



Proclaiming the Word of God

*Anyone can read the Scriptures in public.
Only the believer can proclaim them.*

Guidelines for Ministers of the Word Archdiocese of Hobart

PASTORAL and TECHNICAL TIPS

Preparation before Mass

Pre-reading, reflecting and praying are essential to understand the context and intent of the text (*Break Open The Word*, from the Liturgical Commission, Brisbane, is a useful resource for background information and pronunciation hints).

Arrive in time to check the *Lectionary* is in place and open at the correct page, and to meet with others involved. Also, find out whether

- The Psalm is to be read, sung, or read with a sung refrain
- The Gospel Acclamation is to be sung, read with a sung refrain, or omitted

Pre-reading, reflecting and praying are essential

During Mass

Approach the Ambo (lectern) with other readers and cantor following the Opening Prayer, according to the usual procedure or custom in your parish.

- Move reverently and bow together
- Bows are made to the altar, not to the tabernacle

Stand at the lectern confidently with your feet comfortably apart and wait for people to settle.

Adjust the microphone to suit you.

- Know your own sound-system and microphone
- The microphone should be approximately 100 – 125 mm (4 - 5 inches) from your mouth and pointed to-wards your chin
- If necessary, turn the microphone off before adjusting

Take time to do this preparation properly. Don't feel under pressure to start reading. Time spent in composing yourself and arranging the microphone is worthy of the task of proclaiming the Word of God.

Begin the reading: *'From the... '*

Conclude with: *"The Word of the Lord."*

- Do not read the rubrics or the italics

Proclaiming the Word requires ‘ a speaking style that is audible, clear and intelligent.’ (LM:I 14)

Proclaiming Well

Remember, the story you tell is filled with a drama you need not supply.

Voice	Project rather than shout, proclaim rather than read
Pace	Keep it even, not too fast
Pitch and tone	Read at an even level, but this depends on the literary style of the passage. Keep a balance between a monotone on one hand and an artificial inflection on the other.
Facial expression	This should not distract from the Word. Look up occasionally, but don't overdo it

Liturgy groups could be involved to help readers if they are too loud, too soft, or if anything becomes a distraction for the assembly.

If a mistake is made, stop, regain your composure and resume.

Allow time for a period of silent reflection after each reading, so that ‘*all meditate briefly on what has been heard.*’ (LM:I 23). This needs to be done in such a way that there is no anxiety from others that the next reader has forgotten to move, or is not present.

Allow time for a period of reflection after each reading

Psalm: ‘*As a rule the Responsorial Psalm should be sung. ...When not sung, the psalm ... is to be recited in a manner conducive to meditation on the Word of God.*’ (LM:I 22, 23)

There is no need to announce that it is the response. If there is no music, simply read the response and, with a gesture or eye contact, invite the Assembly to join in.

The Gospel Acclamation should be sung: ‘*the assembled faithful's greeting of welcome to the Lord... and an expression of their faith through song.*’ (LM:I 23)

Lectors and cantors return to their seats in the assembly either before or after the proclamation of the Gospel, but before the homily, according to local custom.

The Church is nourished spiritually at the table of God's Word

Further Reading

The General Instructions of the Roman Missal (GIRM)
Lectionary for Mass: General Introduction (LM:I)

Break Open The Word, Liturgical Commission, Brisbane (published yearly)

Liturgical Commission
Archdiocese of Hobart
AUSTRALIA