

Lector Guidelines — Our Lady Help of Christians

1. Spiritual & Practical Preparation

- Use the parish-preferred readings (you should also have been provided with a workbook).
- Practice aloud at home—focus on clarity and pacing.
- Check pronunciations ahead of time (biblical names, locations, etc).
- Helpful website for visual and audio: <https://bible.usccb.org>

2. Arrival & Check-In

- Arrive **at least 15 minutes early**.
- Check in with the celebrant (s) in the sacristy.
- Confirm:
 - If a cantor/singer is present, or if you will be doing the opening and concluding announcements as well as the responsorial psalm.
 - That Readings are opened to the correct page on the ambo.
 - Whether you are also reading the **Prayers of the Faithful**, or if a deacon is present. If you are reading the petitions, review the announcements and names.
- Look over the ambo setup and adjust the microphone height if needed. **PLEASE BE AWARE THE MICROPHONE IS ON PRIOR TO THE START OF MASS AND ALL CAN BE HEARD** on the live stream at home.

3. Approaching the Sanctuary

- If you are entering the mass from the back of the church and processing in with the celebrant, wait for the bell to ring, the assembly to stand and the altar server (s) to begin to process, if no altar server present, wait for bell to ring and congregation to stand and begin to walk slowly to the altar. Do not carry a purse or car keys (this can be distracting). You should be carrying a missalette so that you may join in the singing of the entrance hymn.
- You may either sit in the front pew prior to the start of mass or you may process up with the celebrant and altar server(s). If you process in, please be positioned behind the altar servers (if present) and in front of the celebrant. If you choose to process in with the celebrant and there are no altar servers present, you may begin to walk up the aisle once the cantor begins to sing.
 - If already in the sanctuary line, follow the lead of the celebrant (bow with celebrant) once you arrive at the altar. If there is an altar server or servers attempt to stand on the other side of the celebrant when standing at the foot of the altar, not all lined up to the left of the celebrant - it appears to look unbalanced.

4. Proclaiming the Readings

- After the opening prayer, and after the priest and cantor have been seated, you may process to the ambo, for the first reading.
- Begin clearly: *A reading from...* **DO NOT** say “*Our first reading is _____*”
- Use a **measured, conversational pace**—OLHC’s acoustics carry well, so avoid rushing.
- Keep your eyes up periodically to engage the assembly.
- Pause briefly at natural breaks and before the conclusion.
- End firmly and pause before you say: *The Word of the Lord.*”

5. Responsorial Psalm

- At OLHC, the psalm is typically sung by the cantor. If a cantor is not present you will need to flow from the first reading to the responsorial psalm.
- If asked to read it:
 - After finishing the first reading and saying “The Word of the Lord”, observe a clear pause.
 - Do NOT announce the words “Our responsorial psalm is _____” before reciting it. This is an integral part of the liturgy of the word, and the congregation is already expected to know it follows the first reading. Announcing the title can draw unnecessary attention to the lector rather than the Word of God.

Second Reading

- If the cantor has been present and concluded the responsorial psalm, pause for a moment of silence, before approaching the ambo for the second reading. Begin by stating the source as written in the Lectionary (i.e. “A reading for the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans”). Avoid adding phrasing like “The second reading is...”.
- After you have concluded the second reading, please turn the page so that the celebrant is on the page of the gospel and does not need to turn pages upon arriving at the ambo.

6. Prayers of the Faithful

- In order to eliminate a long pause before you begin the prayers, please walk to the ambo when we get to the words “We believe in One, Holy, Catholic and apostolic church...” during the creed. This way, you will be ready to begin the Prayers immediately after the celebrant says the opening prayer.
 - Maintain a steady rhythm.
 - Pause after each petition to allow the congregation’s response.
 - Confirm prior to the start of the mass how a name, such as deceased person, should be properly pronounced.
 - Guidelines dictate that the lector waits at the ambo while the priest says the concluding prayer, only departing after the final “Amen” has been spoken, ensuring the full prayer is completed respectfully.

7. Movement & Timing

- After finishing, **step away calmly**—don't rush.
- Return to your seat, either back on the altar or in the front row.
- Stay attentive for the rest of the Liturgy of the Word.

8. Dress & Presence

- OLHC tends toward **business casual to dressy modest attire**:
 - Avoid distracting accessories. Do not process up or down with car keys or handbag.
- Stand confidently, but naturally—no exaggerated gestures.

9. Microphone & Sound Tips

- The church sound system is sensitive:
 - Speak **directly into the mic**, about 6–8 inches away.
 - Don't tap or blow into it—ask for help if it's not working.
- Project with your voice; don't rely entirely on amplification.
- Please be aware that the microphone is turned on before and after mass and will pick up all conversations near the microphone and live stream out to those at home.

10. Parish-Specific Culture

- OLHC has a **reverent but welcoming tone**—aim for warmth without theatrics.
- Many parishioners are long-time members, so clarity and consistency are appreciated.
- If unsure about anything, please ask Father Janton for clarification.

11. Common Tips

- Watch for seasonal differences:
 - **Advent/Lent** may have slightly different pacing or solemnity.
 - Special liturgies (holy days) may include extra instructions.

If you'd like, I can walk you through the **exact flow of a Mass at OLHC step-by-step** or help you rehearse an upcoming Sunday reading so it sounds natural in that space. I highly recommend watching yourself back on a livestream to see how your pacing, pronunciations, etc. sound.

If you are in need of a replacement and you have attempted to get a substitute to no avail, please text my cell phone: 215.855.5523 so that I may try to fill the opening. In the same regard, if you are attending a mass and have noticed that a lector is not present, please offer your services.