

St. Rita Catholic Church
Santa Rosa Beach, Florida

Ministry of the Lector

“The Word of the Lord”. Christ speaks His message through your voice. Christ is in you. You give Him a voice.

This is your gift to God and to His people, to proclaim God’s “Good News” of His love and salvation.

You must know, believe and live this truth to be the “Voice of Christ” to His people today. The Holy Spirit is your teacher and support. Ask Him for help in your ministry each time you serve.

“Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ” is the closing response. You have proclaimed His words with all of your prayer, preparation, enthusiasm and skill. The people hear the Word of Christ and say ”Praise....”

This is your mission in your ministry – to be the Voice of Christ to His people. Know it, live it, proclaim it and love it. He is our Lord. His Word guides our salvation.

Proclaim: Study His Word in Scripture.
Know His Word in your life.
Be living in His Word in your life.
Be growing in His Word through prayer, study and action.
Tell all that His Word is life eternal.

Result: Your enthusiasm will catch the weary, suffering, doubting, and complacent.
It will encourage everyone.

Do it well! Your ministry of Lector is ...POWERFUL!!!!

Qualifications for Lectors

1. Have received all of the Sacraments of Initiation.
2. Be a practicing Catholic. This means that you attend Mass on every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation, you regularly give to the support of the Church, you make your annual Easter duty, you do not belong to any organization which is opposed to the Catholic faith.
3. Be a person of lively faith, good morals and live a true Christian life.

“O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.”

Your Skills: Uttered with conviction, preparation, clarity and skill.

With Conviction: You must read, learn and know the scripture passage in your life, believe and live it. Make it real for the congregation by the conviction in your voice. Make it new, even if it is told over and over. God is speaking His love to His people. It is an endless message.

With Preparation: At least one week in advance, using the Lector Workbook, read all the scripture readings for the day. They are related and will add insight to the importance of your particular part. The workbook has hints for delivery, pronunciations, history and explanations. The Liturgical year is from the First Sunday of Advent to the Feast of Christ the King. Pick up your book from the Mass Coordinator in mid October.

With clarity and skill: Practice. Read the Word aloud just as it will be read at the lectern, with full voice and all expression.

Vocal Variety. This is the single most important quality of public speaking. Monotone lacks color. Variations in pitch, animation and warmth draws attention to your message.

Rhythm. The rhythm of a poem is very different from that of narrative. Identify the mood and purpose of the reading and find the appropriate rhythm.

Rate. Rhythm is interesting when it is varied and not particularly interesting when it lapses into a steady beat without variation. Some texts deserve a slower proclamation simply because they are dense in meaning or syntax, others because they are particularly solemn or particularly brief. A very brief reading must be proclaimed slowly, lest it be over before the hearers have even become focused on it. Still other readings can profit from a degree of briskness. But consider, too fast and the people won't understand what you are saying. Too slow and they will forget the first word of the sentence before you get to the last.

Pausing. Effective pausing is learning not to fear silence. The listeners must have time to process the text. A well-executed pause is one way of emphasizing a part of a text, either what has just been proclaimed or what is coming next. This is referred to as the “pause for effect”.

Volume. Volume is not necessarily loud. Sound level is more “height” & “weight” or pitch and projection. This should be practiced at the lectern in church with someone who will help you. Call Terry to set an appointment for any help.

Stage Fright. Your fear is really the energetic desire to do well. Prepare well! Then USE the energy behind the fear.

Most of those on any stage will admit to Stage Fright before walking out and getting started. But, they treasure that fear because they know it will give the energy to their efforts. Practice not only makes perfect (or nearly so), it also creates confidence.

St. Rita Procedures:

DRESS

Please dress appropriately for your ministry. You are in the House of God. Dress modestly and neatly. There are older members of our community who will stop listening to the proclamation of God's Word to worry about how you are dressed. We are not expecting heels and hose, nor do we want blue jeans and tee shirts. Dress well and neatly as a spokesperson of the Good News.

SCHEDULE

The schedule is available the very last weekend of the month. **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GET ONE. If you can't make the Mass(s) that you have been assigned, your obligation is to call Terry.** Her phone number is on the schedule. If you know when you will be out of town in the coming month, please call with the dates. The cleaner the schedule when it is published, the better.

TIME

Arrive **15 minutes** before Mass and check in with the Mass Coordinator. On occasion, she will have special instructions from Father for you.

If you have not checked in by **10 minutes** before Mass time, you will be replaced. It takes time to find a replacement. Then they need time to review the readings.

Occasional misses happen. These will be accepted. But repetitive misses, without notification, will be interpreted, as a lack of interest in your ministry. We rely on your filling your assignment.

After checking in with the Mass Coordinator, go to the ambo (lectern) to make sure the book is marked with the correct page.

After Father's introduction to the reading approach the sanctuary. Bow to the **altar**, not the cross or ambo, before going up the steps. **DO NOT BOW** when leaving.

If your name is first on the schedule, it means you are to proclaim the first reading; if second, you proclaim the second reading. When there is a choice of readings, prepare both and ask Father before Mass which he wants you to read.

NEW PROCEDURE: After the first reader finishes proclaiming the Word, take a step back & remain in place until the responsorial psalm begins before you return to your seat.

The second reader **CLOSES THE BOOK AND PUTS IT ON A SHELF IN THE AMBO** before leaving. Father/Deacon needs a clear surface on which to put the Book of Gospels.

FIRST TIME LECTORS: Because of the sound system in St. Rita, it is a necessary that you be rehearsed before you proclaim God's Word for the first time to avoid awkward sounds. You may move the mic. Do not speak into it. Speak to the side, or 5/6" behind it. Call Terry to set a rehearsal time for someone to help you.

ONE LAST NOTE: Many people have told us how a certain reading had touched their heart, even after hearing it many times. It is you, as the Voice of Christ, with your prayerful love and preparation who have given that gift. Thank you from your St. Rita family and our guests. Give thanks to the Holy Spirit who teaches us all.
