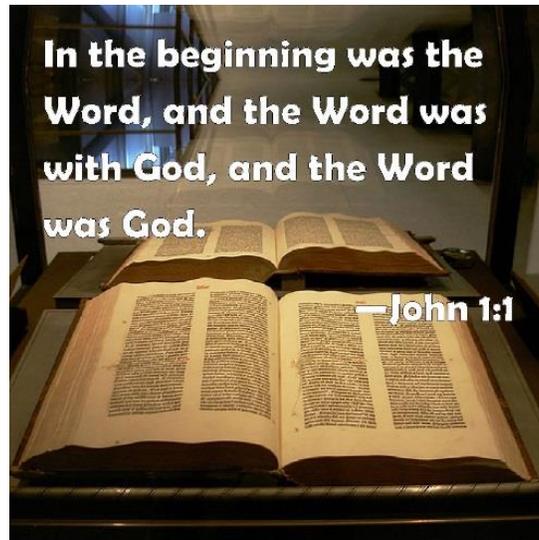


# ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

## CATHOLIC PARISH

*Growing Disciples in Faith and Service*



# Lector

## HANDBOOK

**Prepare. Pray. Proclaim.**

*St. Thomas Aquinas Ministers of the Word*

# A History of Lectors in the Catholic Church

## Introduction

The ministry of the lector is one of the most important ministries restored to the laity during Vatican II. The responsibility of proclaiming God's Word for the Christian assembly is a humbling and deeply rewarding experience. The purpose of this handbook is to help all lectors understand the various responsibilities associated with this ministry. In addition, this handbook enumerates the many resources available to lectors to assist them in the performance of their duties.

## Qualifications

Participant in the Ministry of the Lectors at St Thomas Aquinas should have the following qualifications:

- Is an initiated and practicing member of the Catholic Church.
- Regularly attends Mass.
- Fully embraces the words and prayers that are offered in Mass.
- Gives positive witness to the Christian life.
- Possesses full knowledge of the Order of the Mass.
- Has the capability to proclaim Sacred Scripture at Mass.
- Is willing to prepare for the readings through prayer, study, and practice.
- Has participated in a Lector training program.

## Prayer of Lectors

Dear Jesus, thank you for calling me to be a lector at Your Eucharistic celebrations. Let me take this role seriously and diligently prepare myself for it by studying the sacred texts before Mass, and by striving to be a better Catholic Christian.

By my physical action of reading, I am the instrument through whom You become present to the assembly in Your word and through whom You impart Your teachings. Let nothing in my manner disturb Your people or close their hearts to the action of Your spirit.

Cleanse my heart and my mind and open my lips that I may worthily proclaim Your word.

Amen

## General Responsibilities

### Preparation

Lectors should familiarize themselves with their respective readings during the week prior to their designated duty. They should pray over, read, and practice proclaiming the scriptures that they will be reading. The *Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers* is an especially useful resource. All of the scripture readings at St. Thomas Aquinas are taken from the Revised New American Bible (RNAB). *Other translations, including your own, are not to be used at St. Thomas Aquinas.*

The "Lector's Prayer for Before and After Preparation" is useful for motivation and focus for lectors during the preparation process.

### Prayer of Preparation for a Lector of the Word

Lord, invest me with Your Powers

as I prepare to proclaim the Marvel of Your Message.

I have prepared my readings, I have tried to take within me the meaning of what I am about to proclaim; help me, I ask, to read not just with my lips

but with my whole heart and soul.

Lord, make me a hollow reed so that Your Voice will be heard by all who will hear me.

Free me of excessive concern over my performance,

over the impression I create in this Sacred Action.

Convert my feelings of nervousness, turn all my apprehensions into an energy

for proclaiming Your Word with power and authority.

May Your Spirit fill me as it fills the holy words that I am about to proclaim.

Amen

## Before Mass

Check in at Ministry sign-in 20 minutes prior to Mass.

