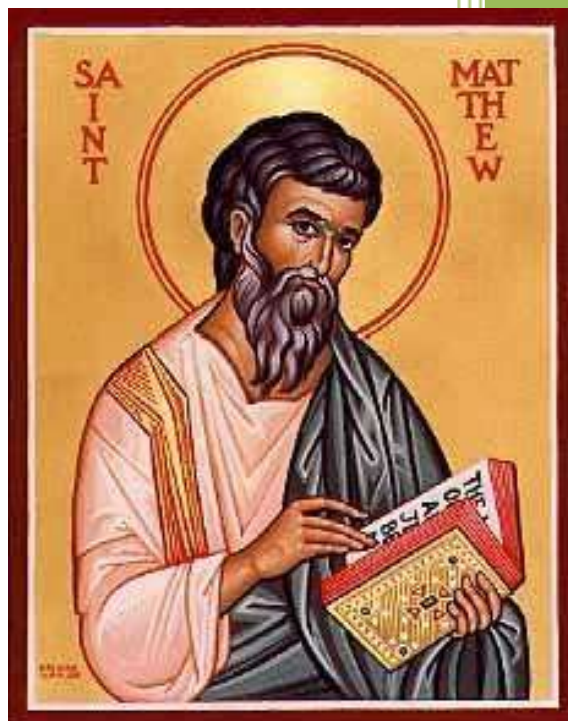


Ministry of the Word



St. Matthew Catholic Church
Diocese of Fort Worth

(rev. 12-05-11)

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Background

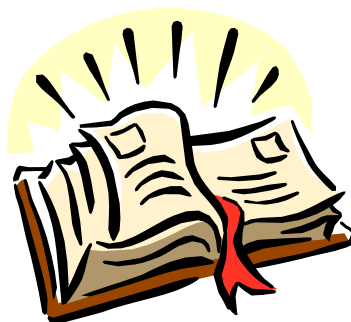
The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, That I may know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. Isaiah 50:4

The Ministry of Lector used to be a Minor Order for those preparing for ordination to the diaconate or priesthood. The word *proclaim* comes from the Latin *pro* meaning “before” and *clamare* meaning “to cry out.” The lector proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ, making God present to the gathered community. Today, only men are instituted by the bishop as Lectors. Lay people of both sexes may serve as non-instituted lectors. St. Matthew has the latter in our parish.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) has this to say about the Ministry of Lector in #59:

By tradition, the function of proclaiming the readings is ministerial, not presidential. The readings, therefore, should be proclaimed by a lector, and the Gospel by a deacon or, in his absence, a priest other than the celebrant. If, however, a deacon or another priest is not present, the priest celebrant himself should read the Gospel. Further, if another suitable lector is also not present, then the priest celebrant should also proclaim the other readings.

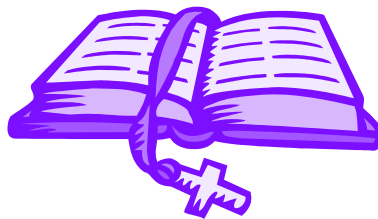
After each reading, whoever reads gives the acclamation, to which the gathered people reply, honoring the word of God that they have received in faith and with grateful hearts



Qualifications

1. Practicing member of the Catholic Church, i.e. is attending Mass regularly
2. Committed to developing the skills necessary to proclaim the Word – one formation meeting per month for one hour, plus a two hour refresher course once per year
3. Eager to engage in ongoing faith formation to deepen their understanding of Sacred Scripture and forge a strong relationship with Jesus Christ
4. Willing to follow the dress code outlined by the Pastor for lay ministers serving in the liturgy
5. Must attend the *Keeping Youth and Children Safe (KYACS)* workshop required of all ministers at St. Matthew Catholic Church and in the Fort Worth Diocese
6. Prayerfully prepare for one assigned reading per month
7. Commits to serving for a full year at a time

The Rule of St. Benedict advises us: “anyone can read Scripture in public; only a believer can proclaim them.”



Prepare

How to be Successful in this Ministry

1. Know your own story. Realize that you have responded to a call, not from the Pastor or the Coordinator of Lectors, but from the Holy Spirit. This is merely one step in your lifelong spiritual growth.
2. Know the meaning behind your reading. It is a good idea to attend Bible Study on Thursday night at the parish. If you are not sure what your reading is all about...ask!
3. Believe the Word. The Church teaches that all Sacred Scripture is divinely inspired and as such is Truth. Pray for guidance and for faith. Develop a strong prayer life. If you believe what you are proclaiming, so will your listeners.
4. Proclaim your reading out of a love for God and your community. You do not perform for personal glory. You proclaim out of love. Only then will you speak with conviction.
5. Practice without a microphone in front of other lectors. This will help you to speak slowly and promotes good eye contact. We do this in our monthly meetings.
6. Remember that your job is to be the parish storyteller. You have to paint the picture of the scriptures for them, many of whom are not familiar with the Bible. Read slowly enough to give them time to 'see' the Word of God.
7. Be thankful that God has truly used you as a tool in the faith life of the community

