

IX. LITURGICAL MUSIC GUIDELINES

A. INTRODUCTION

B. THE PLACE OF MUSIC IN EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATIONS

1. Choice of Sacred Liturgical Music
2. Music and the Liturgical Structure of the Eucharistic Celebration
3. Liturgical Celebrations with Children

C. ROLES IN LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

1. The Clergy
2. The Deacon
3. The Assembly
4. The Choir
5. The Psalmist and Cantor
6. Musicians and Instruments
7. The Pastoral Musician

D. COPYRIGHT LAW FOR MUSIC

E. MUSIC IN SACRAMENTAL CELEBRATIONS

See each section of a specific sacrament for particular music guidelines.

F. MUSIC PUBLISHERS

A. INTRODUCTION

“The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people, 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people' (1 Peter 2:9, 4-5) have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism.

“In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy the full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else. For it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 14).

In these guidelines we offer suggestions to bring about increased understanding of the ministerial function of music in the liturgy.

B. THE PLACE OF MUSIC IN EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATIONS

We, Christians, gather in liturgical assembly to express our faith in community and by expressing this faith, to renew it and deepen it. The manner in which the Eucharist is celebrated has profound effect on the faith of people. Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken it (Sing To the Lord, 5).

Music is integral to good Eucharistic celebrations. Like the liturgy of which it is part, music is ministerial and sacramental, serving to express our love for God and for each other, and deepening our faith. The many variations and styles of music available afford a broad flexibility for use in liturgy.

What is primary is the music of the assembly. If people of faith are called to express their faith in worship, then the music of the assembly takes preference over all others. There is ample room in celebrations for choirs, which serve to enhance the assembly's sense of celebration. Choirs, however, can never take to themselves the act of music-making and the song of the assembly.

Music in worship is not an end in itself, but a dimension of the full liturgical celebration. What is essential is situating the music within the framework of prayer. If the music does not contribute to the prayerful atmosphere of the assembly, then it has failed. Music is meant to unify the worshipping community.

1. Choice of Sacred Liturgical Music

In judging the appropriateness of music for the liturgy, one must examine its liturgical, pastoral, and musical qualities (STL, 126). All three judgments need to be considered together to answer the question, “Is this particular piece of music appropriate for this use in this particular liturgy?”

- a. Liturgical judgment: Is this composition capable of meeting the structural and textual requirements set forth by the liturgical books for this particular rite? (STL, 127)
 - i. Structural considerations should include the season—musical restraint during Advent and Lent; the rite or feast—songs of resurrection for funerals, hope and joy for weddings, joy and celebration for Christmas and Easter, for example. Always, the music should retain its primary responsibility of engaging human hearts in the mystery of Christ (STL, 110ff.).
 - ii. Textual elements include the ability of a musical setting to support the liturgical text and to convey meaning faithful to the teaching of the Church (STL, 128).
- b. Pastoral judgment: This judgment takes into consideration the actual community gathered to celebrate the liturgy. The musical compositions should promote the sanctification of this community, in this place, at this time. Cultural diversity must be respected, and even celebrated. The musical experience and traditions of a given liturgical assembly should be “held in proper esteem and a suitable place is to be given to it” (SC, 119). If the song expresses genuine religious sentiment, is appropriate to the liturgical action, and has appeal to the assembly, it meets requirements for use in the liturgy. Liturgically inappropriate songs are not to be used within the liturgy.
- c. Musical judgment: Is this composition technically, aesthetically, and expressively worthy? This judgment is basic and primary, and the question should be answered by competent liturgical musicians. The musician has every right to insist that the music used be good music. “To admit to the liturgy the cheap, the trite, or the musical cliché often found in secular popular songs is to cheapen the liturgy.” Specific musical styles, however, have not been adopted by the Church. Thus, the Church recognizes and welcomes the use of various styles of music to aid liturgical worship (STL, 134-136).

