

Preparing for Tonsure & Ordination as a Reader

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. - 1 Timothy 4:12



Preparation

- With your Pastor's and Bishop's blessing, work with your pastor, spiritual father, an experienced Reader, and other clergy.
- Learn about the office: historically, theologically, and practically.
- Obtain a cassock; learn its meaning and care and when to wear it.
- Review the tonsuring service; study & pray through it weekly (Antiochian service below), and annually on the anniversary of your tonsure.
- Learn the service books, the services, their structure, and how to arrange them.
- Learn how to lead a 'reader's service', especially Vespers, Typika, Matins, and Paraklesis.
- Learn to read, intone, and chant the tones, and sing in the choir. (A good introduction to Neo-Byzantine Chant is the "Glory to Thee" podcast: <http://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/glorytothee>)
- Write a little article about readers and the other (minor) orders for the bulletin.
- Make a pilgrimage (at least overnight) to a monastery.
- Learn the process of opening & closing the church, including lighting & extinguishing candles.

Shortly Before

- Get on the epistle reading schedule.
- About 6 weeks in advance, remind your pastor to remind the Bishop.
- Fast and pray carefully the night and morning before the tonsuring.
- Confess your sins prior to tonsuring.
- Remember the passage the Bishop selects for you to read.
- Arrange photographer and accommodating seating for family.

Resources:

<http://www.asna.ca/resources/readers-guide.pdf> - Reflects Russian Practice but still very helpful

<http://www.dowama.org/node/26> - Bishop BASIL's note on services without a priest

<https://goodguyswearblack.org/holy-orders/minor-orders/reader/>

https://orthodoxwiki.org/Minor_orders

Byzantine Chant workshop:

<http://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/glorytothee>

Ongoing

- Read the Scriptures daily (OT, Psalms, Epistle, and Gospel).
- Read Patristic commentaries on the Scripture.
- Attend sacred music conferences and workshops (Sacred Music Institute and others).
- Assist in the educational and liturgical ministry.
- Study vocal techniques for protecting one's voice while projecting & enunciating beautifully for many years.
- Always get the pastor's blessing when you see him and ask (or anticipate) how you can help.

Prepared by Fr Noah Bushelli, March 2017.



Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. - Psalm 119:105

The Tonsuring of a Reader

In preparation for the tonsuring, the candidate shall have a cassock by the day of the tonsuring. On the eve of his tonsuring, the candidate shall attend Vespers, and, after having a light supper, begin his Eucharistic Fast. During that time, he shall interact as little as possible with anyone and spend that time praying and preparing himself for the tonsuring. Married candidates shall refrain from marital relations during this time. He shall have his confession heard either after Vespers or during Matins on the day of the tonsuring.

On the day of the tonsuring, following the Great Doxology, but before the Troparion before the Divine Liturgy before the Divine Liturgy, the candidate is led by the Bishop's Assistant to the center of the solea in front of the Bishop. He makes three (3) prostrations toward the Holy Altar. Then, he turns and makes one (1) prostration toward the Bishop and stops on his knees. The Bishop lays his hand on the candidate head.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Bishop: O Lord who enlightenest all created beings with the light of thy wonders, and knowest the intent of every man before it is formed, and strengthenest those who are desirous of serving thee: Do thou, the same Lord, array in thy fair and spotless vesture this thy servant (*NAME*), who desireth to become a Reader before thy holy mysteries, that he may be illuminated, and that attaining unto the age to come he may receive the incorruptible crown of life, and rejoice with Thine elect in bliss everlasting. For blessed is thy name and glorified is thy Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages, Amen.

The Bishop tonsures the candidate, saying:

Bishop: In the name of the Father;

People: Amen.

Bishop: And of the Son;

People: Amen.

Bishop: And of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

The new Reader kisses the Bishop's right hand and stands. The Bishop takes the cassock, blesses it and, with the help of the Bishop's Assistant, puts the cassock on the new Reader. The new Reader kneels, again, before the Bishop.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Bishop: O Lord God Almighty, elect this thy servant (*NAME*), and sanctify him and enable him with all wisdom and understanding to exercise the study and reading of thy divine words, preserving him in blamelessness of life. Through the mercies and bounties of love towards mankind of Thine Only-Begotten Son, with whom thou art blessed, together with Thine All-Holy and good and Life-Giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages, Amen.

The new Reader stands and kisses the Bishop's right hand. The Bishop presents the new Reader the Epistle Book. The new Reader faces the people and reads the randomly-selected passage. At the conclusion of the reading, the Bishop blesses him, saying:

Bishop: Peace be to thee that readest.

The Bishop addresses the new Reader, saying:

Bishop: My son (*NAME*), the first degree of the Priesthood is that of Reader. It behooveth thee, therefore, to peruse the divine Scriptures daily, to the end that the hearers, regarding thee, may receive edification, that thou, in nowise shaming Thine election, mayest prepare thyself for a higher degree. For by a chaste, holy and upright life thou shalt gain the favor of the God of loving kindness and shalt render thyself worthy of a greater ministry, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory unto ages of ages, Amen.

The Bishop blesses the new Reader, saying:

Bishop: Blessed is the Lord! Lo, the servant of God, (*NAME*) has become a Reader of the most holy Church of (*NAME*), in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Following any words of wisdom or instruction from the Bishop, the new Reader takes his place among the Readers. The Troparion before the Divine Liturgy begins and the first Deacon begins the Dialogue with the Bishop in the usual manner.