



GUIDELINES FOR LECTORS

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

“When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his own word, proclaims the gospel” (*GIRM #29*).

“ . . . By their silence and singing the people make God’s word their own, and they also affirm their adherence to it by means of the Profession of Faith. Finally, having been nourished by it, they pour out their petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful for the needs of the entire Church and for the salvation of the whole world” (*GIRM # 55*).

“The lector is instituted to proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture, with the exception of the Gospel. He may also announce the intentions for the Prayer of the Faithful and, in the absence of a psalmist, proclaim the Psalm between the readings” (*GIRM # 99*)

“In texts that are to be spoken in a loud and clear voice, whether by the priest or the deacon or by the lector, or by all, the tone of voice should correspond to the genre of the text itself, that is, depending upon whether it is a reading, a prayer, a commentary, an acclamation, or a sung text; the tone should also be suited to the form of celebration and to the solemnity of the gathering. Consideration should also be given to the idiom of different languages and the culture of different peoples” (*GIRM #38*).

1. Pastors, in consultation with the parish pastoral council, staff members and community, determine the needs and the persons best qualified to serve the parish in this ministry. Those invited into this ministry should realize that it is a leadership role in the community.
2. This ministry is open to women and men who have been fully initiated. They must be practicing Catholics, in good standing with the parish community, and possess a love of the scriptures. Regarding the age of lectors, generally speaking it is recommended that lectors be 16 years of age.
3. Lectors exercise their ministry during the Mass, at a Sunday Celebration in the Absence of Priest, and to the homebound and nursing home communities. Lectors should dress appropriately for their ministry.
4. Lectors must be properly trained in both the theology and the practice of their ministry before beginning this ministry. They need the perspective and ability to understand the Word and to interpret the scriptural texts. Ample material is available to assist with background and understanding. Ongoing formation is encouraged at least annually.



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5. Good communication skills are necessary for anyone who proclaims the word of God. Pauses, enunciation, phrasing, and speed with which one proclaims should be well practiced. Silence after the readings is essential. Lectors use the text as written; they do not add their own words.
6. Lectors slowly pace themselves in procession carrying the Book of the Gospels, not the Lectionary, (*GIRM* #120.d) slightly elevated. The assembly sees the Book of the Word and the respect with which it is held.
7. The Psalm is usually sung, and is the role of the cantor, unless there is no music or cantor.
8. A simple commissioning of lectors takes place during the Eucharist. The length of service for each lector is left to the discretion of the pastor/pastoral administrator, as long as the minister remains a member of the parish. . It recommended to be renewed every three years, giving both the parish and the minister the opportunity to reconsider the commitment.
9. Scheduling ministers for this ministry is important, even during difficult seasons and vacation months lest the impression be given that the ministry is trivial or unimportant.
10. Parishes may train youth (teenagers) to lead the intercessions for the assembly, thus teaching them the skills of the proclamation and communication and preparing them for the ministry of lector.
11. At children's Liturgies (school/RE), children may fulfill the role of lector if they have been trained in proclamation and communication skills, as well as reading skills. Be cognizant that Mass is not an opportunity for performance.

Revised October 2007
Promulgated November 6, 2002
Most Reverend Anthony M. Milone
Bishop of Great Falls-Billings