The Lector Workbook

The workbook is a great help to all lectors. It has a section explaining the pronunciation key on page IX. At the beginning of each reading, there is the phonetic spelling for many of the Biblical names (don't rely on the pronunciation we heard while growing up). At the bottom of the page following each reading, there are explanations and hints on how the particular reading should be proclaimed.

St. Matthew Catholic Church will provide one copy for each lector. However, if you wish to order additional copies, they can be purchased online from Liturgy Training Publications at www.ltp.org. Just be sure to purchase the United States Edition.

Service at Mass

Duties of each lector

The first lector:

- Brings the Lectionary and the Lector binder containing the Opening Greeting, Prayer of the Faithful, and announcements to the Ambo 5-10 minutes before Mass begins
- Also places the blue presider binder on the priest's chair if the celebrant desires this
- Checks and adjusts the microphone to their height – *make sure it is turned on*
- Reads the greeting before the Entrance Processional
- Proclaims the first reading
- Returns the Book of the Gospels, Lectionary, and the lector binder to the vesting sacristy following Mass

The second Lector:

- If there is no Deacon, carries the Book of the Gospels in the Entrance Processional, walking immediately before the priest; then places the Book of the Gospels on the Altar
- Proclaims the second reading
- Reads the Prayer of the Faithful, unless a Deacon is present
- Reads the announcements

Before Mass

Arrive at least 20 minutes before Mass is to begin. Sign in at the podium in the narthex and proceed immediately to the vesting sacristy. If we have a visiting priest, be sure to introduce yourself. Make sure the Lectionary and Book of the Gospels are properly marked for the day's readings. Make sure the Gospel is in English 😊

Read through the Opening Greeting and Prayer of the Faithful to familiarize yourself with them. Pay special attention to the names of the sick and deceased. Father will be happy to help you with pronunciation. Pray the Prayer for Lectors posted in the sacristy. Review your reading again in the Lectionary if time permits.

Five to ten minutes before Mass begins; the first lector will bring all the books to the Ambo, reverencing the Altar as the Sanctuary is entered. Place the Lectionary on the Ambo opened to the first reading. Place the white lector binder inside the Ambo, opened to the Opening Greeting. The first lector will then sit behind the Ambo until the procession lines up in the narthex. When the procession lines up, the lector then proceeds to the Ambo and waits for the music to end. The organist cannot see the narthex over the music stand and takes their cue to stop playing when you step up to the Ambo.

The Mass Begins

First Lector

Read the Opening Greeting, place the lector binder inside the Ambo, and then proceed to your pew, remembering to reverence the Altar as you leave the Sanctuary. The Entrance Processional then begins. Sit in the first unreserved pew in the right-center section, across from the choir.

Second Lector

In the absence of a Deacon, carry the Book of the Gospels to the Altar, holding it slightly elevated, just enough so you can see under it. Walk behind the Altar servers, but in front of the priest. Walk slowly and reverently. When you arrive at the Sanctuary, take your place at the foot of the steps to the right side. Bow your head when the priest bows. Enter the Sanctuary at the same time as the priest to place the Book of the Gospels on the center of the Altar, propped up on the pillow. Do not stand it on its cover as this will destroy the binding over time. Place the Book from behind the Altar to avoid disturbing the Altar cloths, flower arrangements, etc. Proceed to your pew, reverencing the Altar as you leave the Sanctuary. Sit in the first unreserved pew in the right-center section, across from the choir next to the first lector.

The Readings

Both lectors should approach the Sanctuary together, pause at the last pew, bow *profoundly* from the waist to reverence the Altar, and then proceed into the Sanctuary. The second lector will sit behind the priest. The first lector will go directly to the Ambo.

Pause to wait for most movement to cease. Settle in for a moment, take a breath and smile, look up to make eye contact with the people, then announce your reading: "A reading from ...". At this point, continue to look up and pause for a slow three-count, then proceed with your reading. At the end of your reading, look up, pause for a slow three-count, then proclaim "The Word of the Lord." Do

not move until the response is completed. Turn the page in the Lectionary to the second reading, place the Lectionary inside the Ambo, and then be seated behind the priest while the cantor sings the Responsorial Psalm. The second lector approaches the Ambo *only after* the cantor has returned to the choir area. The lectors and the cantor should not be in motion at the same time. Proceed to proclaim the second reading in the same manner as the first reading, including the three-count pauses.