2. **Music and the Structure of the Eucharistic Celebration**

A clear understanding of the structure of the liturgy is necessary, along with the three judgments, when choosing and preparing music for Mass.

PRELUDE MUSIC

While the faithful assemble for worship, appropriate instrumental or choral pieces set the mood for the celebration and assist the worshippers in their preparation for prayer. Music selections should contribute to establishing a prayerful atmosphere.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

1. Entrance Song or Chant

The gathering or opening song begins the introductory rite while the priest and ministers process to the altar; the music continues until incensing is completed, if this action is included. The song or chant acknowledges Christ's presence in the community, fosters unity of those gathered together thus fulfilling their ministerial function, and introduces minds into the mystery of the liturgical feast or season. Antiphons and psalms are traditional processionalists in the Roman Liturgy. Hymns of praise are also appropriate. (See GIRM, 48.)

2. The Penitential Act

a. The Act of Penitence follows the greeting as the entire assembly prays a formula of general confession. If the *Kyrie* (Lord have mercy) is included, it is sung or said in dialogue by the assembly with the priest, choir, or cantor. Invocations, such as "Lord, you were sent to heal the contrite of heart," may be included with the *Kyrie*, which would replace the general confession.

b. During the Easter season in particular, the blessing and sprinkling of water may replace the Act of Penitence. The blessing of water may be sung, and a song accompanying the sprinkling should have an explicitly baptismal character (STL 147). The *Kyrie* is omitted if the sprinkling rite is used.

3. The *Gloria*

This ancient hymn of praise is meant to be sung, not recited, on Sundays outside Advent and Lent, on solemnities and feasts, and at special celebrations. Keep in mind that it is not sung during Advent or Lent. The text may not be replaced by another text. Settings that are through-composed give the clearest expression to the text, but the addition of refrains is permitted, provided the refrains encourage congregational participation. The *Gloria* may not be moved to a different part of the Mass (STL 148-150).

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Readings and responses from Sacred Scripture comprise the Liturgy of the Word.

1. Responsorial Psalm.

"The people make God's Word their own" by singing responses to the readings from the Sacred Scripture (STL, 152). The responsorial psalm should be sung, as a rule, and the musical setting should aid in fostering meditation on the Word of God. Usually the cantor sings the response and invites the assembly to repeat it. After singing each verse, the cantor invites the assembly to sing the refrain. The "invitation" can be indicated with a raised arm or similar gesture familiar to the assembly.

The proper or seasonal Responsorial Psalm from the *Lectionary for Mass*, with the congregation singing the response, is to be preferred (STL, 157). These Psalms have been carefully selected to complement the scriptural readings. Songs or hymns should not be used as a substitute for the Responsorial Psalm.

Psalmists/cantors should sing in such a way that does not draw attention to themselves, either because of a very beautiful voice or of very bad singing, but in a way that encourages the assembly to focus on the words. The psalm should be sung from the ambo whenever possible.

2. Gospel Acclamation

a. During most of the church year, the Alleluia with the proper verse is sung in a similar cantor/response style to the Responsorial Psalm. During Lent, alternate acclamations are used, with verses as found in the *Lectionary for Mass*. If only one reading is used before the Gospel, the acclamation may be omitted. Except during Lent, an Alleluia may be used as the response to the Psalm, which would occur just before the Gospel.

If there is a Gospel procession, the acclamation may be repeated as often as necessary (STL, 161-164).

b. The Sequence, a liturgical hymn sung before the Gospel acclamation, **is required** on Easter Sunday (*Victimae paschali lauden*) and Pentecost (*Veni Sancte Spiritus*). On the Solemnities of the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord (*Lauda Sion Salvatorem*) and Our Lady of Sorrows (*Stabat Mater*), the Sequence is optional (STL, 165). The required Sequences should be sung. The words have been set to many popular hymn tunes.

3. Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

This prayer consists of intercessions and responses. Its structure is as a litany, and may be sung in the cantor/assembly-response style.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

1. Preparation of the Gifts: Offertory Procession

Many churches customarily take up a collection from the assembly after the Prayer of the Faithful. Music is appropriate at this time and may be instrumental, choral, or include the entire assembly. In the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, a congregational hymn is preferred. After the collection, if there is one, the priest prepares the altar, and the gifts of bread and wine, and the collection if available, are brought to the altar. Music continues at least until the gifts have been placed on the altar. Even when there is no procession, music may still accompany the rites at the Offertory. Types of music may vary with local customs, the presider's preferences, and the occasion. Norms on the manner of singing are the same as for the Entrance chant (STL, 173-175).

2. Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer is the center and summit of the entire celebration (STL, 176). The dialogue between priest and assembly expresses their communion with one another in offering the Eucharistic sacrifice. To emphasize this unity, the musical elements of the prayer, especially the *Sanctus*, the Mystery of Faith, and the Great Amen should have a stylistic unity. These acclamations belong to the people and should be sung, especially on Sundays and solemnities. It is recommended that, if possible, the priest sing at least the opening dialogue and the Preface, the invitation to the Mystery of Faith, and the concluding doxology. It is not permitted to recite the Eucharistic Prayer inaudibly while the *Sanctus* is sung. Except for the people's acclamations, musical instruments should be silent during the Eucharistic Prayer (STL, 178-182).

3. Communion Rite

Before receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, the Faithful prepare their hearts and minds with a series of rites.

a. The Lord's Prayer

When the Lord's Prayer is sung, the doxology should also be sung by all. If possible, the invitation and embolism should also be sung by the priest (STL, 186).

b. Sign of Peace

The brief exchange of the Sign of Peace must not be protracted by the singing of a song (STL, 187).

c. Fraction Rite and *Agnus Dei*

The Lamb of God chant accompanies the Fraction Rite, when the priest breaks the bread into smaller pieces. Usually, it is sung by the choir or cantor with responses by the assembly. Customarily, the invocation and response (Have mercy on us) are sung or said three times, ending with "Grant us peace" as the third response. Because this litany accompanies the Fraction Rite, invocations may be repeated, or different versions used, as necessary until the conclusion of the rite. The first and final invocations are always Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*) (STL, 188).

d. Communion Song

The Communion song or chant expresses the joy of unity of those processing and receiving the Holy Sacrament. Communal singing by the assembly should be preeminent. Themes of songs suitable for the Eucharistic banquet include joy, wonder, unity, gratitude, praise, and the sharing of the Lord's Supper. To encourage participation of the faithful, it is recommended that psalms sung in the responsorial style, or songs with easily memorized refrains, be used.

Because the processional begins while the priest is receiving Communion, care should be taken to ensure that musicians have the opportunity to receive Communion. They may take turns slipping into the procession, or wait until the end of the procession.

For a lengthy procession, more than one piece may be desirable. Combinations of music for the assembly and music for choir alone may be used in this case. If a post-communion hymn is used, it should end in a timely manner, and should never draw undue attention to the choir or other musicians. A period of silent reflection after Communion is also appropriate (STL, 189-196). In the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, a Marian hymn or motet may be sung after Communion as a meditation piece.

CONCLUDING RITE

If the concluding blessing is sung by the priest, the assembly should sing the Amen. The dismissal may be sung by the deacon or priest with the assembly singing *Thanks Be to God*.

All may join in a hymn or song after the dismissal when customary. The procession of ministers should be arranged so that it finishes during the final stanza. A choral or instrumental postlude is appropriate while the assembly leaves the church. Other options include a choral or instrumental piece instead of a closing song for the assembly, or, particularly during Lent, silence (STL, 199-200).

3. Liturgical Celebrations with Children

The basic principles for music in the liturgy apply as well to children's liturgies. Musical selections should be age appropriate, seasonal, and reflect the scripture readings of the day. Care should be taken that the instruments support the singing and not over-power the children's voices. Children may also be involved in the liturgical musical roles as instrumentalist, cantor, and choir, as long as proper training and preparation have taken place. Music for children may also incorporate liturgical movement, gesture, signing, appropriate hand claps, and finger snaps. These gestures can be helpful in sung prayer for children.