The first lector to arrive should

- Determine if the Celebrant of the Mass, the Deacon, or the Sacristan has any special instruction.
- Verify that a cantor is present to sing the Psalms and lead the Welcome and Prayer Before/After Mass.
- Determine if the Deacon will assist with the Mass, (carry the Book of the Gospels in the procession and also read the Prayers of the Faithful).
- Verify that the Lectionary is placed on the ambo and the correctness of the readings (the Sacristan will normally have already moved the ribbon to the correct readings before you arrive).  
*No Post-It notes should be used in the Lectionary.*
- Insure that the ambo microphone is turned on, adjusted for Lector's head position when reading, and functioning properly.

When the second lector arrives, he or she should check in with the other lector to verify that the necessary actions have been accomplished.

Any problems or discrepancies discovered during preparation for the Mass should be reported immediately to the Sacristan, Mass Coordinator, the Deacon or the Celebrant of the Mass.

EVERY  
WORD  
OF GOD  
PROVES  
TRUE.

**Proverbs 30:5 ESV**

✠✠ Ministry-To-Children.com

## During Mass

The general sequence of actions during the Mass is indicated in the table below. Note that both lectors' duties are completed before the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Specific description of the lector's duties with respect to each of these tasks is provided later.

Part of Mass	Subpart of Mass	Responsible Individual
Rite	Welcome & Intro to Mass	Cantor
	Procession with Gospel	Deacon
	Opening Prayer	Celebrant
Liturgy of the Word	First Reading	Lector #1
	Responsorial Psalm *	Cantor/ Lector # 1
	Second Reading	Lector #2
	Alleluia Verse	Cantor
	Gospel	Celebrant
	Homily	Celebrant
	Profession of Faith	Celebrant
	Prayers of the Faithful **	Deacon / Lector # 2
	Announcements	Deacon or Priest
	Closing	Priest
	Dismissal	Deacon or Priest
	Prayer after Mass	Cantor

**\*The Responsorial is normally sung by one of the Cantors. When it is not sung, Lector #1 proclaims it.**

**\*\* When the Deacon is not present, Lector # 2 will read the Prayers of the Faithful.**

## After Mass

Any problems encountered during the Mass which are related to the performance of lector duties should be reported to the Deacon and to the Mass Coordinator.

## General Guidelines

- Lectors should try to sit in one of the first four rows, either side of the Center aisle.
- Please dress in a manner that is considered appropriate for the congregation at St. Thomas Aquinas. Dresses/Skirts should be no shorter than the top of the knee. Women should refrain from wearing revealing fashions, i.e. low cut, exposed midriff or bare-shouldered dress, or very short skirts. Men should wear slacks. No one should wear old jeans, shorts or sleeveless shirts. **The respect you display in your appearance speaks volumes about the respect you have for proclaiming the Word of God.**
- Beginning Advent 2016, the lectors will be seated in the sanctuary by the ambo 5 minutes before the start of Mass. Lector 1 will sit closest to the Ambo.
- After #1 Lector reads the first reading, the lector will exit the sanctuary by the choir side and be seated with the congregation.
- **If there is no cantor, then the first lector proclaims the responsorial psalm.**
  - The Responsorial Psalm is stated once and then the lector raises the hand which will invite the congregation to repeat it and states it with them. Read the verse then again invite the congregation to respond by raising your hand and starting the response softly.
- The Cantor will come up to the ambo from the choir side and exit the same way.
- Lector #2 will approach the ambo after the cantor has left the sanctuary and proclaim the scripture. When finished the lectionary is placed on the stand to the right of the ambo. The lector exits by the choir side steps and joins the congregation.
- **If there is no deacon, then the second lector remains in the sanctuary and returns to the lector chair until after the Apostles Creed. Father opens the prayers of the faithful and the lector reads the petitions. After Father closes the prayers. The Lector invites the children forward for the**

**collection.** The lector then exits the sanctuary by the choir side steps.

## Effective Proclamation

All lectors should consider **that they are called to proclaim, not merely read,** God's Word to the congregation.

