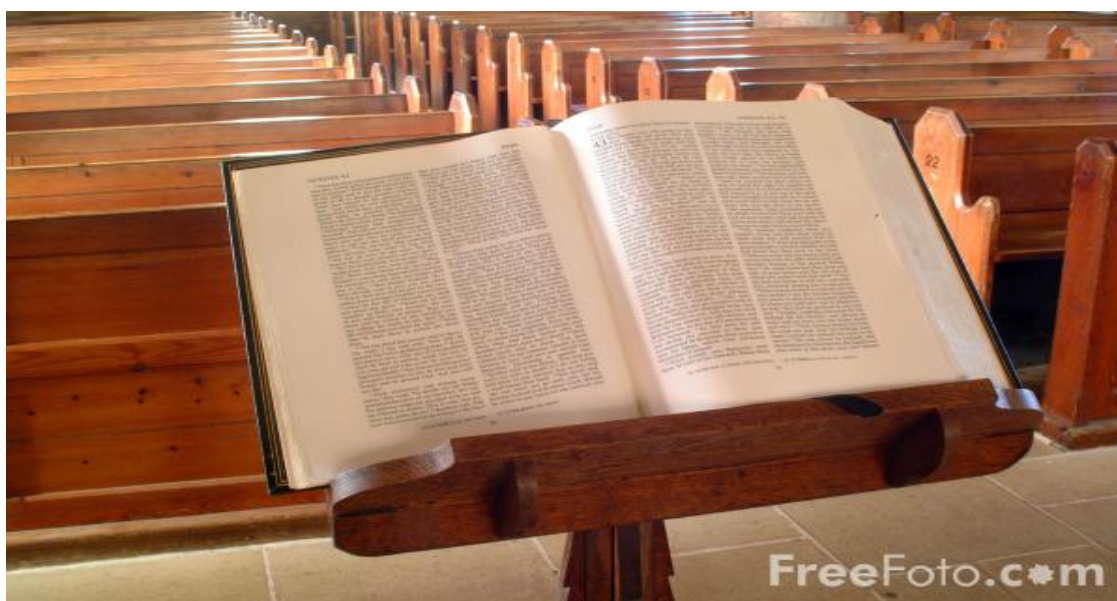


## READING IN CHURCH

« ...whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. » Romans 15: 1-6



Reading in church is a responsibility and a great privilege. We bring the word of God to each person in the congregation.

The Eucharist provides the nourishment of the sacrament and the reading provides the nourishment of the word.

The reader is the “storyteller” in the Mass and a dynamic, expressive and sincere reading of God’s word can release meaning into the lives of each member of the congregation.

An effective reading helps in facilitating the interaction between the message and the lives of the faithful.

## BEFORE YOU READ

- Start your preparation in good time.
- Read through the text and check for any difficult names of places and people e.g. Xanthicus (Zan-thih-kuhs) or Zaphenath-Paneah (ZAF-ee-nath-pan-EE-uh), audio versions of the Bible on the Internet can help here.
- Practise **ALoud** from the start.
- Consider the context of the scripture.
- Ask yourself:

Who is speaking?

Where are they speaking?

Who is the speaker addressing and in what circumstances? Am I able to identify with any of the characters?

What is the reading teaching us?

- Pray about your reading.
- Consider your dress-code (clothing and jewellery should never distract from the reading.)
- Arrive in good time and check the physical setting (ambo, lectionary, size of building, steps, microphone position e.t.c.)
- Sit near the front.
- Walk slowly to the ambo, but in good time. Bow at the bottom of the steps.

- Make any adjustments required for the microphone, compose yourself and take your time.
- Introduce the reading, look at the congregation, pause and wait until everyone is settled and attending.

### **DURING THE READING**

- Think about your posture, stand up straight and don't lean into the microphone. Plant your feet and imagine you are being pulled up by a string on your head.
- Use inter-costal diaphragmatic breathing because it.....

slows your heart rate down and calms you physically

provides oxygen to the brain and keeps you sharp and alert

aids posture and appearance, avoiding the "caved-in" look

supports the voice to the end of sentences where important words often come

helps you to appear confident and in control (rather than sounding breathy )

reduces nervousness

### **THROUGHOUT THE READING CONSIDER:**

- Pitch- too high, too low?

