

GUIDELINE FOR READERS

*'Christ does not speak in the past, but in the present, even as he is present in the liturgical action'.
Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis*

1. The reader is a channel for communication of the inspired word of God in the scriptures to the whole assembly. This is not only technical but also spiritual –i.e. biblical and liturgical (cf. GILM 55).
2. Readers should prepare themselves as far in advance as possible, reading the text, studying it, reflecting and praying on it. This enables readers to raise their heads from the printed page to make eye contact.
3. Readers should ideally arrive 10 minutes before the service begins.
4. Readers should take their place somewhere convenient for reaching the sanctuary easily.
5. Whenever there is more than one reading, it is better to assign the readings to different readers (cf. GILM 52). This helps avoid any possible monotony with the use of the same voice.
6. The reader(s) bow to the altar, a symbol of Christ.
7. In liturgy, every movement draws attention to itself. A useful rule of thumb is for ministers to move only when there is some other movement going on, to minimize distraction, e.g. move forward as people are sitting down.
8. The readings are always to be read from the Lectionary. Pieces of paper or missals are not appropriate for the proclamation of the Word, since they lack the necessary dignity. (cf. GILM 37)
9. It is good practice for a reader to wait until the congregation has settled before beginning the reading. Communication requires the full attention of the people.
10. Begin with the words 'A reading from'... Avoid unnecessary words like 'The first Reading is a reading from'.
11. A significant pause is strongly recommended between the actual scripture text and the reader saying 'This is the word of the Lord'. This gives the text a chance to be absorbed by the listeners before the concluding formula moves people's minds on to what comes next.
12. The psalm is normally sung by a cantor with the people responding (cf. GIRM 61). When spoken, the psalm should **not** be introduced by a phrase such as 'The response to the psalm is' or 'Response', but should be spoken immediately.
13. The Alleluia or the Lent Gospel acclamation 'must be sung and during it all stand' (cf. GILM 23). The scripture verse does not have to be sung. Just wait for the Alleluia to be sung. There is no need to say 'please stand to greet the Gospel'.
15. The Entrance and Communion Antiphons are recited by the people. If the people do not do this, a reader may read them at the appropriate time when there is no singing; these should be clear and audible. (cf. GIRM 198).

Reference are:

GILM: General Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass, 2nd editio typical, 1981

GIRM: General Instruction on the Roman Missal, 2005