

*Parishioners need to discover whether this is the correct ministry for them and this applies equally to experienced and inexperienced readers. It is to be hoped that the information here will help people to discern their ministry and encourage a deeper understanding of the Word - as we need to submit to the Word in order to know God.*

*There needs to be a balance between physical and spiritual preparation: a strong personal faith is essential together with excellent technical skills to ensure that the Word will be proclaimed to the best of our ability - both spiritually and technically.*



**Sets of the complete cycle of mass books are available to readers to enable them to ensure thorough preparation before the celebration of a specific Mass.**

**An effective way to prepare Sunday readings is to attend the Lectio Divina sessions held on Thursday evenings where the readings are discussed and their meaning explored.**

**Should you have any questions or want some help or guidance with the preparation of passages don't hesitate to phone me on 07557 125306 or contact me at [elizabeth.ward@rowansbank.co.uk](mailto:elizabeth.ward@rowansbank.co.uk) and I will do my best to help. I am happy to run practice sessions for anyone in the 30 minutes between the masses on a Sunday.**



## The Ministry of the Word

In the beginning was the Word...

St Teresa of Lisieux, Lexden

**Introduction:** This is a wonderful ministry for those who are able to undertake it. The notes and pointers here are drawn from Christine Hammersley's Training Day which she led on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2011.

**Basic information:** Every reader should prepare all readings in advance of the celebration of the Mass so that there is a deep understanding of the content as well as the interrelatedness of the passages and the psalm.

- On arrival check that the correct reading is on the ambo.
- Sit as near to the front as possible – nothing should detract from the celebration of the Mass - all servers, readers, ministers should move smoothly into position.
- Walk in a purposeful way to the centre and bow to the altar - which is our focus - and move to the ambo.
- Aim for a simple and natural delivery.
- **Tension is the main enemy of good reading but can be avoided by preparation.**

- **Practice posture** - needs to be relaxed yet alert – stand with feet slightly apart to be perfectly balanced – never lock the knees, it will cause tension. Waist should be drawn in to ensure breathing comes from the diaphragm; shoulders need to be open and down; chin should be level and the head held steady.
- **Reading ahead** is necessary in order to make some eye contact, but refrain from staring directly at individuals, focus on and around the clock to include the whole congregation as your audience.
- **Breathing** needs to be intercostal (low chest) in order to have control of the reading, not clavicular (high chest) which is higher and reveals tension. Check your breathing by placing your hands across the base of your rib-cage so that tips of the fingers are just touching. When breathing is intercostal and the lungs are filled, the rib-cage expands and fingers move apart. This occurs naturally when lying down so can be checked in this position. (It is also healthier to breathe in this way.) Shallow

breathing makes reading long sentences particularly difficult.

- **Vocal Expression:** as the voice is an instrument there is an infinite range of vocal expression although most readers use a very limited range. When preparing passages it is useful to experiment using different ranges as the most important thing is to get the sense of the passage across to the congregation.
- **6 Vocal facets:**
  - Pitch – used to denote different characters and moods
  - Pace – read so that the key words will be slower (emphasised) than the rest
  - Power – project the voice even when using a microphone
  - Pause – used for sense and dramatic impact
  - Inflection – use of upward and downward glides to ensure correct interpretation
  - Tone – gives colour to convey emotion and allows a mental picture to be clearly conveyed.

**Practise tongue-twisters to improve your diction, articulation and delivery.**