Music is not to prolong or dominate the liturgy (no concerts!) but should flow throughout and give balance to the entire celebration.

Many resources are available on the Internet and from music publishers for ways to include children in liturgies and for finding songs for children.

Music instruction by the music director or choir members is an excellent way to teach children about the importance of music in the liturgy. Some churches incorporate this instruction, along with teaching songs, in Religious Education classes. Establishing children's choirs is another way to foster enthusiasm for music in the liturgy among young people.

C. ROLES IN LITURGICAL CELEBRATION

1. The Clergy lead the worshipping assembly and encourage its full, active participation by setting the example with their own full, active participation, particularly in song. The presider sings prayers and dialogues according to his capabilities. All priests should be comfortable singing their parts of the Eucharistic Prayer as noted in the *Roman Missal* (STL, 18-20).

- a. While encouraging participation with his own singing, the presider should not, however, be heard over the assembly's singing, **nor should he sing the assembly's responses to the Mystery of Faith acclamation or the Great Amen** (STL, 21).
 - b. A good pastoral musician can offer invaluable assistance to the pastor and the parish in promoting good musical liturgical prayer.
 - c. The presider should learn the simple melodies of the penitential act, gospel acclamations, preface dialogue, etc., in order to contribute to music leadership in actual celebration of the liturgy.
2. The Deacon also sets the example for the assembly by his participation in song and chants. Dialogues between deacon and assembly, various invitations in the rites, the Exsultet, Penitential Act, and the Prayer of the Faithful are opportunities for the deacon to sing as he is capable. A good music director can assist and teach the deacon in the various forms of chant and song (STL, 22-23).
 3. The Assembly - The liturgy is essentially a public prayer in which the assembly sings, prays, listens and responds to God's word, remembers what Jesus did, and gives thanks. Everything pastoral musicians and other liturgical ministers do is for the express purpose of assisting the assembly to pray well.

The music selected for the full, active participation of the assembly must be within its members' capability to sing. A repertoire of familiar songs rich in theological content can deepen the faith of the community (STL, 24-27). Good song leaders, choir and careful choices of music will assist the people in learning new songs and give them confidence in their participation.
 4. The Choir - In the *Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy* from Vatican Council II, Article 114 reads, "Choirs must be diligently promoted." Also, the *Instruction on Music in the Liturgy* states that, "the choir, because of the liturgical ministry it performs, deserves particular mention...." From these directives, the Church has given the choir an important function to perform as it contributes to the liturgical experience. The interaction between the singing of the choir and that of the assembly, especially litanies and dialogues such as the *Kyrie* and *Agnus Dei*, facilitates active participation (STL, 28).

The particular functions assigned to the choir in the liturgy are two-fold:

- a. The choir assists and strengthens the assembly's singing. It can support, nurture, and encourage the assembly's attempts especially with less familiar music. The choir can also enhance the music by adding harmonies and descants to the songs as well as to the acclamations sung by the assembly (STL, 29).
- b. The choir may sing alone those parts in the Mass not exclusively in the domain of the assembly. It can add to the liturgy of a Sunday or a feast day by providing musical settings of certain texts at the celebration of Mass. According to the *CSL*, it is a mistake to equate an assembly's active participation with mere vocal activity. Attentive listening is also a fruitful form of active participation.

The choir can create the mood for intelligent worship and reflective meditation with good choral works as preludes and for the processions. The music of the choir must always be appropriate to the liturgy.

The placement of the choir members should show their presence as a part of the worshiping community while fulfilling their particular role as liturgical ministers. Ideally, the location would enable their own full participation by being able to see and hear the Liturgy, and to interact effectively with the assembly (see STL 95-100).

