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WORD OF GOD AND THE EUCHARIST

The Eucharist assembly is the people of God convoked by the Holy Spirit to listen to the Word of God proclaimed and to celebrate the memorial of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. The Mass is the most privileged place where the Word of God is proclaimed, explained, listened to and adopted as a guide to life.

It is therefore clear why the Synod gave clear directives and indications for actions. There should be a place of honor reserved for the Bible in the church building. The Lectionary and especially the Book of Gospels are to be dignified in size and shape. The latter is carried in solemn procession. Readers are to be well trained. The microphone and acoustics need attention. The homily is to be based principally on the Holy Scripture. Moments of silence, for reflection and personal prayer, are to follow the readings. Good translations of the Bible are to be promoted by the Bishops' Conference and the Lectionary needs recognition from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

From the Homily delivered by Francis Cardinal Arinze during the Closing Solemn Mass of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC) IX Plenary Assembly in Manila 16 August 2009



SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH

Mission

We, the parishioners of Santuario de San Antonio, respond to God's call to seek Him, to know Him, and to love Him with all our heart, mind and strength. We follow the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi who made Jesus the center of His life and in faithful communion with St. Anthony of Padua, our patron saint, and Mary, our blessed Mother.

We hold that by our faith in God, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we are baptized with water as "members of the body of Christ", that is, the Church universal, and are committed to living the Gospel proclaimed by Jesus.

We hold that the Church's mission, grounded in the Gospel, is to proclaim and show forth Jesus' Good News of how to live a fully human life. To realize this mission is to foster and to preserve the Gospel and allow us, the faithful, to live in the love of God and neighbor.

From the Constitution of Santuario de San Antonio Parish, Makati City, Philippines, December 2010



MINISTRY OF LECTORS AND COMMENTATORS

An Integral Part of the Liturgical Ministry

Vision

A dynamic group of spiritually-formed and fully-initiated Catholics called to serve as living witnesses and effective proclaimers of the Word of God in all liturgical celebrations of Santuario de San Antonio Parish. Liturgical celebrations include the sacraments and Liturgy of the Hours.

Objectives

- To inspire lectors and commentators to deepen their spirituality by attending recollections and regular formation at Santuario de San Antonio Parish and on-going formation at the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission of Manila
- To help members develop a profound understanding and appreciation of the Liturgy of the Word and its significant connection to the Liturgy of the Eucharist
- To enhance the proclamation skills of members with training and workshops
- To work agreeably with members of the ministry and to collaborate with other ministries in support of parish projects
- To be constantly aware of the relationship of the ministry with the Archdiocese of Manila and to contribute to the success of its programs



Prayer of Preparation

Praise to You, Lord God,
King of the universe,
And all glory to Your Name.
I praise You and thank You for calling me
To proclaim your Word
To Your beloved people.

Open the hearts of all who worship with us,
So that they may hear Your voice when I read.
Let nothing in my life or manner
Disturb your people or close their hearts
To the action of Your spirit.

Cleanse my heart and mind,
Open my lips
So that I may proclaim Your Glory.
All praise to You, Heavenly Father,
Through the Lord Jesus,
In the Holy Spirit,
Now and forever. Amen.

Introduction

This Manual for Lectors and Commentators of the Santuario de San Antonio Parish (SSAP), Makati City, Philippines contains relevant information needed by all members to have a common understanding of the required skills and operations and, thus, serve as a guide on how the ministry is to be carried out. It is also intended to serve as a reference material to facilitate the training of new members.

Definition of Terms

- There are **three books** used at mass:
 - The **Sacramentary** is placed on the altar before the mass begins.
 - The **Book of the Gospels** contains the gospel reading for each Sunday of the three-year liturgical cycle, plus all solemnities, feasts, and ritual masses that are celebrated throughout the liturgical year.
 - *It is the only book carried in the procession on Sundays and on feast days.*
 - The **Lectionary** is a book of all readings used at the Eucharist and other liturgies, arranged in the order of the liturgical calendar.
 - *It is never carried in the procession but is placed on the ambo before mass begins.*

Note: There is also a **Book of General Intercessions** from which the weekday Prayers of the Faithful are read.
- The **presider** plays the role of serving and encouraging the congregation which God has gathered in a particular place so that it can give praise to God and grow in its response to the gift of Christ in word and sacrament. The **presider** sets the tone of the liturgy.

