of the shelves and return to your seat.

At the conclusion of Mass, Lector #2 shall return the Lectionary to the altar sacristy. Book of the Gospels goes on the gift table in the back of the Church.



### **DO's FOR LECTORS...**

- DO** know you are a minister of Church and a representative of St. Isidore Parish.
- DO** prepare yourself before every Mass with a moment of quiet prayer.
- DO** secure a substitute in advance when you are unable to attend the Mass you are scheduled for.
- DO** dress appropriately, according to the parish guidelines.
- DO** participate fully in all parts of the liturgy by praying, singing and listening to the homily.
- DO** develop a devotion to the Eucharistic presence of Christ, knowing the Christ of the Eucharist, not just knowing about the Eucharist.
- DO** thank God for leading you to the worthwhile ministry!

### **DON'TS FOR LECTORS...**

- DON'T** draw attention to yourself by dramatic or hurried movements. Be natural in your walking to and from the altar, somewhat slower than your normal walking pace. Reverence the altar with a slight bow of your head before you ascend the steps.
- DON'T** rush the ritual. Allow this moment its full beauty.
- DON'T** be overly dramatic with your reading. Let the Spirit guide your words.
- DON'T** panic if you speak the wrong word or stutter. Take a breath and continue.
- DON'T** ever forget how precious you are to God and how grateful the parish is for your service!

### **SCHEDULING MINISTERS FOR MASS**

Each lector is asked to select a specific Mass time to serve. There is a choice of eight Masses per weekend, 6 in English and 2 in Spanish. Each lector is committed to that specific Mass time for four months at a time and, depending on the Mass time, shall read twice during each 17 week period. The Ministry Schedule is produced three times a year. Six weeks before the new schedule begins there is the opportunity to request days off, change your Mass time or resign from a ministry. Every effort is made to honor such requests. Please watch your email and the parish bulletin for further details.

## **ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS**

When you get your schedule, it is a good practice to mark your home and/or cell phone calendars with the day and time you are to read. Save the roster in a convenient place, in case you need to contact another lector.

Your reverence for the persons you serve and for the Mass will show in all of your actions. In the way you walk slowly and with dignity and the way approach the altar area, the way you stand when you are reading, even your facial expressions (you can smile!).

If you are nervous and feel confused about your reading, ask the other lector or Father to clarify your concern.

Each lector is to get their own substitute when they are unable to serve their assigned date and time. In case of illness please notify the other lector at least one hour before Mass begins.

## **OTHER OCCASIONS**

There is a need for Lectors on several other occasions when the community gathers for worship, such as Christmas and New Years, Thanksgiving, Holy Days of Obligation, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week (Triduum), Public holidays (Labor Day, Memorial Day), etc.

Scheduling ministers to serve on these occasions is difficult, due to personal schedules, so we rely on our ministers to sign up to serve. Sign up sheets are generally found in the sacristy a few weeks before the liturgy. If you also serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion please sign up for only one ministry at Mass. You can always fill in as an EOM if someone is needed that day.

## **CONCLUSION**

Your faithfulness and dedication are greatly appreciated. If for any reason you can no longer continue your commitment to the ministry please notify us so your name can be removed from the roster. If you have a change of address, email or phone number, please let us know. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don't hesitate to call.

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