

Guidance for Lectors for Sunday Mass at Immaculate Conception Church in East Aurora

Where to Sit

At Mass, Lectors should generally be seated with family or friends in a place which allows for easy access to the Ambo, preferably among the Assembly in the pews near the Altar. An important aspect is that the Lector is part of the Assembly. So, the Lector proceeding from the Assembly to the Ambo for the first reading has its own significance.

Placing the Lectionary on the Ambo

Move the Prayers of the Faithful and the Church Announcements to the shelf below, and open the Lectionary to the first reading. Then, proceed to your seat in the pew.

Carrying the Lectionary

Lift the Lectionary, which contains the Word of God, with solemn respect. Always use two hands and never tuck it under your arm. Then, genuflecting or bowing in respect to the Tabernacle is not necessary because you are already carrying the Word of God.

Prior to Mass

1. Become familiar with the readings
2. Arrive in the Sacristy at least twenty minutes before Mass begins.
3. Cross your name off the Lector schedule posted in the Sacristy, to indicate that the Lector has arrived.
4. Place the sheet with Prayer of the Faithful and the sheet with the Church Announcements in the Lectionary, for easier transport to the Ambo.
5. If not carrying the Lectionary in the Entrance Procession, place the Lectionary on the Ambo.

The Entrance Procession

The Lector is *invited to participate* in the Entrance Procession, whether there is a Deacon or not. However, when there is a Deacon assisting at the Mass, the Lectionary is always placed on the Ambo before Mass. Although the General Instruction for the Roman Missal says that the Lectionary should not be carried in the procession to the Altar, it is the custom at Immaculate Conception Church *to allow the Lector the option to carry the Lectionary* in the Entrance Procession when there is no Deacon present. Note that it is not necessary for the Lector to carry the Lectionary to participate in the Entrance Procession.

Approaching the Ambo

At the time of the Liturgy of the Word, the Lector should approach the Ambo reverently. When the Lector passes in front of the Altar, he/she Reverences the Altar by bowing, before proceeding to the Ambo.

The Readings Before the Gospel

The First Reading

1. After the “Amen” to the Collect, proceed to the Sanctuary, bow toward the Altar, then move to the Ambo. In proceeding to the Ambo to proclaim the reading, the Lector should never carry a missalette or sheet of paper.
2. Read the first reading, including “A reading from...” as in the Lectionary.

3. After saying, “The Word of the Lord”, and the congregation responds, “Thanks be to God”, take a seat on a nearby seat in the Sanctuary (assuming the responsorial psalm is sung).

The Responsorial Psalm

Normally, the Cantor or organist leads the congregation in singing the Responsorial Psalm. During the Responsorial Psalm, remain seated on a nearby seat in the Sanctuary. (On the rare occasion when there is no cantor or organist, remain at the Ambo instead of sitting after the first reading. Read the Responsorial Psalm from the Lectionary in its entirety. When this happens, it is helpful for the Lector to raise a hand to indicate to the congregation when it should repeat the response.)

The Second Reading

1. Read the second reading, including “A reading from...” as in the Lectionary.
2. After saying, “The Word of the Lord”, the congregation responds, “Thanks be to God.” If there is Deacon using the Book of Gospels, place the Lectionary on the Ambo shelf below. Step down from the Altar, pause to Reverence the Altar by bowing toward it, then return to your seat in the pew.

Prayer of the Faithful

It is the custom at Immaculate Conception Church that the Lector reads the Prayer of the Faithful, instead of the Deacon.

1. Proceed to the Ambo during the recitation of the Creed. (Suggestion: start toward the Altar at “I believe in the Holy Spirit” during the Nicene Creed, or slightly earlier if the Apostle’s Creed is being said.)
2. Retrieve the sheet with the Prayer of the Faithful from where you placed it on the shelf below
3. After the priest introduces the intercessions, read each intention from the Ambo followed by, “We pray to the Lord.”
4. Remain at the Ambo while the priest concludes the intercessions with a prayer.
5. Then, return to your pew.

Prayer for Vocations and Announcements

It is the practice at Immaculate Conception Church that the Lector leads the congregation in the Prayer for Vocations and reads the announcements after communion.

