

READER HANDBOOK



ST. TIMOTHY CATHOLIC CHURCH

January 2023

Updated: February 21, 2024



INTRODUCTION

Humble Service

Genuine ministry is about humble service. ‘The model of ministry for Readers is John the Baptist who had to decrease so that the Messiah could increase (John 3:30).’ (*Guidelines for the Ministry of Reader, Diocese of St. Petersburg*). The Reader must put aside personal agendas and needs, prejudices and judgments to serve the community and give faithful testimony to Christ’s presence in the Word.

Seating

The proper place for the seating of Readers is within the assembly. ***Please sit in pews close to where you will bow to the altar. Avoid sections that are close to the baptismal font.*** Readers should be seen coming forth from the assembly and returning to it when their ministry has been completed. (*Guidelines for the Ministry of Reader, Diocese of St. Petersburg*)

Attire

A neat and reverential appearance is in keeping with the minister’s role and belief in the real presence of Christ in the Word. The ministers’ attire should not detract from their role.

The Sanctuary is not a place for self-expression in either how one dresses or how one acts. Our dress and mannerisms should not attract attention to ourselves but instead demonstrate the reverence we show for the presence of God in the Word and Sacrament. Therefore, the following items of clothing are not acceptable dress for performing our obligations to Proclaim the Word:

- a. For men:
 - i. Jeans, cargo pants, jogging pants, and other extremely casual slacks
 - ii. Tee shirts
 - iii. Bermuda shorts, jogging shorts, or other short pants of any kind
 - iv. Sneakers, flip-flops, slippers
- b. For women:
 - i. Tank tops, tee shirts, form-fitting athletic-type tops or spandex slacks and tops
 - ii. Short skirts (please use your best discretion), jeans, denim skirts, cargo pants, jogging pants and other extremely casual slacks
 - iii. Bermuda shorts, jogging shorts, or other short pants of any kind
 - iv. Sneakers, flip-flops, sneakers

Please use your best discretion in keeping with the guidelines set forth by the Diocese.

Training and Ongoing Formation

'Each parish should have in place an extensive and continuous training program for those who proclaim the scriptures in liturgy.' (*Guidelines for the Ministry of Reader, Diocese of St. Petersburg*). Reader Training will be conducted as warranted, depending on the number of volunteers in the Reader Ministry and the need for new and/or refresher training. There will be recruitment of new Liturgical Ministers on two occasions per year.

SCHEDULES AND PROCEDURES

Schedules

The Reader schedules are created for a two-month period and will be available by email around the middle of the previous month. Schedules are created electronically through the Ministry Scheduler Pro. Schedules are created using the information each minister has provided relative to their Mass preference(s). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Readers, having been trained, to learn and use Ministry Scheduler Pro for helping the system make the schedule.

There will be 2 Readers scheduled for each Mass. When there are 2 Readers, the following assignments will be made:

Processing with Book of Gospels present)	first listed on schedule (if no Deacon
Old Testament reading	first listed on schedule
New Testament reading	second listed on schedule
Prayers of the Faithful present)	second listed on schedule (if no Deacon

Each Reader should be prepared to proclaim both readings if the other Reader is unable to be at Mass.

Substitutes

It is your responsibility to find a substitute if you are unable to read at your assigned Mass. The Ministry Scheduler Pro can help you find a substitute when you request a substitute through the electronic scheduler. ***Please do not call the other Reader, with whom you are scheduled and ask them to proclaim both readings. It is important to have two separate Readers so the priority should be to find a replacement. If no replacement can be found, then both readings will be done by the Reader who is present.***

Holy Days

Readers will be recruited for Holy Days via email. Please sign up early for these Masses (especially Christmas and Easter).

PROCEDURES PRIOR TO THE LITURGY

Sign-in Procedures

Readers should arrive at **least 20 minutes** before Mass. When you arrive at the church, stop at the MSP kiosk on the wall outside of the Chapel. Choose the appropriate Mass (should only be one showing) and check in. If you are substituting for someone, simply check in under their name. **If you have not signed-in by 10 minutes before the beginning of Mass, a replacement will be identified to sign-in and take your place.** In the case where there are two Readers scheduled for the Mass, the substitute will more than likely be the other scheduled Reader.

Book Preparation

Prior to the start of Mass, Readers should ensure that the Lectionary is at the Ambo and turned to the correct page and that the Prayers of the Faithful are at the Ambo as well.

PROCEDURES DURING LITURGY

Introductory Rites

For the entrance procession, the Deacon will carry the Book of Gospels. However, when a Deacon is not present, the first Reader will carry the Book of Gospels. When this happens, the Reader will line up immediately following the altar servers in the entrance procession, with appropriate spacing (approximately 5-7 rows). The Reader approaches the Altar and walks up the steps of the Sanctuary platform, without pause, and places the Book of Gospels on the altar. The Reader then returns to the assembly from the Sanctuary platform exiting from any three sides of the Altar, **except** the side from which you just approached (a Priest will be following you up the stairs). When a Deacon is present, the Reader simply takes his/her seat in the assembly prior to the processional.

Liturgy of the Word

Following the Opening Prayer, the two Readers (and sometimes the Cantor) come from their place in the assembly to the front of the altar. The Readers and Cantor reverence the Altar together and then turn toward the Ambo. When there are two Readers, the first goes to the Ambo and the second Reader and the Cantor take a seat near the Ambo in the Reserved pews. The following is a procedural primer:

- Making eye contact, the Reader announces the reading, pauses a moment, and then begins the passage. Simply announce as is stated in the Lectionary. There is no need to embellish this with the chapter and verse. At the conclusion of the reading, the Reader

pauses a moment (silently count to 3), makes eye contact, and says “The Word of the Lord.”

- At the conclusion of the first reading, the Reader remains still and silent momentarily (2-5 seconds), stepping down the stairs, faces the altar and reverences (bow), and then takes a seat near the Ambo in the reserved pew.
- The Cantor then sings the responsorial psalm.
- The second Reader approaches the Ambo, reverences (bows) the altar, and then goes to the Ambo for the second reading. Making eye contact, the Reader announces the reading, pauses a moment, and then begins the passage. Simply announce as is stated in the Lectionary. There is no need to embellish this with the chapter and verse. At the conclusion of the reading, the Reader pauses a moment (silently count to 3), makes eye contact, and says “The Word of the Lord.”
- The second Reader should place the Lectionary on the shelf of the Ambo prior to stepping down (the top of the Ambo should now only have the Prayers of the Faithful).
- At the conclusion of the second reading, the Reader(s) and possibly the Cantor go to the front of the altar, reverence (bow), and return to their places in the assembly.

If there is no Deacon or acolyte present at the Mass, the second Reader will offer the Prayers of the Faithful. During the Creed, the Reader approaches the Ambo from his/her place in the assembly. With no specific formality, the Reader takes the most direct yet unobtrusive path, around the perimeter of the assembly to the Ambo. The Reader should begin their approach early enough so that they are at the Ambo once the Creed has completed. **NOTE: The Reader does not perform this role if there is a Deacon or Acolyte present at the Liturgy or if the Cantor will be singing the petitions.** It is important to know who will be doing the Prayers of the Faithful before the Liturgy begins.

Concluding Rites and Dismissal

The Reader does not have a role in this portion of the Liturgy. He/she does **not** carry out the Book of Gospels during the Dismissal.