



HOLY INNOCENTS' CHURCH

READING AND PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD



St. John Chrysostom, the Bishop of Constantinople in about the year 400 said:
“I ask one favour of you: each of you should take the section of the gospels which is to be read that Sunday and before that day arrives, sit down at home and read it through.”

LITURGY OF THE WORD

In the liturgy of the Word God speaks to his people.

He borrows the reader's voice, so that the congregation can hear him.

Prepare and understand the reading.

When going to the lectern to read during the **Liturgy of the Word**, make a short bow to the Altar first, then go to the lectern. Adjust the microphone to suit the height of the reader so that you read into the microphone. Don't start reading until all are seated and ready to listen – don't fiddle, it's noisy. Know where the reading is from and try to look at different areas of the church as you read. Eye contact makes communication real. Make a short bow to the Altar when you leave the Sanctuary.

The First Reading consists of:

The Entry Antiphon The First Reading The Psalm

The Entry Antiphon

(The entry Antiphon is not read if an entrance hymn is sung, or replaced with a hymn – check with the choir before the start of Mass).

*On hearing the bell, proceed to the lectern **taking your Mass Book with you**. As you approach the Lectern, make a short bow to the Altar. At the lectern, announce the antiphon thus: “Good Morning (evening). Today is the Second Sunday of Advent.” Give time for the congregation to find the page. **Begin the antiphon in a clear and unrushed voice as the priest comes down the centre aisle**, and the congregation will join in with you.*

The First Reading. Approach the lectern as the opening prayer that follows the Gloria concludes (the Gloria is omitted in times of sorrow e.g. Lent), or if there is no Gloria, then the opening prayer that follows the ‘Lord have mercy’. **Do not take your Mass book with you**. As you approach the Lectern, make a short bow to the Altar. **Begin thus: “A reading from...”** (**Do not say**, “The first reading is a reading from...”, and **do not** read the passages in Italics).

When you finish your reading, **pause**, look up at the people, and announce: “**This is the Word of the Lord**”. The congregation will reply with, ‘ Thanks be to God ’.

Responsorial Psalm. If the Psalm is to be sung (check with the choir before the start of Mass), return to your seat after the first reading. If the Psalm is not sung, remain at the lectern for the Psalm.

Read the response once, and the congregation will repeat it after you. (**Do not say**, “The Responsorial Psalm is ... etc.”). Ideally, during the reading of the Psalm, the reader should read the verses, and the congregation should answer with the response. If the congregation is small or without Mass Books, it may be necessary for you to join in with them when they repeat the response. Return to your seat when you are finished, making a short bow to the Altar when you leave the Sanctuary. Be prepared to continue reading if there is not a second reader.

The Second Reading consists of:

The Second Reading The Gospel Acclamation
The Bidding Prayers The Communion Antiphon

The Second Reading.

Approach the Lectern at the end of the Responsorial Psalm if it is to be sung, otherwise as the first reader leaves the lectern. Bow together at the altar.

Begin thus: “A reading from...”. (Do not say, “The second reading is a reading from...”, and do not read out short passages in *Italics*).

When you finish your reading, **pause**, look up at the people, and announce: **“This is the Word of the Lord”**. The congregation will reply with, ‘ Thanks be to God ’.

After a short pause, invite them to stand for the Gospel Acclamation
Announce clearly **“Please stand to greet the Gospel’**.

The Gospel Acclamation.

This is not read if it is to be sung (unless the priest instructs you otherwise; it could be part spoken and part sung. Check with the priest and choir before the start of Mass). **When all are ready, say the Alleluia.**

Return to your seat, either after the invitation to stand, or after the Acclamation. Make a short bow to the Altar when you leave the Sanctuary.

The Bidding Prayers or Prayers of Intercession.

Move towards the lectern **at the end of the Creed** (“We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come”).

Make a short bow to the Altar, then retrieve the bidding prayers from the lower shelf and wait until the priest first introduces the bidding prayers, before you start to read the petitions. At the end of each petition, make a short pause, then conclude with **Lord hear us**, (or the alternative conclusion) to which the people answer, **Lord graciously hear us** (or the alternative). Leave a longer pause for people to pray for their own intentions.

The celebrant may make an intercession during this pause. Then introduce the ‘Hail Mary’ (and lead), **after which, the priest will conclude the ‘Prayer of the Faithful’**.

When the celebrant has finished, put the bidding prayers back on the lower shelf of the lectern and return to your seat, making a short bow to the Altar when you leave the Sanctuary.

The Communion Antiphon.

(This is not read if there is a Communion Hymn – check with the choir before the start of Mass). Taking your Mass Book with you, move towards the lectern after the words, “Lord, I am not worthy to receive you”. Make a short bow to the Altar and then, after the priest consumes the Precious Blood say, “Let us say together the Communion Antiphon on page....”. Give time for the congregation to find the page, then read the Antiphon and the congregation will join in with you.

Return to your seat when you are finished, making a short bow to the Altar when you leave the

Sanctuary.

Public Speaking - The Five P's

Pronunciation Pitch Pace Pause Power

Pronunciation.

Pronounce each syllable carefully and distinctly. Vowels are open-mouthed sounds. Consonants are formed by contact between tongue, teeth, lips and palate. Each separate syllable has a life of its own and should be given individual attention. Together they make words.

Don't run words into one another ("gimme" for "give me").

Pitch.

Our voices have a basic natural pitch, which rises and falls to shape our sentences. **We drop the pitch to indicate an end, raise it for a question, etc. Don't let your voice be monotonous.**

Pace.

Practise the variations of speed that help shape the reading. Slow down your speech; don't just lengthen the pauses. Better to be a little slow than too fast.

Pauses & Phrasing.

Pauses indicate punctuation, and thus make sense of the text – but keep it fluid. **Pauses also add emphasis;** give time to comprehend what has been said, and can signal a significant or difficult word coming up. Breathe during a pause, through your nose; don't gasp or gulp air.

A full stop. The pause at the end of the sentence.

A semicolon. An intermediate value between a comma and the full stop.

A comma. Used to indicate a separation of ideas and marks a brief pause in a sentence.

Put stress on certain words. Some words carry more weight than others – they tend to be verbs and nouns. We (almost) never stress "a", "the", prepositions or pronouns.

Pay special attention to speech and important passages and be ready to emphasise them. Vary the voice if the story changes or another person becomes involved etc.

Power.

Volume & Projection. Keep your head up and aim your voice at the people furthest away, projecting your voice loud and clear, but do not shout! Speak with authority.

Practise the "little quieter"/"little louder" variations that help to make sense of the reading.

Don't fade at the end of sentences. Remember that some people may have hearing problems; children may be giving you opposition.

If you mispronounce a word, carry on. If you do say it again say it clearly. Do not apologise. Stand well balanced on both feet. **Where appropriate, be joyful and enthusiastic,** certainly with the Alleluias.

Go to www.netministries.org/bbasics for pronunciation of bible words

