***Rationale and Guidelines for Lectors (Prepared: August 2022)***

*In proclaiming the Word of God, lectors exercise their responsibility in the liturgical celebration. God speaks to the faithful through them, and the effectiveness of their proclamation of God’s Word depends significantly on their conviction, preparation, and delivery.* (From “Introduction to the Order of the Mass,” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, hereafter USCCB)

**Preparation for Proclamation:** The lector should have the ability to proclaim the Word so that the Word itself, not the lector, is in the foreground. In fact, the lectors are more than readers; they are “proclaimers.” The Word must be spoken with conviction, clarity, and skill. It is important for lectors to be familiar with the Scripture and to understand what is being read. Lectors are called to be the voice and presence of God.

Each week, a link to the USCCB Daily Readings webpage will be sent to readers assigned for that weekend. Liturgy Training Publication’s “Workbook for Lectors” is available in the Copy Room at the Newman Center (which includes a pronunciation guide), along with the LTP’s “Pronunciation Guide for the Lectionary” (for those who want more guidance. Beginning Advent 2022, both resources will be available at both churches: Copy Room @ RNP, Robing Room in the Narthex @ BSP.

The commentary at the foot of the Workbook for Readers will help you understand the meaning of the text, which is essential to a convincing delivery. Don’t be afraid to ask for help from one of the priests, or deacons, or Mary Ellen. The USCCB website also has online podcast recordings of all Masses to listen to, which is another excellent resource for pronunciation of difficult names, inflections, and phrasing. Reading with understanding (both yours and the assembly’s) is imperative, so it is important to practice and pray your reading aloud before you proclaim it to the Church.

* **Please arrive at least ten minutes before your scheduled liturgy.** “Sign-in” on the clipboard in the parking lot entrance @ RNP and Robing Room @ BSP, and if possible, check with the Sacristan @ RNP and MC @ BSP to receive any last-minute instructions. If you do not check in, we may not know that you are present and may enlist someone else to do the reading, which would be unfair to both of you.
* **Check the placement of your assigned text in the Lectionary.** Compare the text in the Lectionary with what you have prepared. Do not read from your practice sheet. If you are the first reader, also check the height of the microphone to make sure it is at the proper level for you.
* **Suggestions regarding the sound system:** The sound system at both churches does a good job of amplifying your voice, but that will not do what your diaphragm, larynx, mouth and lips should do for you. Avoid getting too close or too far away from the microphone. In general, “fingers length” allows you to be heard but also prevents “aspirant” sounds from occurring.
* **If you cannot make a scheduled date, please request a sub on MSP or e-mail Mary Ellen. (A single reader should read both readings only as a last resort.** If you are having trouble using MSP, please contact Mary Ellen via email (mehaupert@viterbo.edu). She will be happy to register your conflict and/or find someone to take your place.

***Lector Guidelines: Roncalli Newman Parish***

1. Approach the sanctuary with reverence; bow to the ALTAR, and proclaim your reading with energy and understanding.
2. After you read, remain “at rest” at the ambo/lectern until the music for the psalm or Gospel acclamation begins, then turn and bow to the altar again as you leave the sanctuary. The silence after the readings is not “dead time” but an opportunity to prayerfully consider the Word just proclaimed. Obviously, you need to be still, not looking around or checking on when the music is going to start. At the end of the reading, readers should 1) turn the page for the second reading and 2) close the Lectionary and place it on the shelf below before stepping back from the ambo. As soon as the accompaniment for the psalm begins you can return to your place.
3. If there is NO DEACON PRESENT, the 2nd reader will read the Prayers of the Faithful.

***Lector Guidelines: Blessed Sacrament Parish***

1. Please plan to sit close to the front of the church. (If there is no Deacon available to read the Prayers of the Faithful, the 2nd reader will return to the ambo from his/her seat in the pews when the priest introduces the Prayers to the congregation and read the Prayers of the Faithful.)
2. Know who is also reading with you. Talk with them before and determine how you want to approach the altar. **You have two options**:

**OPTION A**

* 1. Get out of the pew and meet the other reader in **the CENTER aisle**. Approach the steps and proceed up into the Sanctuary to the front of the altar. Stop. bow together, then walk to the left. Reader 1 will go to the ambo; Reader 2 will go the chairs along the side wall and be seated.

**OPTION B:**

* 1. Get out of the pew and meet the other reader towards the front of the LEFT aisle (*the alley side of the church).* Walk up the steps to the Sanctuary. Bow together towards the altar. The first reader goes immediately to the ambo and the other goes to the chair along the side wall and is seated.

After the congregation responds: “Thanks be to God” the first reader goes over to the chairs along the wall and sits.

The second reader moves to the ambo after the responsorial psalm Is completed.

Immediately after the congregation responds to the second reading, the second reader will close the lectionary and place it on the shelf below. The first reader may approach the second reader at this time. Readers will then proceed to exit the Sanctuary in the manner agreed upon beforehand:

A) Bow to the altar near the ambo and exit down the side aisle stairs or

B) Walk to the front of the altar, bow together, turn to go down the center aisle steps, and return to your pew.

**GUIDELINES TO CONSIDER WHEN PREPARING TO READ**

1. **Read the assigned text several times for understanding**. There are times when the readings are quite obscure, and the syntax of the writing is awkwardly phrased. If you’re stuck, then leave it alone and come back to it later in the day. A new perspective can help your understanding and interpretation.
2. **Practice at home aloud** until you feel comfortable with the language and phrasing. Stand up. (Suggestion: Go into your bathroom, face the mirror, and read out loud.)
3. **Be conscious of your breathing**. A serious problem many lectors have is that they run out of breath before they finish their sentence, and then you don’t have enough “energy” to push out the last few words, and we, in the congregation, can’t hear how that sentence concludes.
4. **Diction and articulation are critical**. Move your mouth, even exaggerate moving and opening your mouth.
5. **Make sure you have ENERGY in your voice.** You are speaking the Word of God. That demands Energy – volume, emphasis on key words. You are providing an oral interpretation of the reading for those sitting in the pews. Help them to understand the Word of God.
6. **Do NOT rely on the same pattern of vocal inflection for each sentence**. Vary that.
7. **SLOW DOWN**. It will feel unnatural to you at first but get used to it! Proclaiming the Word of God in a resonant church can’t be understood at NORMAL CONVERSATIONAL PACING.
8. **Don’t be afraid of the “Pregnant Pause**.**”** For many readings, it makes sense to insert a pause in the reading to help emphasize a key point from the reader. Whatever you can do to help us understand the reading better is your mission.
9. **Slow down at the end of the reading** so we know it’s coming to a close. At the end of the reading make sure you add a sufficient pause (such as the silent mantra “One, Mississippi, Two, Mississippi, Three, Mississippi,” before you proclaim: “The Word of the Lord.”