- The **lector** is commissioned to proclaim the *Readings* from Sacred Scripture, with the exception of the Gospel, and is entrusted with the crucial task of making the *Word of God* come alive for the congregation. A well-prepared lector can do much to enhance the celebration of the liturgy by a prayerful and powerful proclamation of the *Word of God*. He/She in the absence of a psalmist, may proclaim the *Responsorial Psalm* after the First Reading. The lector also announces the intentions of the *Prayers of the Faithful* after the introduction by the presider. *Ideally, the lector should not exercise more than one ministry at any single celebration of the liturgy unless requested by the presider.*
- The **commentator** provides the faithful, when appropriate, with brief explanations and commentaries with the purpose of introducing them to the celebration and preparing them to understand it better. The commentator's remarks must be meticulously prepared and clear though brief. In performing this function, the commentator stands in front of a lectern facing the faithful, but neither at the ambo nor the altar.
- The **ambo** is a special lectern that symbolizes the presence of the *Word of God*, just as the altar symbolizes the sacrament of the *Eucharist*. The Liturgy of the Word (which includes the *Readings*, the *Responsorial Psalm*, the *Gospel*, the *Homily*, and the *Prayers of the Faithful*) takes place at the *ambo*, always a permanent, solemn and dignified place.
- A **lectern** is a stand with a slanted top, on which the commentator places his/her material for reading and the song leader his/her material for singing. There are two lecterns in SSAP: one for the commentator and another for the song leader.
- The **ordo** is the liturgical calendar of the church showing masses that are celebrated: weekdays, Sundays, holy days (solemnities, feasts and memorials). It is displayed in the sacristy.

Proper Attire and Decorum

Proper attire must be worn by lectors and commentators so as not to attract attention to themselves but rather, allow the congregation to listen to the proclamation of the Word.

i. Anticipated and Sunday Masses and Special Celebrations

FOR MEN

- Barong Tagalog or guayabera, short or long-sleeved shirt with a tie, or a suit
- Nicely-creased black trousers (no jeans or jogging pants)
- Leather shoes worn with socks (no rubber shoes, flip-flops, slippers)

FOR WOMEN

- Lector robe worn over a dress or skirt and blouse
- Low-heeled shoes (no rubber shoes, flip-flops, slippers, very flat and open sandals that look like slippers)

ii. Weekday Masses

FOR MEN

- Same rules apply as in Sunday masses and special celebrations. However, polo barong may be worn.

FOR WOMEN

- Lector robe worn over a dress or skirt and blouse
- Low-heeled shoes (*no rubber shoes, flip-flops, slippers, flat and open sandals that look like slippers*)
- Simple jewelry (*no dangling or oversized earrings, necklaces and bracelets*)

If a lector/commentator feels that she is inappropriately dressed, a lector robe, available in the cloak room may be worn over her attire.

Reminders and Operating Guidelines

i. At Home

It is important for all members of the ministry to prepare at home before their assigned date to serve as lectors or commentators. Preparation for lectors should include—

- Studying thoroughly both Readings and background notes (it may help to look up the material in the Bible to understand the context of the reading)
- Reflecting and meditating on the Readings
- Checking the correct pronunciation of all unfamiliar words
- Reading the material aloud several times to correctly get the rhythm, punctuation, and pauses and to clarify the material in the mind, and
- Getting familiar enough with the Readings so that occasional eye contact with the congregation can be made during mass without disrupting the flow of words.

Lectors must remember that they are proclaiming the Word of God to the congregation and not just reading words from a book.

ii. In Church

- Lectors and commentators should arrive in church twenty (20) minutes prior to the start of the mass to give them ample time to prepare. If a lector or a commentator is late and a substitute has been asked to take his/her place, the substitute will serve during the entire mass.

- Effective proclamation involves the delivery of the message with clarity, conviction and appropriate pace.
- Do not speak in a monotone. Use variations in pitch, speed, pauses, and emphasis to put life in the reading. Do not allow your voice to fade, that is, starting a sentence loudly and letting the voice become soft and inaudible towards the end of the sentence.
- Vocal expression should correspond to the genre of the text, whether it is a poem, a prayer, an instruction, an acclamation, or a liturgical song.
- The Liturgy of the Word must be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation. Any kind of haste must be avoided because it impedes recollection. Brief moments of silence are appropriate during the liturgy, specifically after the Second Reading, the homily and Holy Communion.

