

GIRL (General Introduction of the Roman Lectionary)

49. Liturgical tradition assigns responsibility for the biblical readings in the celebration of Mass to ministers: to readers and the deacon. But when there is no deacon or another priest present, the priest celebrant is to read the gospel and when there is no reader present, all the readings.

51. The reader has his own proper function in the eucharistic celebration and should exercise this even though ministers of a higher rank may be present. The reader's ministry, which is conferred through a liturgical rite, must be held in respect. When there are instituted readers available, they are to carry out their office at least on Sundays and major feasts, especially at the principal Mass of the day. These readers may also be given responsibility for assisting in the planning of the liturgy of the word, and, to the extent necessary, of seeing to the preparation of others of the faithful who may be appointed on a given occasion to serve as readers at Mass.

GIRM (General Instruction of the Roman Missal)

101. In the absence of an instituted lector, other lay people may be deputed to proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture, people who are truly suited to carrying out this function and carefully prepared, so that by their hearing the readings from the sacred texts the faithful may conceive in their hearts a sweet and living affection for Sacred Scripture.

Here are our questions:

1. What legitimate circumstances call for a reader who is not an instituted lector (but is trained by an instituted lector) to read?
2. Is there a process that a priest should employ to determine whether a reader who is not an instituted lector is 'truly suited to carrying out this function and carefully prepared?'
3. How is a reader who is not an instituted lector to be trained?
4. If a congregation does not have an instituted lector, is it a necessity on the part of the priest to find a congregant well-suited and willing to apply for institution as a lector?