

# OUR LADY OF LOURDES LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

## LECTOR ORIENTATION

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...”*  
~ John 1:1

Throughout history, the Church has affirmed the close tie between the Word proclaimed in the Liturgy and Word made flesh received in the Eucharist; recognizing both as Christ *present* to give himself as food. When you realize that your role as Lector is both presenting **and** making Christ present in the Liturgy, it becomes a much deeper responsibility to proclaim effectively and well.

The first part of preparation to Lector then, must be about our own ability to understand what we are proclaiming. Your intent is to unleash the power of the Word for the entire assembly.

First, understand:

At Lourdes we make available to each Lector a copy of the Workbook for the year. This covers everything from the meaning of the passage to how to pronounce those difficult words. As regularly scheduled Lectors, please be sure to take the book home. The week before your assignment, become familiar with this reading – (for that matter, use it even when you are not Lectoring, to better understand what you hear at Mass!) Pray over it, study it thoroughly, practice it repeatedly - absorb its intent and meaning. This workbook does a great job of teaching what the passage is about. Its Scripture Commentary section for each reading is meant for you ... it is difficult to proclaim what you don't understand.

Second, deliver:

Your delivery will become personal to everyone in the pews if you use a few tricks gleaned from the greatest storytellers. Work on the pace of your reading. A good rule of thumb is a half step slower than your normal conversational voice. Too fast, and no one will understand you. Too slow, and they may become distracted. Do not simply read it ... engage the people with the Word.

Periodically, look up from the pages. Find two or three spots in the Church that you can look up to as you proclaim. If your face is down the entire time, it can appear you are simply reading it to yourself.

When you look up from the Book, you project a connection – it brings out the power of the Word. Use your intentional desire to communicate what you understand from the Scripture – not just the words, but also the meaning. The inflection in your voice, the pitch – high or low, your posture and facial expressions, are all important to a storyteller. Think of it this way – if you are proclaiming joy, show joy! If it is a plea – an urgent appeal, project that in your face and voice – not in a way that is theatrical or exaggerated, but in a way that is honestly expressive.

One of the most useful ways to fully be responsible for what you are bringing to the Liturgy is availing yourself of other Lectors. Practice together and listen to each other. If you hear someone who seems like they always do a great job, let them know and ask for feedback.

Third, pray always!

Our Parish Administrator at Our Lady of Lourdes, Mary Asp, an outstanding and experienced lector herself, shared her prayer as she prepares to proclaim the Word, "Lord, let them hear you, through me."

The practicalities of being a Lector:

1. Arrive 15 to 20 minutes before the start of Mass.
2. Go to the Ambo and make sure the Lectionary is ready and open to First Reading.
3. If you are the Second Lector, you should also go up and make sure you know where you will be starting.
4. The cue for First Lector is when the Presider concludes the Opening Prayers and invites people to be seated as he sits down.
5. Your demeanor during the Liturgy is one of reverence. Modeling reverence happens in multiple ways: your walk to the Ambo is dignified and respectful, with a reverent bow from the waist to the Altar.
6. When you finish the First Reading, set the page to the Second Reading (unless you are also proclaiming the Responsorial Psalm).
7. When you leave the Ambo after the First Reading, walk down to the front of the steps and bow before Altar. (Note: if a cantor is coming up to sing the Responsorial Psalm, it is appropriate that you wait and bow with the cantor). For those who Lector at the 7 pm evening Mass, the Responsorial Psalm is recited, not sung. The First Lector leads the people in the Responsorial Psalm.
8. Cue for the Second Reader: Once the Responsorial Psalm has been proclaimed, it is your cue to go up to do Second Reading. Again, if the cantor is coming down, meet and bow together.
9. If you are the Second Reader, plan to also read the Intercessions, unless a Deacon or an assisting priest has this assignment.
10. Final note – dress appropriately. High-heeled shoes are difficult to climb the stairs in – be comfortable. Clothing should be simple but on the dressier side – no shorts, no flip flops, no sneakers. Business casual is most appropriate. Unless you are also assisting as an Altar Server, please sit in the congregation.

From a Liturgical Minister Training session by Mary Asp, Parish Administrator at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church  
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