5. The Psalmist and Cantor have separate roles in the liturgy, but may actually be performed by the same person. The psalmist proclaims the Psalm after the first reading and leads the assembly in singing the refrain. He or she may also intone the Gospel Acclamation and verse. Persons designated for these ministries should possess a good singing voice, know correct pronunciation, and exercise proper diction. The psalmist sings the verses of the Responsorial Psalm from the ambo or another suitable place (STL, 34-36). The location of the psalmist when not singing is near the ambo or other place of proclamation.

The cantor leads the congregational song, and when a choir is not present, engages in invocations, litany dialogues, and leads the acclamations at the end of prayers. When the assembly is comfortable and confident in singing songs and acclamations, the cantor's voice recedes and becomes part of the assembly. The location of the cantor is in front of the assembly where he or she is visible to all at worship. When not acting as psalmist, the cantor should be stationed at a lectern or music stand other than the ambo.

6. Musicians and Instruments

- a. The Organist and Other Instrumentalists - Musicians should be well qualified by training and skill. Pastoral Musicians should receive appropriate formation that is based on their baptismal call to discipleship; that grounds them in a love for and knowledge of Scripture, Catholic teaching, Liturgy, and music; and that equips them with the musical, liturgical, and pastoral skills to serve the Church at prayer (STL, 50).

Liturgy is greatly enhanced by the services of professional musicians. In no way should the generosity of volunteer musicians be downgraded, but volunteers rarely are professionals, and professionals are just as necessary in this highly technical field as they are in the classroom or at the altar. The worship of God demands the finest music obtainable. Musicians should be paid in accord with their education, their talent, and the contribution they make to the parish.

- b. The Role of Instruments - The primary role of an instrument is to accompany the singing as a support to the voices, to render participation easier, and to achieve a deeper union in the assembly. Care must be taken that the sound of the instruments does not overwhelm the voices so that it is difficult to hear the text (When a text is being proclaimed by the minister, the instruments should be silent).

The organ and other instruments can play solos to provide a setting for liturgical songs by introducing the preludes and prolonging them in postludes or to provide a setting for the celebration itself.

There are no religious instruments; there are no secular instruments. The only condition placed on the use of instruments is that they be played in a style that meets the needs of the liturgical celebration, and is in the interest both of the beauty of worship and the edification of the people.

7. The Pastoral Musician - The pastoral musician has as his/her main task the providing of a musical framework for parish liturgical celebrations. Ideally, he/she possesses the following qualities:
 - a. Thorough musicianship, including skills as a versatile organist, capable singer, well-prepared conductor and composer-in-residence.
 - b. Rich background in liturgy.
 - c. Openness to all musical forms, including contemporary forms.
 - d. Ability to be sensitive to the needs of the local community.

The duties of the pastoral musician will be determined in collaboration with the Liturgy Committee and the pastor. (See STL, 41-47.)

D. COPYRIGHT LAW FOR MUSIC

1. Rationale
Many published works are protected by national and international copyright laws, which are intended to ensure that composers, text writers, publishers and their employees receive a fair return for their work. Churches and other institutions have a legal and moral obligation to seek proper permissions and to pay for reprinting of published works when required, even if copies are intended only for the use of the congregation. (STL, 105)
2. Policy
 - a. Unless otherwise specified in the Publisher's Policy, the written permission of the copyright owner must be obtained before any text, music, or both of copyrighted materials may be reproduced by any means.
 - b. Proper acknowledgement of copyrighted materials must be given according to the directives specified by the copyright holder.
 - c. While this policy refers primarily to music, the sense is true for any copyrighted materials regardless of their character.
 - d. Copyrighted materials that have been reproduced without permission must be destroyed immediately.
 - e. Failure to comply with this policy may result in a considerable lawsuit against the parish(es) in violation thereof.

3. Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston Music Reprint Copy Guidelines

It may be helpful to think of each piece of music as you would a book in a library: each has a different title, author and publisher, so the footnote is specific to the resource.