1. Normally the Lector proceeds to the Ambo as the Communion music stops. Occasionally, the priest may indicate that the Lector begin during the purification of the vessels. Be alert and flexible.
2. Retrieve the prayer for vocations from the shelf in the Ambo. At this writing, it is on a laminated yellow sheet of paper. Also retrieve the sheet with the Church Announcements from where you placed it on the shelf below.
3. Read the Prayer for Vocations. (Leave the Prayer for Vocations at the Ambo.)
4. Allow a brief opportunity for the cantor to announce the final song before the announcements.
5. Read the announcements.
6. If you want to participate in the procession after Mass,
 - Remain on the Altar after the announcements
 - Participate in a manner similar to the Entrance Procession, following the altar servers to the Sacristy.Otherwise,
 - Return to your pew after the announcements.
 - After the final song is complete, reverently carry the Lectionary, with the Prayer of the Faithful and announcements, back to their respective places in the Sacristy.

Tips for Proclaiming the Word

1. Speak slowly and clearly. Most people tend to speak about twice as fast as a Lector should.
2. Always read the readings ahead of time. Practicing the readings will help words and phrases more easily roll off the tongue.
3. Determine how you will pronounce difficult words or names.
4. The first reading is usually related to the Gospel reading. Understanding how they relate may suggest which words or phrases you want to emphasize in your proclamation.
5. Be aware of the type of reading. Understanding the literary style (narrative, prayer, history, prophesy, exhortation, etc.) helps you to shed light on the tone you should use and the meaning of the Scripture passage.
6. The title of the reading such as “A reading from the Book of Exodus” and the ending, “The Word of the Lord”, should be distinguished from the reading itself. Lectors do this by observing a pause of about three seconds.
7. Consider using the following resources to assist in your preparation
 - a. The “Workbook for Lectors, Gospel Readers, and Proclaimers of the Word”. This book provides suggestions on which words and phrases to emphasize and helpful explanations of each reading.
 - b. www.Lectorprep.com. This is an excellent website that gives historical and theological perspective to the readings, and good advice on how each reading should be proclaimed.
 - c. Daily Readings at <https://bible.usccb.org>. This website provides the readings and also includes a podcast that allows you to listen to someone proclaiming the readings.
 - d. The bible with its footnotes. Sometimes it’s helpful to read the passages before and after the reading for the day to understand its context.

Schedules

Two-month schedules are prepared six times a year: shortly after February 10, April 10, June 10, August 10, October 10, and December 10. Schedules are available for pick up in the Sacristy shortly after they are printed. Prior notification of any scheduling limitations is appreciated to rjachimiak@gmail.com or 716-238-4728 (voice or text).

Schedules are also made available at www.r716.us/IC.

Separate sign-up sheets are posted in the Sacristy, as required, for Palm Sunday, Easter, and Holy Days of Obligation.

Glossary

Ambo. The Ambo is a permanent podium on the Altar where the Liturgy of the Word takes place. It is the symbol of the presence of the Word of God in the Church, just as the Altar is the symbol of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Ambo is to be used for the proclaimed Word, namely, the readings from Sacred Scripture, the Gospel, the homily and the intentions of the Prayers of the Faithful.

Altar. The table in the center of the Sanctuary used for celebrating the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Assembly. The people gathered at Mass. The congregation.

Church Announcements. Information shared with the congregation about parish-related events.

Entrance Procession. The action of the Priest, Deacon, Lector, Altar Services, and/or others moving from the entrance to the altar at the beginning of a Mass.

Lectionary. A book that is composed of the readings and the responsorial psalm assigned for each Mass.

Lector. The Reader. The person from the Assembly who reads the first and second readings at a Mass. At Immaculate Conception Church the Lector also reads the Prayer of the Faithful, the Prayer for Vocations, the Church announcements, and sometimes the Responsorial Psalm.

Prayer of the Faithful. The Universal Prayer. A prayer where people respond to God's Word and ask for the salvation of all. It can include petitions for many things, such as the Church, those in authority, those in need, and the local community.

Reverence the Altar. A sign of reverence, such as bowing, that acknowledges the sacredness of the Altar.

Sacristy. A room off the vestibule where the vestments, sacred vessels, Lectionaries, and other religious articles are kept, and where the clergy prepare for the Mass and other functions.

Sanctuary. The place where the altar stands, where the Word of God is proclaimed, and where the Priest, the Deacon, and the other ministers exercise their offices.

Tabernacle. A box or vessel in the Sanctuary where the Holy Eucharist is stored. The word tabernacle means "dwelling place".