The lector prepares for mass by:

- Setting the Lectionary on the ambo and opening it to the correct Reading;
- Getting a copy of the missalette for his/her review and guidance;
- Checking if the microphone is working well and is set at least three (3) inches away from the mouth but directly in front of it to prevent hissing or popping sounds;
- Getting the Book of the Gospels to be carried during the procession; and
- Saying a prayer before the mass begins, asking the Holy Spirit to empower him/her as he/she will be proclaiming the Word of God.

The commentator must do the following before mass—

- Get offerors from the congregation for the Presentation of Gifts. Check with the sacristan to find out if the gifts are ready on the offertory table.
- Find out who the presider is.
- Coordinate with the song leader/choir to find out if responses to the Psalms would be read or sung.
- Review the missalette and guidebook found at the lectern. Take note which Sunday of the year it is (e.g. Second Sunday of Advent, etc.)
- Check and review announcements. Make sure they are current.
- For special masses and celebrations, coordinate with presider for instructions before the mass.

Guidelines During Mass

i. Anticipated and Sunday Masses and Special Celebrations

INTRODUCTION AND PROCESSION

- The priest is introduced as “presider”. The name of a guest presider must always be mentioned.
- The mass begins with a procession to the altar in the following order—
 1. Altar servers
 2. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
 3. Lector
 4. the Presider
- The lector solemnly carries the closed Book of the Gospels, slightly higher than head level with the front cover facing the altar. He/She goes up to the altar after the procession, puts the Book of the Gospels on its stand, and steps aside. The lector, the presider and the other ministers altogether make a deep bow

to Book. The presider goes up to the altar; the lector, and the other ministers proceed to their designated places.

- In the absence of a song leader/choir, the commentator, if capable, may lead the congregation in the singing of hymns.

FIRST READING, RESPONSORIAL PSALM AND SECOND READING

Before the First Reading, the lector remains in his/her seat until the presider concludes the Opening Prayer. He/She proceeds to the ambo as the commentator reads the introduction to the Reading. Upon reaching the ambo, the lector finds his/her spot in the lectionary, pauses and establishes eye contact with the congregation before starting with the First Reading.

- When finished, he/she pauses for around 5 seconds and makes eye contact with the congregation before saying, “The Word of the Lord.” (If there is no pause after the reading, this statement will sound like part of the Reading.)
- The General Instruction in the Lectionary calls for the Scriptures to be read in church from the Book that respects the worthiness of their content, and not from missalettes.
- The Responsorial Psalm is part of the Word of God. If not sung, the lector reads each Verse and the commentator leads the congregation in responding by saying, “Please join in singing the response” or, “Let our response be ...,” as needed.
- After the Second Reading, the lector puts the Lectionary on the shelf below the top of the ambo to give way for the Book of the Gospels to be brought by the presider. The lector may also choose to carry it and put it on the credence table.

- The commentator pauses for 5 seconds for silent meditation before saying, “To honor the Gospel, please rise.” Only then will the song leader start singing the “Alleluia”.

THE “ALLELUIA” AND THE GOSPEL

- If only the word “Alleluia” is sung, no matter how many times it is repeated, the lector reads the verse before the Gospel. However, if “Alleluia “ is sung with other words (e.g. “Seek Ye first the kingdom of God ...) the lector does not read the Gospel verse.
- After the Gospel verse is read, the lector waits for the presider to approach the ambo, steps back slowly, bows slightly to the Book of the Gospels set on the ambo by the presider and then returns to his/her place.
- **Nota Bene:** “Alleluia” is not sung during Lent. Instead, “Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory!”, is sung before and after the Gospel Verse.

THE CREED

- The commentator does not say, “Please rise,” before the Creed. The congregation will automatically stand when the presider says, “Let us rise to profess our faith,” or indirectly, “I believe in God ...”
- If the presider recites the Creed loudly, the commentator may recite with him softly. The commentator may recite the Creed loudly if the presider simply starts it.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

- As the presider recites the Introductory Prayer, the lector gets ready to read the petitions in a clear, well-modulated voice. The lector proclaims the Intercessory Prayers as thoughtfully and carefully

as the Readings. He/She pauses slightly after each petition before saying, “Let us pray to the Lord,” to give the congregation the cue when to give the response. The commentator then leads the congregation in the proper response.

- After the last petition, the lector says, “Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions,” pauses for around 10 seconds and then says, “Let us pray to the Lord.” The lector remains at the ambo until the presider has completed the Closing Prayer and then returns to his/her designated place.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

- The commentator announces, “The offerings will be brought to the altar by (names of offerors).”

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The commentator reads the Parish Announcements following the Prayer after Communion.
- If the announcement is long, the commentator may ask the congregation to sit. When finished, he/she says, “Thank you. Please rise.” for the final blessing.