- a. Music may be reprinted in worship aids rather than using hymnals, but certain rules apply. Please remember: permission, in the form of music licensing, is needed for **every** piece of music reprinted. This pertains to words, music, or both words and music to be reprinted.

Hymns or pieces of music listed “in the public domain” are the exception. Pay special attention that both the music and the words are, indeed, “in the public domain.”

- b. The hymn/tune/text credit notation found at the bottom of any piece of music should be kept with every piece of music reprinted. In addition to this notation, the following information should be added:

**Composer’s name, © year, publisher. All rights reserved.
Used with permission under license number XXXXXXXXXXXX.**

OR you may list the licensing information in the back of a worship aid,* keeping the hymn/tune/text credit notation with each song.

Print the copyright acknowledgment on the bottom of the first page of each reprinted hymn or song, using 6-to-8 point type.

If words and music are written by two different composers, list it as:

Text: composer’s name, © year, publisher. Tune: composer’s name, © year, publisher. All rights reserved. Used with permission under license number XXXXXXXXXXXX.

- c. If no publisher is mentioned in the credit notation, the composer holds rights to his/her own music and must be contacted to obtain permission to reprint words and/or music.

If a composer is listed, but the piece is not covered by a currently-held license agreement for which an annual fee is paid, the publisher must be contacted to obtain permission. A one-time use fee is usually involved, and is paid over and above any currently-held license agreement. This is even true of certain hymns printed in GLA or OCP hymnals.

***Example: *This Is My Father’s World* is in the public domain. *The Servant Song* by Richard Gilliard, © Scripture in Song / Mananatha! Music, administered by Music Services, is used with special permission. Tune: BEACHSPRING. All other music in this worship aid is reprinted with permission under OneLicense.net #XXXXXXX and LicenSing #XXXXXXX. All rights reserved.**

d. Most commonly, music is used under licensing agreements obtained on a yearly basis and paid annually through the following companies:

- **OneLicense.net** found online at www.onelicense.net covers GIA Publishing, Heritage, Hope, Selah, and many others listed on the home page of their web site.
- **OCP LicenSing** found online at www.licensingonline.org covers Oregon Catholic Press, New Dawn, Hope, and others.
- **World Library Publications** found online at www.wlp.jspaluch.com is a division of J.S. Paluch Company.
- **Christian Copyright Licensing International** found online at www.ccli.com offers church copyright licenses and covers many publishers.
- **Music Services** found online at www.musicservices.org covers Mercy Vineyard Publishing, Word Music, Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, Spring Hill Music Publishing, and Maranatha Music. Contacting this company is a good place to start when looking for one-time reprint permission involving an obscure title or tune not covered by the primary music licensing companies.

e. If in doubt about proceeding with the reprinting of music in a worship aid, etc., call the Office of Worship and Sacraments.

E. MUSIC IN SACRAMENTAL CELEBRATIONS

In each specific section please see a listing of appropriate musical suggestions and any specific additions or commentary as needed.

F. MUSIC PUBLISHERS

Most publishers of liturgical music will send out single copies of selections for examination (on approval) if the person receiving will pay postage, insurance fee, and guarantee a return of the copies. Many publishers offer free catalogues and selected sample copies of music. The copyright licensing agents listed above, except World Library Publications, provide extensive lists of publishers. Three of the major publishers of liturgical music are:

GIA Publications, 7404 South Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638
800-442-1358; Web: www.giamusic.com

Oregon Catholic Press, 5536 NE Hasslo, Portland, OR 97213-3638;
877-596-1653; Web: www.ocp.org; Email: liturgy@ocp.org

J.S. Paluch Co. Inc./World Library Publications, 3708 River Road, Suite 400,
Franklin Park, IL 60131-2158;
800-566-6150; Web: www.wlpmusic.com; Email: wlpcs@jspaluch.com

REFERENCES

General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM). 2003. United States Catholic Conference, Inc., Washington, D.C.

Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship. 2008. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C.

Vatican Council II. 1963. *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C.