

# PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Presented by Sr Judith Foster sgs



During May 2005, St Declan's, Penshurst held a four week course on the Ministry of the Word. This course was available for all existing and new readers and commentators. Sr Judy truly opened our eyes *and ears*, as well as our hearts on the history, traditions and practice of the Proclamation of the Word!

The course began with the aspects of Liturgy and the equal importance of the Word and the Eucharist. The following is a summary of the course for your information and reference. Please note a couple of subtle changes we will introduce in our practice.

The word Liturgy comes from the Greek word "**Leitourgeia**" which means – people at work. We in the mass and beyond are people at work and all people working together for:

- **WORSHIP**
- **PROCLAMATION**
- **SERVICE TO CHARITY**

Worship is what we do together when we gather as a faith community. We hear the proclamation of the Word and take that proclamation *we hear* into our daily lives by serving others in actions and prayers. Many of our Visitation Ministers who administer communion to the sick and housebound are living this service each day.

We are Christian people through our Baptism. In our baptism we become a member of the body of Christ, with Christ as our Head. We are called to worship and through our anointing become 'priestly people', people who serve as a king would serve the poor and lost.

Our origin in Christ makes us holy and we can only become more holy by being fully active and participating in the mass and during our worship. Our function as the 'people of God' who actively participate is to gather to form one body in Christ, listen and hear the Word of God, join in the prayers and singing. It would be a pretty silent mass if nobody responded or spoke out the prayers. During the Eucharistic Prayer, which is our prayer, not only the priest's prayer we offer the sacrifice together and commonly participate at the Lord's table.

When we minister to the people of God it is to be done with dignity and respect, and the call is put out to people who have a talent to do it, and do it well.

The Word of God becomes the foundation of the liturgical celebration. It is the role and support of all our life. It is our sustenance for the way we live. If the Word is not heard we are not nourished. The Eucharist cannot be celebrated without the Word, they go hand in hand.

The Proclamation of the Word is a dialogue between God and God's people. We listen and we respond by our actions. It is strongly encouraged that the body of the Church does not read along with the proclaimer, but must listen to the Word of God. This is why the reader must be well prepared to PROCLAIM the message and dialogue God is radiating to his people through them.

Ministers of the Word should be those with FAITH who have come to share that faith with others. They should have CONFIDENCE and be comfortable before the assembly and who wish to share something that is important with warmth, sincerity and empathy without being overbearing or casual. They must have the ability to speak in public, understand the mechanics of voice communication and to serve the community by being prepared to give their gifts and time for preparation and formation.

The attached pages are an excellent resource to have, read and follow. They are a copy from "Breaking Open the Word" published by The Liturgical Commission of Brisbane. They consist of how to prepare for the Sunday reading, 'What is the Bible?', the different kinds of writing in the bible, the arrangement of the Lectionary and Reading Skills – the Tools of the Trade. Please take time to read through these pages, highlight your weaknesses and work on them. Arrange for someone to listen to you read, and take criticism as a learning experience.

Only one Liturgical Ministry may be performed at the Mass you attend. If you are rostered for two ministries, decide on which one you wish to do, and find a replacement for the other. If you are

unsuccessful to find a replacement, phone the presbytery on 9580 1310 and inform the priest, leave a message if they do not answer. It is then the priest's responsibility to organise the ministers with the help of the Acolyte.

The following are the actions and movements for the readers and commentators in our Parish.

## READERS

If you are unable to read on your rostered week you must find a replacement, so that they may prepare themselves to proclaim the Word.

You have prepared well during the week for the reading you will proclaim to the assembly.

Mark your name off on the reader's roster in the sacristy and make your presence known to the priest or acolyte.

Check the Lectionary (no.1) that the reading is marked with a ribbon and easy to find when you approach the Lectern (also called an Ambo). The book should be placed on the right hand side shelf of the Lectern. Adjust the microphone to your height. A suggestion is to point it to your voice box when you stand with your head up. When you read your head will look down and the microphone should be in the correct position.

While waiting for Mass to begin you are welcome to sit in the sacristy and read the readings from the bulletin for a last minute run through.

The green Gospel book is in the small cupboard in the sacristy (ask the acolyte to show you if you're not sure). Check the correct Gospel reading is marked with a ribbon for the priest. The reader carries the Gospel Book in the entrance procession held high (if possible). When the reader comes to the end of the aisles they step to the left, and do not bow when the other ministers genuflect or bow. Walk up to the left of the Altar and wait until the priest kisses the Altar and place the Gospel Book in the centre of the Altar. Walk back to your seat.

