

Online training to turn Ministers of the Word from readers to proclaimers

Ministers of the Word are commonly referred to as readers in Australian parishes, but liturgical educator Cathy Murrowood says that when this ministry is performed, something more profound than reading words from a page is taking place.

Ms Murrowood, who will lead Australian Catholic University's new training program for Ministers of the Word next month, says being a reader is not about reading, but proclaiming Sacred Scripture in a way that penetrates hearts.

"It's not like reading a shopping list, which anybody can do," Ms Murrowood said.

"Proclaiming the Word is much more sophisticated because the Minister of the Word is a vessel of the Holy Spirit. Proclaiming Scripture and the Prayer of the Faithful well increases people's capacity to respond to what they hear, which can transform and change their lives."

The ACU Centre for Liturgy's four-week online training program will teach new and experienced Ministers of the Word practical skills, such as timing, enunciation, the use of emphasis and silence, and the appropriate pronunciation of Biblical words, names, and places.

"These are techniques for more effective proclamation so that when people hear the Word of God they can respond in their hearts," Ms Murrowood said.

Completed over four weekly online modules with live classroom sessions, the training program also offers a step-by-step guide on how to write the Prayer of the Faithful, and how to proclaim the Word at key celebrations such as the Easter and Pentecost Vigils.

Supported by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, the ACU Centre for Liturgy's online pastoral training programs are offered in collaboration with local Catholic worshipping communities and include a practical training session with the local pastor or delegate. The program is open to all Australian parishes but can be accommodated for communities outside Australia.

Ms Murrowood says unlike some other liturgical ministries, every single parish needs Ministers of the Word.

"The people of God proclaim the Word of God whenever they gather for Mass, this means that quite a few ministers of the Word are needed by all communities," Ms Murrowood said.

"The need for training Ministers of the Word then is quite significant."

"If every parish could give their ministers the gift of these programs, what wonderful liturgical experiences our communities would have. Well trained ministers make a huge difference to our experience of liturgy."

Ms Murrowood said the Church has always recommended that liturgical ministers receive formal training.

"When we're talking about specific training for liturgical ministry, there's been a big emphasis by Pope Francis in the last couple of years. He has encouraged us to go back and do more ministry training," Ms Murrowood said.

"The Plenary Council also highlighted the need more training, and the Church's liturgical teachings and documents for the last 50 years have always emphasised the importance of forming people for liturgical ministry."

"The ACU Centre for Liturgy makes liturgical training more accessible, and more comprehensive than ever before, especially considering that in the last few years training has been inaccessible due to the pandemic."

ACU Centre for Liturgy director Professor Clare Johnson said the Centre's suite of pastoral training programs offered one of Australia's most comprehensive educational resources for new and experienced liturgical ministers.

"Our online training program for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion has had a great impact on parishes around Australia, and adding this comprehensive and enjoyable new program designed specifically for

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Ministers of the Word to our range of offerings will only enhance parish celebrations further,” Professor Johnson said.

“These effective and expertly-crafted training programs support the ACU Centre for Liturgy’s aim to advance the liturgical apostolate in Australia and beyond. We are delighted with the enthusiasm and interest in these programs from parishioners who are committed to improving the celebration of liturgy in their local communities.”

Registrations for the Ministers of the World online training program are now open. Visit the [ACU Centre for Liturgy website](#) for details on how to register.

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