

PROCLAIMING WELL FOR ALL TO HEAR AND BE NOURISHED

❖ Formation

- The celebration of the Liturgy of the Word opens our hearts to give thanks to God in and through the Eucharistic prayer.
- Liturgical gesture, words, postures, methods and styles all exist for a reason. We Proclaim the Word of God, not just read some text. Poor proclamation can impede its reception in the lives of our brothers and sisters. Some of these obstacles include:
 - No eye contact or sense of story - both of which indicate a lack of familiarity with the reading
 - Impersonal delivery - the Word can only be proclaimed when it is personally meaningful
 - Inaudible - what can't be heard cannot be understood, usually from misuse of the microphone
 - Unintelligible - missing the whole, often a result of poor reading and lack of understanding
- Our actions and symbols should convey at all times a deep sense of reverence for God's presence in the world, and in the symbols of the Word, such as the Gospel book.
- Procession, movement, etc. should be uniform--this minimizes distraction and allows the people to pay attention to the Words, not the word reader.
- We become actors in a liturgical play - we must embody the role we are representing
- Know how the microphone functions and be mindful of using it to the best of your ability:
 - Ensure the microphone neck is at the correct height for your mouth: if you proclaim mostly with eyes on the text, be mindful and lower the neck of the mic before reading.
 - The microphone picks up in a direct line of sight: bend the end towards your mouth
 - If your voice is exceptionally soft, it is critical that you move the mic as close to your mouth as possible, within 6 inches if possible.
 - If your voice is exceptionally strong, be mindful of placing the mic between 6 and 10 inches from your mouth to avoid loud 'boom' sounds when pronouncing 'P' consonants.
 - Do not be intimidated by the mic: the Liturgy Coordinator will be able to adjust the mic if necessary.
 - Be aware that the sound system LIMITS our ability to hear words separately and distinctly. You must read slowly and allow time at the end of each thought for the phrase to move through the space, registering in the peoples' understanding.

❖ Preparation

- Read all scriptures for the Sunday Mass during the week, multiple times if possible. The lectionary is a special book: all readings are given a new context and extended meaning when arranged together.
- Use the preparation book for lectors to understand context of readings, see words of emphasis, and learn pronunciation of challenging words/phrases.
- Read the scripture aloud. Listen to yourself as you read the story. Is it personal? Does it sound like a story you tell a friend, or a fact you relate to a coworker? Do you hear the natural hills and valleys in the meaning?
- Before proclaiming, breathe deeply and give your voice to God through a short prayer. It is God's Word for God's people--we are the instrument through which it is passed.

❖ Intention

- Who am I?
- Where am I?
- What am I doing?
- Why am I doing it?
- You must hold an intention for yourself. There is a strong element of presentation in proclaiming the Word, however it is not the same as the presentation of a politician, a lawyer or a salesman. The type of presentation you must have is your own 'best' self, in awe of God's message to be shared with those who gather to celebrate. However you come to this presentation, albeit through practice at home, prayer with the Word, mindfulness of your posture, deliberate movement, repetition, etc. is unique for each person.
- Experiment with your narrative style:
 - Note the timber of your voice, and try raising and lowering it to match the emotion in the text.
 - Explore different ways of 'telling the story,' imaging how others may proclaim it
 - Let your speed of reading vary, glossing over phrases that are less important with rapidity, and pausing deliberately over important, powerful phrases