

Understanding the Mass Readers

Each week, we are explaining the different parts of the Mass - what is in the church, what we use in the Mass, and why (and how) we celebrate Mass the way we do.

*Today our topic is our **Readers**.*

When you come to church for Mass on a Sunday, the first person you will hear speak is the **reader**, or **lector** - from the Latin word, meaning “one who reads”.

While readers often share important notices before Mass begins, the most important role of the reader is during the Mass itself. In fact, this role is so important that within the Catholic Church it is considered to be a ministry, and anyone who is preparing to become a priest will be appointed to this ministry as part of their preparations for the priesthood.



The role of the reader during Mass is to proclaim the Word of God, by reading the First Reading and the Second Reading. Readers may also read the Psalm (if it is not sung by the choir) and lead the Prayers of the Faithful (also known as the bidding prayers).

The Church chooses the readings throughout the year very carefully. Over time you will hear readers convey the message of salvation through narratives, the poetry of the psalms, and prophetic oracles and parables.

God speaks to us - the congregation - through the readers. The impact of God’s message can depend significantly on the conviction and delivery of the readers who share this message with us.

The patron saint of readers is Saint Bede, an English monk and scholar who lived in the seventh century and was one of the greatest teachers and writers of the Middle Ages.

This week, we invite you to pray together as a family:

God our Father, You inspired Saint Bede to be a great teacher and writer who delighted in the words of Your knowledge. Guide us to listen to and treasure Your words as he did. Help us to know You and to follow Your ways, and to love You with all our hearts. We ask this in Your name. Amen.



¹ *Celebrating the Mass*, Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England & Wales (2005); *Ministeria Quaedam*, Pope Paul VI (1973)