

Saint Elizabeth Roman Catholic Church
Upper Uwchlan Township, PA

PRACTICAL NOTES FOR PARISH READERS: DECEMBER 7, 2015

Thank you for offering your stewardship service as a parish reader at Saint Elizabeth Church. The following notes are provided to assist you in fulfilling this liturgical service in a faithful and competent manner in our new church. In order to facilitate our parish liturgies, please follow these procedures when you are scheduled to proclaim the Word of God at Mass:

- 1) Ordinarily two readers are assigned for each Mass; one proclaims the first reading (and if it is not sung) the responsorial psalm, while the other proclaims the second reading and (in the absence of a deacon) reads the General Intercessions (except when Baptism is celebrated within the Mass). On major feasts, the second reader should also check with the priest-celebrant regarding the use of a sequence.
- 2) In order to reflect the sacredness of the liturgical celebration and the public role of the reader in proclaiming the Word of God, you are asked to dress appropriately whenever you are assisting at the altar: men are asked to wear a collared dress shirt and tie (jacket recommended), while women are asked to wear a dress, skirt & blouse, dress slacks & top, or a formal dress suit.
- 3) It is important to be very familiar with the scripture texts to be proclaimed and come prepared to proclaim the readings in a loud, well-paced and unhurried, clear and convincing voice. Workbooks are provided to assist you in preparing and practicing the readings in advance. Please be attentive to matters such as posture at the ambo (lectern), periodic eye contact, breathing & pause, making good use of the microphone, voice modulation and pitch, clear pronunciation, etc. Your manner and delivery should bespeak an attitude of reverence for the Word and respect for the listening congregation.
- 4) The schedule of liturgical ministers is posted on the bulletin board mounted on the wall directly across the hallway from the vesting sacristy (between the narthex and the daily Mass chapel). Please arrive at church **at least fifteen minutes before** the beginning of Mass, sign in on the posted schedule and then notify the sacristan or the ministry coordinator of your presence. This will allow time for you to coordinate responsibilities with the other reader and to make sure that the lectionary and petitions are readied at the ambo/lectern.
- 5) The readers ordinarily process from the vesting sacristy, walking side by side behind the altar servers and in front of the deacon and the priest-celebrant; in the absence of a deacon, the first reader precedes the other reader and carries the Book of the Gospels in the entrance procession, holding the book upright and “slightly elevated” (*GIRM*, #120d).
- 6) When the entrance procession arrives in front of the altar, the two readers step to the ambo side (outside the altar servers), facing forward. All liturgical ministers (except those carrying something in their hands) turn toward the tabernacle on the left side of the sanctuary and genuflect on the right knee (*GIRM*, #274). The deacon or reader carrying the Book of the Gospels, the cross bearer and acolytes with candles do not genuflect but make a reverential bow toward the tabernacle.

The readers then move directly to their seats in the front pew of section E (next to the choir area). If one reader is carrying the Book of the Gospels, he or she first goes up the steps and

around the right side of the altar to lay the book down flat on the center of the altar (before the celebrant reverences the altar) and then goes back down the steps to join the other reader in the front pew.

- 7) At the conclusion of the Opening Prayer, the congregation is seated. At the 9:30 and 11:30 Mass, the celebrant will dismiss the children for the Liturgy of the Word. Then the first reader moves out of the pew, **bows toward the altar**, and goes up the steps to the right of the ambo/lectern to proclaim the scripture text. Before beginning the reading, please pause a moment to allow late-comers to find a seat. There is no need to include the red print comment at the beginning of the reading: the simple announcement of the source (“A reading from...”) is sufficient.

At the end of the biblical text, the reader proclaims: “The Word of the Lord.” If the responsorial psalm is to be sung, the reader returns to his/her place. If not, there is a short pause to allow late-comers to find a seat, and then the first reader proclaims the responsorial psalm before returning to his/her seat in section E. **There is no need to bow again when leaving the ambo and returning to your seat.**

- 8) After the responsorial psalm is completed, the second reader stands, moves out of the pew and **bows toward the altar**, then goes up the steps to the right of the ambo/lectern to proclaim the second reading as above. Again, before beginning the reading, please pause a moment to allow late-comers to find a seat. After the reading, the reader closes the lectionary and places it on the lower shelf of the ambo/lectern before returning to his/her seat in section E. **There is no need to bow again when leaving the ambo and returning to your seat.**
- 9) If there is no deacon, the second reader will return to the ambo/lectern immediately after the Creed to read the individual petitions after the celebrant’s introduction; the reader waits until the celebrant has completed the concluding prayer or Stewardship Prayer before returning to his/her seat in section E.
- 10) Please be especially attentive to the placement of the microphone, which needs to be aimed directly towards your mouth for effective amplification. It is important to speak in a clear, strong and convincing tone of voice, if the entire congregation is to hear the Word of God.
- 11) The readers remain at their places, kneeling with the congregation for the Eucharistic Prayer and for the Communion Rite. The readers receive Holy Communion from the extraordinary minister stationed at the head of section E, along with others seated in that section.
- 12) At the conclusion of Mass, the readers step out of their pew and line up in front of the altar on the ambo side (outside the altar servers), turn toward the tabernacle to genuflect on the right knee together with the other ministers, and walk side by side behind the altar servers back to the narthex. The Book of the Gospels is left on the ambo, **not** carried out in procession at the end of Mass.
- 13) After Mass or later that week, you may find it helpful to invite comments from several members of the congregation (perhaps one or two neighbors or friends) about the clarity and quality of your proclamation: did you read with faith and conviction? It may also be helpful for you to observe and listen attentively to other experienced readers to learn how to proclaim the Word more effectively.

May the Word of God dwell richly in your heart and, through your stewardship service as readers, dwell ever more richly in the hearts of all our parishioners!