



## Readers (Lectors) Guidelines

1. The Word of God in the Sacred Scriptures lies at the heart of our Christian life and is integral to every liturgical celebration. The Reader proclaims the Word in the liturgical assembly, becoming the voice of the Spirit speaking to the worshipping community.
2. The ministry of Reader calls for prayerful reflection to understand the sacred text and practice of the skills of public speaking. Pastors should assess both the spiritual maturity and the practical abilities of those who aspire to this ministry.

### A. Pastoral Considerations in the Selection of Candidates

3. A person of faith with knowledge and command of communication skills may proclaim the Word of God. The following norms should be observed in selecting Readers. Candidates should:
  - a. have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, regularly attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation, and frequently receive the sacraments;
  - b. be persons who have aptitude for reading in public; and
  - c. have a love and reverence for Sacred Scriptures

### B. Formation

4. “All those entrusted with this office, even those not instituted in the ministry of Reader, should be truly suitable and carefully trained” (*Verbum Domini*, 58), “so that the faithful, by listening to the readings from the sacred texts, may develop in their hearts a warm and living love for Sacred Scripture.”<sup>1</sup>
5. Those who aspire to this ministry should be formed in a basic theology of the Word of God, its importance in the celebration of the sacred liturgy, basic biblical theology and training in public speaking.

### C. Commissioning and Terms of Service

6. The pastor determines the suitability of candidates who will exercise this ministry.
7. Those who will serve as Readers may be given a blessing following their period of formation and before publicly assuming this ministry. A text for this can be found on page 90 in the Canadian *Book of Blessings*. The blessing should normally take place at Sunday Mass.

---

<sup>1</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 3rd typical edition, n. 101.



8. Pastors should consider the normal term of service as Reader to be three years, allowing for a broad sharing of this ministry among parishioners.

#### **D. Continuing Formation**

9. Regular formation should be scheduled for all Readers. A process of periodic evaluation can also be helpful in improving their competency in public speaking.

#### **E. Exercising the Ministry at Liturgical Celebration**

10. Readers should not exercise any other liturgical ministry at the same Mass at which they proclaim God's Word. When possible, individual readings should be proclaimed by different readers.
11. The clothing and appearance of the individual should reflect the dignity of the role of proclaiming the Word of God.
12. In the procession to the sanctuary, the Reader walks in front of the priest(s) and is seated in the sanctuary. The Lectionary is never carried in procession, but placed on the ambo prior to the liturgy.
13. The Lectionary is the proper book of the Reader. Other publications, such as missalettes, should not be used.
14. The Scripture readings are always proclaimed from the ambo (pulpit).
15. The Reader should wait until the congregation is seated and quiet before beginning the reading. During the proclamation, Christ "is present in His Word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n.7).
16. The Lectionary is not held up or shown at the conclusion of the readings. The concluding announcement, "The Word of the Lord," refers to the proclaimed Word and not to the book, so an accompanying gesture is inappropriate. Following the proclamation, a brief pause (5 seconds) will allow the faithful to reflect on the Word that has been proclaimed.
17. When a second reading follows the responsorial psalm, the second Reader approaches the ambo and follows the same procedure as in the first reading. If one Reader is proclaiming both passages from Sacred Scripture, he or she may be seated when the Responsorial Psalm is sung.
18. If there is no deacon, the Reader may announce the intentions at the Prayers of the Faithful. The Reader returns to the ambo at the conclusion of the Creed and is seated after the priest has concluded the General Intercessions with the prayer.
19. At the conclusion of the liturgy, the Reader joins the procession at the end of Mass.
20. The only Biblical translation approved for liturgical use in the dioceses of Canada is found in the Canadian editions of the Lectionary. Liturgies with other language groups must use approved texts.