

1. The Bow

When there is no Mass being celebrated in a Catholic Church, the focal point or "centre of attention" is always the tabernacle, where the Most Holy Eucharist is reserved. Once Mass has commenced however, the focal point becomes the altar, a symbol of Christ who is the priest, the sacrifice, and the *altar of sacrifice*. We genuflect to the tabernacle at the beginning and end of Mass, but bow to the altar *during* Mass when approaching, or passing in front or behind.

When readers come forward to read, they move to the centre of the sanctuary, directly in front of the altar and make a bow from the hips towards the altar. They do the same after reading and before returning to their seat. They do not "slip away" off the side of the sanctuary.

2. Microphone

The microphone at the ambo is very sensitive and does need to be adjusted for height.

3. The First Reading

They begin by saying (for example): "A reading from the book of Proverbs." They do not say: "The First Reading is from the Book of Proverbs" as there is no need to say "The First Reading..." since it is in fact the first reading and this does not need to be pointed out or stated. Also, the theme of the reading which is in red italics on the next line below the line "A reading from the book of Proverbs" should not be read out. At the end of the reading, and after a brief (3 second) **pause**, the reader simply says: "The word of the Lord" and not the previous form which was: "This is the word of the Lord."

4. The Responsorial Psalm

If there are two readers, the person who reads the First Reading will normally read the Responsorial Psalm. The reader simply reads the response to the psalm, which the congregation repeats. **Then the reader reads each verse, pausing between them so that the congregation may make the response. The reader does not say: "Response" at the end of each verse, nor do they begin by saying: "The Response to the Psalm is..."** The reader should try to read the verses with rhythm or "cadence." Lowering the tone slightly at the end of the verse and looking up at the

congregation will signal to the congregation when to make the response.

5. The Second Reading

Like the First Reading, the reader simply reads what is there, without adding, altering, or subtracting anything. They begin by saying (for example): "A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans." ***They do not say: "The Second Reading is from..." as there is no need to say "The Second Reading..." since it is in fact the second reading and this does not need to be pointed out or stated.*** Also, the theme of the reading which is in red italics should not be read out loud. At the end of the reading, and after a brief pause, ***the reader simply says: "The word of the Lord" and not the previous form which was: "This is the word of the Lord."***

6. The Gospel Acclamation

If there are two readers, the person who reads the Second Reading will normally read the Gospel Acclamation. **The reader does not say: "Please stand to welcome the Gospel," or "The Gospel Acclamation."** The reader simply begins with the "Alleluia, alleluia" once the congregation has stood up. **The congregation should join in with the "Alleluia, alleluia," but it**

is preferable then that the Reader alone reads the verse, as many voices from the congregation can result in a jumbled sound which can make it difficult for others (without the text) to understand what is being said. The congregation joins in with the closing "Alleluia."

7. Prayers of the Faithful

The Prayers of the Faithful follow immediately after the Creed and the Reader should be ready to move forward as soon as the Creed is finished. The priest will pray the introductory prayer and then there are normally five or six prayers for the reader to pray on behalf of the worshipping community. After the last prayer the reader remains at the ambo while the priest prays the concluding prayer, after which the reader returns to their seat after bowing to the altar.

There is no need to announce "please stand and welcome the gospel" because liturgical actions flow naturally from tradition and shared faith rather than a polite invitation. Standing is an inherent posture of honour, readiness, and Christ's real presence, making verbal stage directions redundant for a congregation.