RECESSIONAL

- The following order is observed in the recession –
 1. Altar servers
 2. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
 3. Lector and commentator
 4. The priest

ii. Weekday Masses

There is one lector/commentator in weekday masses. As in Sunday masses, he/she must be in church twenty (20) minutes before the commencement of the mass to prepare, as follows –

- Check if the microphone is working well and is set properly.
- Find out who the presider is.
- Find out if there are parish announcements. Make sure that they are current.
- Say a prayer before the mass begins, asking the Holy Spirit to empower him/her as he/she will be proclaiming the Word of God.
- The lector/commentator leads the congregation in reciting the “Angelus” before the following masses –
 1. 6:15 AM
 2. 12:15 PM
 3. 6:00 PM
- During the Easter season, “*Regina Coeli*” is recited in lieu of the “Angelus”.
- *On Tuesdays (if ferial days)*: Entrance Antiphon is not read; instead the Entrance Song to St. Anthony is sung. After the final blessing, the lector leads the congregation in the recitation of the Novena Prayer to St. Anthony followed by the singing of the recessional hymn.
- *On Fridays (if ferial days)*: Entrance Antiphon is not read; instead the Entrance Hymn to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is sung. After the final blessing, the lector leads the congregation in the recitation of the Novena Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, followed by the singing of the recessional hymn.
- Communion Antiphon is read immediately after the presider consumes the bread and the wine (and not before he does so). However, if there is a communion song, the antiphon may be omitted.

Administrative Matters

i. Qualifications

Parishioners who wish to serve as Lectors and Commentators must possess the following qualifications as required by the Ministry of Liturgical Affairs of the Archdiocese of Manila –

- Good Catholics in faith and deed
- Willing to commit themselves to perform the duties and responsibilities as Lectors and Commentators especially the proclamation of the Word in the liturgical celebrations
- Willing to grow spiritually through this ministry
- Proficient in either English or Tagalog and must have above average public oral communication skills
- Physically and mentally fit
- At least 16 years of age and not more than 70 years of age. (However, when the applicants are younger or older than the ages indicated, it is the prerogative of the Parish Priest to determine the suitability and ability of the applicants to the ministry based on the evaluation and recommendation of the screening committee.)

ii. Procedure for Applicants

- Applicants shall be required to fill out an application form to be submitted to the chairperson of the Ministry through the parish office. Applicants shall then be scheduled for interview and evaluation by the Screening Committee. The applicant must submit to the Screening Committee the following additional documents –
 1. Signed Commitment Form
 2. Baptismal Certificate
 3. Confirmation Certificate
 4. Wedding Certificate, if applicable

- The applicant will undergo a scrutiny about their knowledge of the Catholic faith, particularly of the sacraments and he/she must prove their availability for the liturgical celebrations.
- Based on the evaluation and recommendation of the Screening Committee, the Parish Priest will approve the application to the Ministry.
- Upon approval by the Parish Priest, applicants are required to attend the following –
 1. Basic formation by the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission of Manila
 2. Doctrinal formation by the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission of Manila
 3. Santuario de San Antonio orientation by the Training Committee of the Ministry
- The formation is completed by a liturgical commissioning within the celebration of the Mass, to be presided by the Bishop of the place, or his delegate; or the Parish Priest, or his delegate.
- Names of the newly installed Lectors and Commentators must be posted in the Parish Bulletin.

iii. Duties of Members

While service to the Ministry is voluntary, members are expected to eagerly perform the following duties and responsibilities –

- To appropriately and faithfully proclaim the Word of God during his/her assigned mass service
- To zealously attend and perform the designated mass service and other liturgical activities
- To inform the Chairperson or the Scheduling Committee if he/she will be unable to attend his/her assigned time slot and to find his/her substitute
- To attend all periodic meetings and formation programs of the Ministry

- To participate actively in their respective standing committees
- To perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Ministry, the Pastoral Council or Pastoral Team
- To attend the annual On-Going Formation (OGF) conducted by the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission (ALC)
- To attend the re-commissioning after attendance at the OGF
- To keep their records and contact information up-to-date for ease of communication

iv. Leadership

- In October, at the end of the 2-year term of the Parish Pastoral Council, the Ministry members are given the opportunity to nominate the Ministry's Chairperson.
- All active members in good standing are eligible to nominate a Chairperson. They shall select three (3) nominees whom they believe will be a responsible leader of the Ministry.

