

## DEEPENING YOUR LOVE FOR THE SCRIPTURES

Worshipping the Eucharist outside of Mass is a way of deepening our appreciation of Christ's gift of his Body and Blood. In a similar way it is appropriate that Scriptures should themselves sometimes form the centre of our acts of worship. There are a variety of ways of praying the Scriptures, both for individuals and groups, such as *Lectio divina* and the Ignation meditation. (Google it!)

## RESOURCES

Over recent years the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has issued a range of documents which provide an introduction to the Church's teaching on the Mass and the Scriptures, and on ministry in the Church.

*One Bread One Body.* This teaching document on the Eucharist in the life of the Church seeks to help Catholics to a greater understanding of the Mass and the Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. [www.cbcew.org.uk/CBCEW-Home/Publications/One-Bread-One-Body-1998](http://www.cbcew.org.uk/CBCEW-Home/Publications/One-Bread-One-Body-1998)

*The Gift of Scripture.* This teaching document introduces how we might read the Old and New Testaments, learning to more deeply hear and live by the word of God. [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Scripture/GoS.pdf](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Scripture/GoS.pdf)

*Celebrating the Mass.* This pastoral introduction offers a resource to help the Church consider how it prepares, celebrates and lives from the Mass. [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/GIRM/Documents/CTM.pdf](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/GIRM/Documents/CTM.pdf)

*The Sign We Give.* This report has been approved by the Bishops' Conference and issued to encourage the Church in England and Wales to think more deeply and imaginatively about the theology and practice of collaborative ministry. [www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Home/News/CBCEW-Publications/The-Sign-We-Give-1995/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Home/News/CBCEW-Publications/The-Sign-We-Give-1995/(language)/eng-GB)

*One Bread, One Body; The Gift of Scripture; and Celebrating the Mass* are published by the Catholic Truth Society, [www.cts-online.org.uk](http://www.cts-online.org.uk). *The Sign We Give* is published by Matthew James Publishing Ltd.

This document and others in the series can be found on our website: <http://stmaryandstpaul.org.uk/> These have been produced based on a series of resources prepared by the **Westminster LITURGY Commission** who kindly agreed to its use to support the continuing formation of liturgical ministers in the parishes of St Mary and St Paul. The originals and other resources can be found on their website: <http://redow.org.uk/diocese/liturgy/>

# LAY MINISTERS OF THE WORD

*An introduction for commissioned ministers of the  
Word in the parishes of St Mary's, Dukinfield and St  
Paul's, Hyde*



## MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

All ministry in the Church is ordered to the building up of the Body of Christ. It is there to assist humankind to enter more fully into the communion of love that is God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The focus of all liturgical ministry is to assist people's communion with God through their fruitful participation in the worship of the Church. The ministry of the Word is executed so that others might more clearly understand and be fed by the living word of God.

## MINISTERING THE WORD TO THE CHURCH

Ministers of the Word proclaim the Word of God bringing it to the members of the Church, enabling them to hear it spoken to them and assisting them to receive it with a deeper knowledge and love of the Lord.

When we hear the scriptures proclaimed at Mass, we very rarely hear passages that we have not heard before. The Sunday readings are proclaimed from a three year cycle and the Weekday readings from a two year cycle. Readings at weddings and funerals and other rituals are drawn from a still more restricted lectionary.

We do not need to be informed – for these are readings already familiar to us; we do need for this word to be newly ‘performed’, to become a reality in our midst, to be truly the Lord speaking to us, calling us to communion with him.

Ritual language is not concerned with hearing something new. It is concerned with expressing the familiar and hearing it anew each time the ritual is celebrated.

*Aelred R. Rosser. A Well-Trained Tongue. Page 42*

## WHAT ARE LAY MINISTERS OF THE WORD?

Lay Ministers of the Word are members of the faithful who have been commissioned to proclaim the Word of God. These will be people who have been carefully chosen and prepared to exercise this ministry.

## WHEN AND WHY?

The richness in the quantity and variety of the Lectionary challenges those who are called upon to proclaim the Scriptures at Mass. It also challenges

those hearing it. Having different ministers proclaim the Word brings variety and assists the assembly to appreciate the genre and context.

A Lay Minister can be used to assist both during and outside the Mass:

- Proclaim the first and second readings: either one minister, or if there are sufficient ministers available, one for each reading
- Lead the responsorial psalm, if it is not sung
- Carry the Book of Gospels in the procession to the altar, if there is no deacon present
- Announce the intentions in the General Intercessions, if there is no deacon present
- Lead the Gospel Acclamation either in song or spoken
- Leading or supporting a Scripture prayer group
- Assist at a celebration of the Word and Holy Communion, in the absence of a priest

## MINISTERING WITH CONVICTION AND REVERENCE

Guidance in some of the practical aspects of the ministry will be found in Proclaiming the Word of God, another leaflet in this series. Underlying everything there should be the prayerfulness and reverence of the minister. Of particular importance is the way a minister prepares for service and the following thoughts may also be helpful:

- Desire to be responsive to the Lord in your thoughts, in your words and in your feelings
- Be sure to understand in advance when and what you are reading
- Be on time and try arriving ten minutes before the beginning of Mass to check everything is ready and allow for any last minute changes
- Wait for the congregation to be ready before you begin, pause when you reach the ambo and allow the congregation to become attentive
- Ensure there is a silent pause for meditation or prayer after the reading
- Be consistent with other ministers in your approach to and departure from the ambo
- If you are entering or leaving the sanctuary during the service, stop at the bottom step pause and bow, before continuing to the ambo or returning to your seat.