## Volume

Please insure that you stand close to the microphone. Adjust microphone at the neck to be at mouth level when reading. Also, without straining your voice, please speak loudly so that everyone can hear His Word. You cannot speak to loud but you can be too soft. The technicians can only bring the volume up so high without having feedback.

## Pausing

The reverence associated with the act of proclaiming the Word can be enhanced through the appropriate uses of pauses. The lector should pause for **2 to 4 seconds** at each of the following times during the readings:

- Upon arrival at the ambo
- After stating "A reading from The ...[book of Genesis or first letter of Paul to the Corinthians]"
- Before Beginning the Responsorial Psalm
- Before stating "...The Word of the Lord"
- After the congregation responds with "Thanks be to God..."
  - (The pause at the end of the reading is especially important as this allows time for prayerful reflection on the reading.)

## Clarity

The reverence associated with the act of proclaiming the Word can be further enhanced by **in a manner that separates each word, saying each sound as clearly as possible, stretching the vowels slightly while keeping the natural rhythm and tempo, and placing the stress on key words.**

## Pace

Nearly all readers, even the most seasoned veterans, experience an increase in nervous energy when they are proclaiming the scripture in front of the congregation. The most common side-effect of this nervous energy is that reader's pace exceeds the ability of the congregation to hear and grasp what is being read. To address this common tendency most readers must make a

concerted effort to speak slower. **Proclaiming the Word at one half the rate of conversational speaking is a good rule-of-thumb.**

## Specific Responsibilities during Mass

### Lector #1

#### **First Reading**

After the Celebrant proclaims the opening prayer, **Lector #1** should move forward reverently to the ambo while the congregation takes their seats. Upon arrival at the ambo, please WAIT until all late comers have been seated before you begin the reading. This will insure that everyone in the congregation is given full opportunity to hear God's Word without unnecessary distractions. You might need to wait as long as a minute for everyone to find his or her seats. Once they are all settled you should begin the reading in the normal fashion by proclaiming "A reading from..." When you proclaim the Word please concentrate on **speaking in a clear and distinct manner, pausing when appropriate, and not rushing through the reading**. Please turn the page in the Lectionary to the 2nd reading (Lector #2 will do this if Lector #1 does not). After the pause for reflection, return directly to sit with the congregation.

### Lector #2

#### **Second Reading**

After the cantor sings the Responsorial and exits the sanctuary, Lector #2 moves to the ambo. Upon arrival at the ambo, Lector #2 should turn the page of the Lectionary to the second reading, if this has not been done already, and adjust the microphone by the neck if needed. He or she must then WAIT for any late comers to be seated before proclaiming the Word. Once they are all settled, you should begin the reading in the normal fashion by proclaiming "A reading from..." (**not your own version**). Please concentrate on proclaiming the Word in a **clear and distinct manner, pausing when appropriate, and not rushing through the reading**.

When finished with the reading, he or she should close the Lectionary and **place it on the table to the right of the ambo**. The celebrant will use the Book of the Gospels to proclaim the Gospel **unless it is a daily mass**. After a pause for reflection, he or she should then return directly to the pews with the congregation.

## Special Situations

### Partner No-show

If your partner has not shown up by ten minutes prior to the start of Mass, please notify the **sacristan, deacon or celebrant** so that they will know that you will be proclaiming **both readings**. If you are not scheduled to serve at a given Mass you might consider familiarizing yourself with the readings and coming **appropriately dressed** to serve as a lector. It is also a good idea to check in when you arrive to see if you are needed as a substitute. In this way, we will always have well prepared standby lectors on those rare occasions when a lector is unable to perform his or her duties.

