

Protocols for Lectors at St. Joseph Parish

Thank you so much for all the wonderful ministry you provide for our parishioners and all those blessed to visit our parish for liturgy!

Following are the updated guidelines we follow as Ministers of the Word:

1. As always, PREPARE – for the entire week prior to your assignment, you should be reading the Scriptures you will proclaim. It’s good to read out loud for someone else who can listen and help you to be certain you are pronouncing words properly. You can use the workbook you receive each fall, and you can also go online to find commentary about the readings for the day. If you have any questions about pronunciations, PLEASE check ahead of time so that you can proclaim the Word confidently.
2. Please be sure to keep in mind the difference between simply reading and PROCLAIMING. Remember that you might be spreading the Good News to someone who has never heard it before, and that, for each of us, God speaks to us where we are at the moment we hear Him, so your role is extremely important in helping others to hear.
3. Please arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass, and report to the Mass coordinator. If you need to report off, please do as soon as possible so that your swap request can be received by others in a timely manner. And if you are NOT scheduled, please come dressed to serve and let the MC know you are present and willing. This makes it so much easier to everyone to be prepared for praying the Mass.
4. When you are scheduled, please always arrive dressed in your “Sunday Best”, or at least “Business professional.” Leggings and tights are fine with a dress, but they are NOT pants and should not be part of your attire when serving in the sanctuary; neither are bare shoulders, spaghetti straps and cut-outs that expose skin appropriate attire. We are to be vehicles of God’s Word, so our appearance should never cause any distraction. We should not be remembered for ourselves, but for the Word we proclaim with authority and love.
5. Please, when you arrive, check the Lectionary at the ambo. We are using the formal Lectionary, rather than the loose-leaf variety, to accentuate the importance and the permanence of God’s Word. Also please check the pronunciation of any names to be read – tricky names are marked with phonetic pronunciations, but you need to practice them out loud. Always ask if you can’t figure it out.
6. The person who arrives first will carry the Book of the Gospels in the procession (unless the deacon is present) and will read the First Reading. (Should this present a difficulty, the second Reader can carry the book.) The person who arrives second will read the Second Reading and the Universal Prayer. If the Deacon is participating, he always reads the Universal Prayer.
7. In the entrance procession, reader carries the Book facing outward, just below eye level. You process immediately in front of the celebrant, keeping 4-6 pews between the person in front of you and yourself, bow to the altar, ascend the steps and walk left of all the servers, stopping to, face the tabernacle, level with the edge of the altar step. As the servers move, you walk around left to the upper side of the altar and place the Book, face

DOWN, on the center of the altar, up far enough that Father can kiss the altar without having to move the Book. Bow to the altar, walk back around and down the step, turn and bow once more, then go to your seat off the center aisle.

8. Please **BE SEATED** on the center aisle, and bow from the waist when you arrive at the altar step. Then walk to the left of the ambo **on the main floor** before mounting the steps. After you read, you will walk to the left – as you face it – of the ambo, down the steps, over to the center, bow again, and return to your seat. Cantor will approach the ambo to lead the singing of the Psalm, then will return to the choir. Second Reader comes to the sanctuary, following the above procedure, and proclaims, then returns to your seat in the body of the church.
9. Following the Second Reading, please close the Lectionary, and place it on the lower shelf of the ambo so that there will be room for the Book of the Gospels. It's good to practice this with the Lectionary as it is larger than you are used to using and a little more unwieldy.
10. If you should happen to be the only Reader for a particular Mass, you may sit in the sanctuary during the Psalm as you have done in the past. Please be careful to sit with both feet planted on the floor.
11. For Universal Prayer, Reader approaches the ambo during this line of the Creed: "I believe in one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church..." You begin after Father prays the introductory prayer, and you remain in place, facing Father, as he prays the concluding prayer. Then you return to your seat.
12. Following Mass, first Reader will please return the Book of the Gospels to the sacristy for the next liturgy.
13. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Office!