- Pace - too fast, too slow?
- Pause - pauses give the congregation time to reflect
- Projection- can you be heard at the back of a crowded church?
- Inflection - rise and fall of the voice avoids monotone
- Tone - the 'colour' or emotional quality of your voice
- Stress and Emphasis – think which words and phrases need to be emphasised

(All of the above creates variety and avoids monotone.)

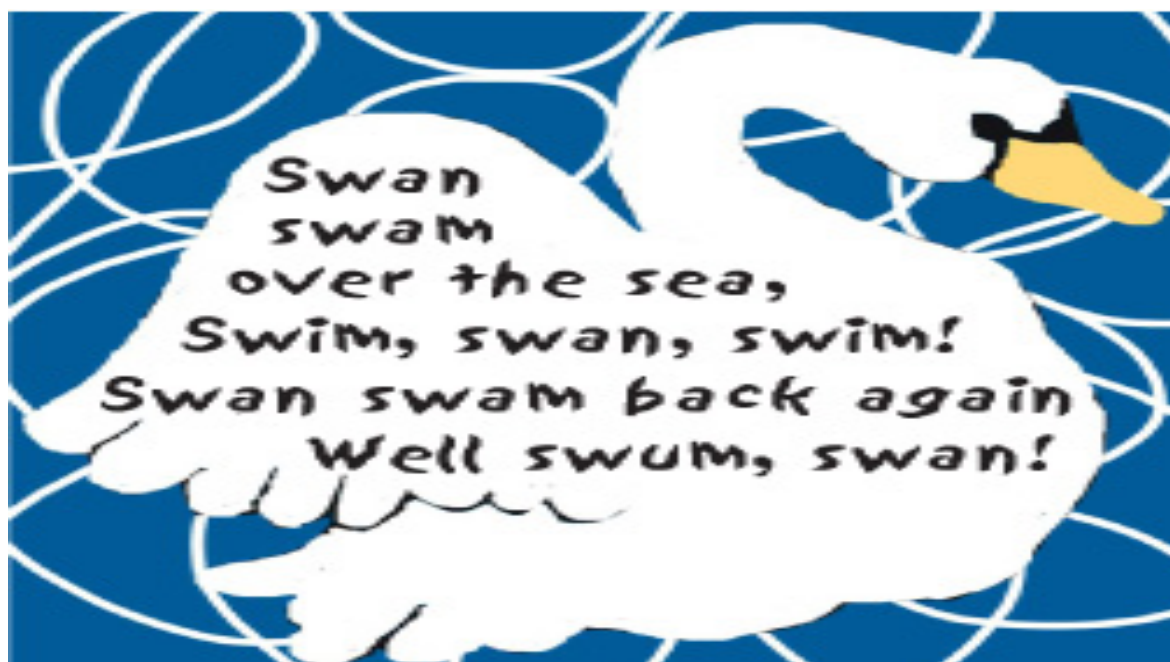
- Eye-contact - let them see the witness of your faith in your eyes
- Body Language – give yourself room to breathe, look like you are in control of yourself and of your material
- Sincerity – it cannot be over-stated and it cannot be faked

## **VOCAL CLARITY**

Vowels and Consonants (vowels help in making you heard and consonants help in making you understood)

Phrasing will give sense to the reading (divide words into clusters, observe the paragraphing and the punctuation)

**TONGUE TWISTERS CAN BE A GREAT HELP WITH VOCAL CLARITY**



For example:

Long legged ladies last longer

A box of biscuits, a box of mixed biscuits and a biscuit mixer

Red leather, yellow leather

She sells sea shells on the sea shore

Three grey geese in green fields grazing

Which wristwatches are Swiss wristwatches?

### **AFTER THE READING**

Assess yourself:

- how did I do?
- how can I improve?

Seek the opinion of others and **PRACTISE, PRACTISE, PRACTISE!**