### Lector is Unable to Perform Scheduled Duty

If you are unable to perform your lector duties on the day that you were assigned, **you are responsible to find a replacement**. Request a substitute using the scheduler or call lectors from the roster in scheduling program. If, after sufficient effort on your part, you are unable to find a replacement, please notify the Mass Coordinator by e-mail. If the Mass Coordinator cannot be reached, or if you become ill on Sunday morning, please try to reach the Sacristan scheduled for Mass on that Day.

## Daily Mass

Serving as a lector for a daily Mass is an especially effective means for new lectors to develop confidence in their abilities. It is also fruitful for experienced lector as it helps them to develop a deeper appreciation and better understanding of God's Word. The notable difference in the lectors duties at this Mass are:

- There is normally only one reading so only one lector is used
- The Mass is held in the chapel.
- The daily Lectionary includes a Responsorial Psalm, which is not normally sung. After the first reading, the lector pauses, then reads the Responsorial Psalm without introduction; i.e. "The Lord hears the cry of the poor".
- In most cases, the Celebrant, without assistance from the lector, reads the General Intercessions also known as the Prayers of the

Faithful)

- The proper closing for the readings is "The Word of the Lord."

## Administrative Information

St. Thomas Aquinas uses a **Ministry Scheduler Program** to schedule Lectors quarterly. Using a logon ID and password you can input your **preferred mass times and also the dates that you will not be able to serve**. Lector schedules are prepared and distributed **quarterly**. Every effort is made to insure that lectors serve during their most preferred Mass. In most cases lectors are assigned to Masses when other family members in other ministries are serving. The new schedules are **posted on Church DB during the last week of February, May, August, and November**.

If you have signed up for this ministry and are not included on the schedule, please contact the Office of Ministries and Apostolates at [minadmin@stabcs.org](mailto:minadmin@stabcs.org) or 979-693-6994, ext. 119.

## Lector Resources

**Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers**, Published by Liturgy Training Publications Inc. is always available in the Sacristy

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR SUNDAYS  
<http://www.usccb.org/nab/>

LECTOR PREPARATION  
<http://www.lectorprep.org/>

## Lector Coordinators

**Deacon Frank Ashley**  
[Fashley@stabcs.org](mailto:Fashley@stabcs.org) or  
979-693-6994 ext.102  
Cell: 979-229-9013

**Diana Jetter**  
Director of Ministries/Apostolates  
[liturgy@stabcs.org](mailto:liturgy@stabcs.org)  
979-693-6994 ext. 136

## Venerable Bebe, Patron Saint of Lectors



Feast Day: May 25

Venerated: 1899

Bede was born near St. Peter and St. Paul monastery at Wearmouth-Jarrow, England. He was sent there when he was three and educated by Abbots Benedict Biscop and Ceolfrid. He became a monk at the monastery, was ordained when thirty, and except for a few brief visits elsewhere, spent all of his life in the monastery, devoting himself to the study of Scripture and to teaching and writing.

He is considered one of the most learned men of his time and a major influence on English literature. His writings are a veritable summary of the learning of his time and include commentaries on the Pentateuch and various other books of the Bible, theological and scientific treatises, historical works, and biographies.

Bede was moreover a skilled linguist and translator, and his work made the Latin and Greek writings of the early Church Fathers much more accessible to his fellow Anglo-Saxons, contributing significantly to English Christianity. Bede's monastery had access to an impressive library which included works by Eusebius and Orosius, among many others.

His best-known work is *HISTORIA ECCLESIASTICA*, a history of the English Church and people, which he completed in 731. It is an account of Christianity in England up to 729 and is a primary source of early English history.

Called "the Venerable" to acknowledge his wisdom and learning, the title was formalized at the Council of Aachen in 853. Bebe was a careful scholar and distinguished stylist, the "father" of English history, the first to date events *anno domini* (A.D.), and in 1899, was declared the only English doctor of the Church by Pope Leo XIII. He died in Wearmouth-Jarrow on May 25.

(Venerable Bebe, 2016) [http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=574](http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=574)