

THE MINISTRY OF LECTORS By Austin Flemming

Yours is a share in the work of the Lord's Spirit who opens our hearts to God's holy word. Yours is the task of telling our family story, the story of salvation. Yours is to proclaim the true and saving word of God. You are the messenger of God's love for us. Your task is to proclaim a word that challenges, confronts and captures our hearts. You proclaim a word that heals and comforts and consoles. Yours is the ministry of the table of God's word, which feeds the hunger and the longing of our hearts for truth. Yours is to offer the story of the "great things that Lord has done for us" that we might turn to the table of Eucharist with good cause to give thanks and praise. Yours is nothing less than the ministry of the Lord's voice calling out in the midst of God's people.

Come to your work from your personal prayer, praying that the Spirit will open your heart to what you proclaim. Prepare the word which is yours to speak: Study the scriptures, understand the passage, let it dwell deep within you.

Come to your work in awesome reverence of the word you proclaim: It is the Lord's word. Come to your ministry as one judges and saved by the word you speak. Anyone can read the scriptures in public; only the believer can proclaim them.

Approach the ambo, the table of the Lord's word, as you would the Lord himself: with reverence and awe.

Handle the book of the Lord's word with great care: It is a tabernacle of the Lord's presence. Let your eyes fall often on the faces of the assembly: They are the body of the Lord whose word you proclaim.

Let the Lord's peace settle in your heart, that your voice may be clear and steady.

Let your voice echo the sound of the word with conviction, with gentleness, with strength, and with wonder.

Remember that the story you tell is filled with a drama you need not supply but must always convey.

Like the prophet, you will sometimes proclaim what no one wants to hear; remember always your own need to hear the hard saying and never imagine that your ministry places you above what you proclaim.

If you are the best of the parish lectors, be gentle in helping others to improve.

If you are the least of the parish lectors, seek out that help which other can give.

If you do not know how well you read – ask:

Be grateful for constructive criticism and humbled by any praise you receive.

Every lector wants to read at the Easter Vigil, but not all will be assigned:

Be patient in waiting your turn and be nourished by the work that other proclaim.

Let no minister of the word think that there is nothing left to learn:

another commentary and another workshop cannot but help the open mind and heart.

When your brothers and sisters praise and that you for your work, take delight in the work they have heard and rejoice in the work the Lord has accomplished through you. Be faithful in the work you do, for through it the Lord saves his people