When you have finished the second reading, remove the Lectionary from the Ambo, close it, and hand it to the first altar server. Both lectors leave the Sanctuary together and reverence the Altar, and then take their seats in the congregation.

The Prayer of the Faithful and Announcements

The acclamations of the Prayer of the Faithful are said at the end of the Credo and will be read by the Deacon if he is present. If there is no Deacon, the first lector should be at the Ambo ready to read by the Amen of the Credo. If there is a Baptism, begin approaching the Ambo when the baby or newly Baptized person is introduced. Stop to reverence the Altar before entering the Sanctuary, and then proceed to the Ambo. ** Note that during Easter, the Credo will take the form of the Profession of Faith – be aware of the slightly different form so you don't forget to come forward **

When reading the Prayer of the Faithful, take care to pause and then look up before saying "We pray to the Lord." Wait for the response, then pause a moment before moving to the next line. Each acclamation is distinct and should be made so in your reading. Step back from the Ambo while the priest recites the final prayer.

If there are announcements, approach the Ambo after the congregation is fully seated following the Prayer of the Faithful. Read the announcements, place the

lector binder back inside the Ambo, reverence the Altar as you leave the Sanctuary, then return to your seat in the congregation.

Proclamation and Gestures

The focus of the congregation should be on the Word of God and not on the Lector. As such, while the scriptures are to be proclaimed dramatically and boldly with conviction, you should not cause a distraction with hand movements. So as not to draw undue attention to yourself and thus away from the Word, only three gestures are appropriate by the Lector:

1. Carry the Book of the Gospels slightly elevated during the Entrance Processional, in the absence of a Deacon
2. Hold the Ambo or place your hands on the Lectionary during the proclamation
3. Make occasional, well-planned eye contact with the congregation while proclaiming the Word



Dress Code

For Acolytes, Altar Servers, Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and Lectors

Fr. Hector would like all ministers serving in the Sanctuary to observe the following dress code:

- No excessive metallic ornamentation – aka “bling-bling.”
- Pants and shirts should cover the stomach. Skirts and dresses need to be a respectable length – to the knee. Shoulders should not be bare. Chests should be covered appropriately.
- Blouses and shirts should be tucked in unless they are the jacket type.
- No jeans on Sundays or Solemnities – jeans are OK on weekday masses only.
- No tennis shoes or flip-flops.

We should dress appropriately to serve in the Sanctuary but not draw undue attention to ourselves. Let us honor the Lord by following this code please. Thank you.

Ministers should be in the church and signed in *at least* 20 minutes before the start of the Mass at which they are to serve. Please respect and follow the Pastor’s dress code; it is required.



Tips and Suggestions

- Begin to prepare for your reading at least a week in advance. Please do not wait until Friday night to begin preparations. It will make all the difference when you are to proclaim.
- St. Matthew offers Bible Study on Thursday nights at 7pm in the Music Room. The group reviews the readings for the coming Sunday, so this is an *excellent* aid to assist you in your preparation.
- Build a habit of daily Bible reading. The lector who is familiar with the Bible is more effective when proclaiming it. If you wish, your coordinator can supply you with a handy guide for reading through the entire Bible and Catechism in one year.
- Attend the monthly lector formation meetings each month. Doing so helps you with training sessions to help you grow, reference materials you can borrow, and the monthly schedule.
- Check the parish website regularly for updates and announcements:
www.stmattcc.org
- In an emergency, you can serve in one of the other liturgical ministries at Mass, with the permission of the celebrant. However, you **MUST** fulfill your lector obligation, as it is one of the two liturgical ministries that require prior preparation. Do not hand off your duty to another lector to “read cold”.

Resources for Lectors

CONTACTS

Joseph Moreno – English lector trainer and coordinator - lectors@stmattcc.org or 817-313-6343

Lupita Samudio – Spanish lector trainer and coordinator – msamu10461@aol.com or 817-781-2068

St. Matthew Catholic Church website – www.stmattcc.org

MEETINGS

Lector formation meetings are held every month in the cafeteria. Breakfast snacks are usually provided. Please attend whenever possible to help you grow in your ministry as a lector.

LIBRARY

We have a small library of lector resources, reference materials, and training aids. It will be present at the monthly meetings so lectors can borrow them for a month at a time. Please sign them out when you take them and return them the following month. We will purchase multiple copies of those materials deemed most helpful by lectors.

DEFINITIONS

Narthex – the lobby of the church building

Sacristy – the room where the clergy vests (dresses) for Mass

Sanctuary – the raised area at the front of the church containing the altar and ambo

Ambo – the small platform where the readings and Gospel are proclaimed