

HOW MANY READERS SHOULD BE SCHEDULED FOR EACH MASS?

Whenever there is more than one reading before the Gospel, it is better to assign the readings to different readers. (*Introduction to the Lectionary*, #52).

WHERE ARE THE READERS SEATED DURING MASS?

The readers may take a place in the sanctuary with the other ministers (#195). Since many parishes do not have the other ministers seated in the sanctuary (if only the priest, deacon, and servers are seated there), the readers may sit in the congregation with the rest of the Assembly.

HOW SHOULD A READER PREPARE?

All readers should take time prior to the Mass to study the scriptures and practice their reading aloud. Ten minutes before Mass is not practice, but ten minutes a day during the week prior to Mass is practice.

The readers should also take the time to pray and to read the other scripture texts of the day in order to understand the context of their particular reading.

Through this study and practice, the reading will become the living Word of God.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO PREPARE READERS?

Several publishing companies offer workbooks to assist readers in their preparation for each Sunday's readings. Ideally, each reader would have his or her own copy of the workbook. The Arch-diocesan Office for Prayer, Worship and Evangelization has many resources for readers as well as a list of workshop presenters. A reader's preparation, however, "must above all be spiritual" (*Introduction to the Lectionary* #55). Therefore time spent in daily prayer and reading of the scriptures is integral to excellence in this ministry.

*For more information or
with any questions, please contact:*

**Office for Prayer, Worship, and Evangelization
Archdiocese of Milwaukee
3501 South Lake Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53207**

**414-769-3349
800-769-9373 (x349)
(Within the 10 county Archdiocese)**

**oremus@archmil.org
www.archmil.org**

THE MINISTRY OF THE READER

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Sacred Scriptures, above all in their liturgical proclamation, are the source of life and strength...Love of the Scriptures is therefore a force reinvigorating and renewing the entire people of God. (Introduction to the Lectionary #47)

When the Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to His people, and Christ, present in His own Word, proclaims the Gospel. Therefore, all must listen with reverence to the readings from God's word, for they make up an element of greatest importance in the Liturgy. (General Instruction of the Roman Missal #29).

The above paragraphs highlight the centrality of the Scriptures in both the liturgy and in the ongoing renewal of the Church. This renewal is especially important in the Eucharistic liturgy, the center of the Church's life. In the spirit of that ongoing renewal, we present this series of Questions and Answers regarding the role of the reader.



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE READER AT MASS?

The reader may carry the Book of Gospels in the entrance procession (in the absence of a deacon); a reader proclaims the assigned reading(s) and, in the absence of a deacon, the General Intercessions. If the responsorial psalm is not sung, the reader may also be asked to lead it.

DOES A PERSON NEED TO BE CONFIRMED TO BE A READER?

None of the liturgical documents insist on Confirmation as a prerequisite, although it is desirable that a reader have received the Sacrament of Confirmation. A reader needs to be in good sacramental standing with the Church so he or she can fully participate in the celebration. At weddings and funerals, however, a non-Catholic reader may proclaim one of the readings or offer the petitions, with the permission of the pastor.

DOES ONE NEED TO BE OF A PARTICULAR AGE TO BE A READER?

Again, the documents are not concerned with age. The foundational criterion is a clear understanding of the reading as well as its context. A reader needs to be able to read clearly and audibly; to interact with the Assembly through eye contact and to have a knowledge of the different types of texts and the liturgical seasons. A reader must be comfortable with silence and be able to focus the Assembly's attention on the Word of God rather than on the proclaimer.

WHEN A PARISH HAS MASS FOR THE SCHOOL CHILDREN OR THE CHILDREN IN CHRISTIAN FORMATION, MAY A CHILD SERVE AS A READER AT THAT MASS?

The *Directory for Masses with Children* (1973) says that children should participate in as many ways as possible (#22) and that "readers and cantors, whether children or adults, should be employed" (#24). This means the choosing of those who have a clear understanding of the reading and the ability to proclaim it clearly to the Assembly.

WHAT IS APPROPRIATE DRESS FOR A READER, ESPECIALLY AT SUNDAY MASS?

The practice in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee is that the reader will wear street clothes, with "Sunday best" being closest to the expectations of most congregations.

WHO CHOOSES THE READERS FOR MASS?

The pastor gives the final approval of readers in a parish. It is important that all readers receive proper training and thorough preparation before beginning their ministry. It is also suggested that readers be blessed by the pastor, using the blessing found in the *Book of Blessings* #1827-1845. This blessing can be used as an annual renewal for all readers, as well as for newly trained readers.