

Notes for Readers and Lectors

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST PARISH, CAMPBELLTOWN

Those who have the privilege of proclaiming the Word of God within the Christian assembly undertake an immense task. St Paul tells us, and our experience affirms this reality, that faith comes by hearing (*Romans 10:10*). When we listen to God's word, God nourishes and strengthens our faith.

The Church teaches that Jesus himself is present in the Eucharistic assembly in four distinct ways: in the assembly itself, in the person of the priest, in the Word that is proclaimed, and in the Eucharist. Each of these is meant to be a real presence, but each can be easily diminished. The Bible is not just a dead book but a living text that even now transforms hearts and minds. The Bible was always meant to be read aloud within the Christian community, not just studied privately. When read well with faith and confidence, hearts and lives are changed. When read poorly, faith is diminished.

The Word of God must not be stifled. It must come alive. All too often the Word is lost precisely when readers do not proclaim the text. This happens when they have not taken the time to read and meditate upon the Word before they read at Mass. Sometimes this is because they miss the simple dynamics of public reading and speak too quickly, or too quietly. If you are height challenged, perhaps wear your higher heels. Often words run into each other, and no one is transformed if the reader mumbles into the book.

The Good News is that proclaiming the Word at Mass is an **art form** that many people are able to develop and grow in. Even the most inadequate readers are able to at least make sure that they read slowly, clearly, and confidently. Attached to this handbook is a guide that helps to break open the bible and assist every reader to grow in confidence and understanding.

Reading well at Mass takes time and preparation. If you are not in a position to put in the formation and time each week to adequately prepare, then perhaps it is time to consider moving to a different ministry within the life of the Parish? There are many to choose from.

Some Practical Considerations

In **addition to the notes** in the accompanying *Reader's Formation booklet*, we note the following:

- Make sure that you listen to the readings so you know how to pronounce any difficult words, names or places. Visit rmhealey.com/sunday
- If you have not practiced the reading before Mass, **DO NOT READ**.
- Adjust the microphone before Mass – *not before you read*.
- When bringing the **Book of the Gospels** forward in procession (you will come after the cross bearer), pause briefly, and make your way around the altar and place the Book of the Gospels in the centre of the altar. Then come back and stand to the left of the presider. **All bow together**. The priest will move forward onto the sanctuary, and you will go to your seat.
- Please sit in the front section of the church, near the aisle.
- **Be ready to move** to the ambo during the praying of the Collect. Don't wait for everyone to be seated before moving forward.
- Bow to the altar. Approach the ambo from either side.
- Once you are at the ambo, carefully **announce the reading**.
- Don't read the reading's theme or anything else.
- Look up regularly and engage the assembly. Speak slowly and clearly.
- **Pause** after finishing the reading (count to 3).
- The **conclusion** to the reading is "**The Word of the Lord**" (even though our old Lectionary still has "This is the word of the Lord." Don't say that!)
- When praying the Psalm, clearly announce the Psalm response – but only say the words of the response itself. Pause and look up and repeat the response with the people. Join the people in each response.
- **Do not move the ribbon**. Leave it at the beginning of the reading for the next Mass. *Why would you move it? This makes no sense - stop it!* 😊
- You may say, "Please stand for the Gospel." This is only necessary if there are unchurched people present (e.g. a funeral).
- The Alleluia should *always* be sung. Saying it makes no sense.
- When the Book of the Gospels is used, remember to move the Lectionary onto the shelf after the second reading to make space for it.
- **Move** to the ambo as the Creed concludes.