After the Opening Prayer approach the Sanctuary from the CENTRE aisle (this is a new change, suggested by Sr Judy), bow to the Altar, ascend the stairs to the Lectern. This should all be done in a slow reverent, dignified manner. Also, take a bulletin up with you (or have it at the Lectern before Mass) so you may follow the Responsorial Psalm.

While the commentator is introducing the reading, pick up the book from the right side shelf of the Lectern. Open the book. Look up to the assembly, wait for silence – create an atmosphere of anticipation. Begin your reading with the words, "A reading from the book of ...." pause a moment and then begin to PROCLAIM!

When you have finished the first reading, pause a moment to say "THE Word of the Lord". It is written in the Lectionary "This is the Word of the Lord", but there has been a change from Rome to omit 'THIS IS'. Do not lift the book. As it was pointed out, this is not the end of our mission and this reading is not the only one. Take your bulletin with you and sit in the Readers chair beside the Altar Servers.

After the Responsorial Psalm approach the lectern again and follow the above instructions as for the first reading.

After the second reading do not lift the book, close the lectionary place it back to the right side shelf. This is so the Gospel Book can be placed on the Lectern by the priest, without him moving and shuffling the two books awkwardly. Descend from the Sanctuary, without any bow, back to your seat.

At the end of the dismissal, go up to the lectern without bowing, take the Gospel Book from the Lectern return back to the position in front of the Altar as in the entrance procession. Wait for the ministers to genuflect or bow (again do not bow) and carry the book at chest level back into the sacristy. Place the Gospel book back in its protective box in the cupboard.

## COMMENTATORS

If you are unable to commentate on your rostered week, please make arrangements for someone else to replace you.

Mark your name off on the reader's roster in the sacristy and make your presence known to the priest or acolyte. Ask the acolyte to turn on the microphones if not already done so.

*If you are a Commentator and find it difficult to walk up and down the steps, ask the acolyte or other person to bring the microphone down from the steps and in front of the chair. Do not stand on the Sanctuary from the beginning of Mass up until the Gospel.*

Before Mass take the dark green folder with you to your seat at the organ side of the church (The colour of the folder may change depending of the Liturgical Season). Check the microphone is adjusted to your height and turn the microphone on. Make sure you are facing towards the assembly and the priest. If the microphone is not on, go back to the sacristy and ask the acolyte to turn it on. Read through all the introductions and prayers on the sheet and look over the notices.

When it is time for mass to begin look over to the foyer to see if the Ministers are ready to begin. When the priest or acolyte give a hand signal they are ready, approach the commentator's microphone and begin the introduction to the Mass with a welcoming tone. After the introduction stand by the seat at the foot of the steps or return to your seat.

After the Opening Prayer approach the microphone. Wait for the reader to position themselves and begin the introduction to the first reading. Return to the seat at the foot of the steps.

If there is no Cantor (singer) to sing the responsorial psalm, read the response and motion to the assembly to repeat. Begin leading the psalm for the assembly to read all the verses together and all at once with you. At the end repeat the response. Also, lead the Gospel Acclamation. (7am & 6pm Sunday Masses)

Wait a few moments before beginning the introduction to the second reading. Return to the seat at the foot of the steps until the end of the reading, then after the reading you may return to your seat with the reader. (This is so there is no distraction during the proclamation.)

Prayers of the Faithful – before the Creed has finished approach the foot of the steps, usually when the altar server moves to the Priest to hold the book. At the end of the Creed walk up to the microphone, wait while the priest says the introduction to the intercessions. Read the prayers and pause after each prayer so it may be registered in the people's minds before saying "Lord, hear us". Do not rush the prayers. After you have said all the prayers stay positioned until the priest has concluded the prayers and he sits down. Return to your seat.

Notices – After the Reflection Hymn, or silent reflection if no hymn is sung, approach the microphone and read out the notices. This is an opportunity to ad lib a little if you can, bringing out

your personality. Don't just read them in a monotone but reflect the needs that are asked. Return to your seat after these notices have been read.

Return the green folder back to the sacristy after Mass, ready for the next commentator at the next Mass.

#### **READERS AND COMMENTATORS**

*As with all ministries take on ownership and a role of leadership, with confidence and knowledge of what you are doing.*

*'Break Open The Word' Years A,B,C are an excellent resource to have as the Jerusalem Bible readings we use are printed out with suggested guidelines of how to read the readings beside each reading. These may be ordered through our office, or purchased at Pauline Bookshop in the city, Mustard Seed at Lidcombe, or online from The Liturgical Commission Brisbane.*