QUALIFICATIONS OF NOMINEES

- Parishioner of good moral standing and a practicing Catholic
- At least 2 years of service in the ministry
- Complied with all the requirements and duties of members
- Shown efficiency, dedication and diligence in carrying out the duties and responsibilities in the ministry, e.g. attendance in mass services, meetings, etc.
- Not an officer of other parish ministries/ organizations
- The list of qualified nominees are to be posted/ displayed. Absentee nominees shall be accepted.
- After tallying of votes, the names of the top three

- (3) nominees will be given to the Parish Priest for consideration and final selection. The Chairperson of the Ministry is then appointed for a 2-year term by the Parish Priest.
- A Thanksgiving Mass and installation of the Chairperson of the Ministry and the other members of the Parish Pastoral Council follow at a later date.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIRPERSON

- Calls and presides over ministry meetings
- Creates committees and appoints their heads, as he/she sees fit
- Prepares the monthly schedule of mass service assignments of lectors and commentators
- Coordinates with the Pastoral Team, Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), Liturgical Ministry and Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission regarding duties and responsibilities of lectors and commentators
- Signs minutes of the meetings and other official documents in behalf of the ministry
- Attends PPC meetings and other functions
- Performs other duties assigned by the Parish Priest

v. *Schedule of Mass Service Assignments*

- The Chairperson or the Scheduling Committee, if any, undertakes to arrange mass service assignments according to the members' preferred time slots indicated in the application / personal data forms. Monthly schedules are released a week before the month commences.
- **Substitutes.** If lectors/commentators cannot report for their assignment, it is their responsibility to find a substitute using the Directory of Lectors and Commentators for this purpose.

- **Tardiness.** Frequent tardiness, absences, and requests for changes in assignments are disruptive to schedules that are meticulously prepared by the chairperson. Concerned members will be asked to discuss their situation with the chairperson to arrive at acceptable schedules. Otherwise, they may be asked to take a leave of absence until the ministry is assured of their reliability.
- **Leave of Absence.** Members who plan to go on a leave of absence must inform the chairperson who handles scheduling of assignments.
- **Dissemination of Information.** The ministry shall disseminate information and important messages to its members through any of the following means –
 - Landline: residence and/or office
 - Mobile phones
 - SMS/text messages through a text brigade
 - Electronic mail (through an e-group), and
 - Postings on the bulletin board on the left side facing the parish office
- Copies of schedules and assignments may be found on the bulletin board and in the rack in the sacristy as well as in the parish office. Documents and forms that need to be submitted to the chairperson or secretary may be sent through the contact person at the parish office.

vi. Evaluation of Lectors and Commentators

To ensure the effective proclamation of the Word of God, two types of evaluation shall be conducted for all members of the ministry –

- self- evaluation, and
- evaluation by designated members

The designated members shall conduct periodic evaluation covering the following –

- knowledge of the Catholic doctrine
- human relations
- punctuality
- reliability
- delivery, and
- moral standing

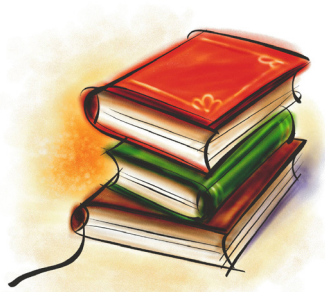
Lectors and commentators are requested to have an open mind to receive feedbacks and comments and learn from such to improve delivery and proclamation of the Word of God from the heart.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

My Lord and Source of Divine Wisdom,
Womb of the Word
which I have been gifted to read
to my brothers and sisters.
Help me as I now return to my daily duties,
to live out in the fullest
what I have proclaimed as Truth,
what I have heralded
as the Way and the Life.

I ask that my life may be an open gospel
to all who observe my actions.
May my speech echo the Love of God,
speak of the Lord's generosity and patience.

Lord, what I ask is that
I might become Your Word
to my family and to all whom I encounter.
May this request be granted
in Your Divine and Compassionate Mercy,
through Jesus Christ,
my Brother and Lord. Amen.



REFERENCES

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- *The Roman Missal*
- *Guidelines for Lectors of other Parishes*
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- *The Marylike Standards for Modesty in Dress*
- *Minutes of Past Meetings of the SSAP Ministry of Lectors and Commentators*
- *Past SSAP Manuals for Lectors and Commentators*
- *Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers: North American Edition*
- *Manual for Lectors and Commentators: Ministry for Liturgical Affairs of Manila, 2007*
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