

CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC PARISH

Wedding Music Guidelines

Principles of liturgical music planning for weddings

1. Mass of Christian Matrimony (wedding Mass) is not a private event; rather it is a liturgical celebration in the life of a particular parish community
 - The Director of Music (DoM) is the resource and guide for couples planning wedding music and is the primary organist/pianist for weddings. A parish cantor is the primary leader of congregational song.
 - Certain sung elements in the wedding Mass will always default to those in the parish repertoire (e.g. Gloria, Gospel Acclamation, Holy, Lamb of God)
 - Guest musicians (vocal or instrumental) may offer music before or after the Mass. They may also offer music during the Preparation of the Altar or during Communion.
 - If the DoM is not available for a wedding, she will be responsible for securing a substitute who is familiar with parish liturgical and musical practices.
2. Christ is present when the assembly of the baptized (the Church) prays and sings.¹
 - Consider creating a worship aid that, in addition to listing the names of the wedding party and family members, also includes the text for responses sung or spoken by the congregation.
 - All music sung or played within the church on the wedding day must be sacred, liturgical, or religious in nature.
 - All music sung or played within the church on the wedding day must be performed live. Recorded music is not permitted.

¹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, No. 7 (1963): "Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, . . . but especially under the Eucharistic species. By His power He is present in the sacraments, . . . He is present in His word, . . . **He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings**, for He promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

MUSICAL ELEMENTS within the Wedding Mass

INTRODUCTORY RITES

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

The **Entrance Procession** includes the entrance of the clergy, bridal party, the bride, or bride and groom. (Grandparents and mothers are seated during the prelude music). On Sundays, the Entrance Procession is usually accompanied by congregational singing. However, at a wedding most people are eager to watch the entrance of the wedding party, and so won't sing an Entrance Song vigorously. Because of this reality, instrumental music is the most commonly used option. Popular instrumental selections include:²

- Canon in D (Pachelbel)
- Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (Johann Sebastian Bach)
- Prelude to the *Te Deum* (Marc-Antoine Charpentier)
- Prince of Denmark's March (Jeremiah Clarke)
- Trumpet Tune in D (Henry Purcell)
- Trumpet Voluntary in D (Jeremiah Clarke)
- Other:

The **Entrance Procession** may be accompanied with congregational singing or with singing by a cantor. If congregational singing is desired, a refrain-verse structure, with the congregation singing a simple, repetitive refrain, is most usable. The same song could also be carried alone by the cantor.

GLORIA

The entire assembly joins in singing this text, which is the primary song of praise to God in the Mass.

Missal chant (Mass XV)

² This list of suggested instrumental and vocal music in this document are not exhaustive. The couple should feel free to request other titles, as long as these requests fit the guidelines listed under Principle Two on the page one of this document.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Select one from the list of psalms approved for weddings. The responsorial psalm is always sung by the cantor and congregation.

ALLELUIA

The assembly sings this acclamation as the priest or deacon processes to the ambo with the book of the Gospels.

Celtic Alleluia (O'Connor)

VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL

The verse is sung by the cantor in between congregational singing of the Alleluia.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

Music during the **Preparation of the Altar**, may take the form of (1) a congregational hymn, (2) a vocal solo, or (3) instrumental music.

HOLY, HOLY

The assembly joins its voice with that of the heavenly hosts to sing praise to God.

Missal chant (Mass XVIII)

MYSTERY OF FAITH

The assembly sings together the acclamation "We proclaim your death, O Lord" (*Missal chant*)

LAMB OF GOD

This acclamation is sung by the assembly during the Fraction Rite, when the priest breaks the consecrated host.

Missal chant (Mass XVIII)

COMMUNION PROCESSION

Music during the **Communion Procession** may take the form of (1) a congregational hymn, (2) a vocal solo, or (3) instrumental music.

optional musical element after the Communion Procession

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Offering prayers and flowers to the Virgin Mary is a devotion sometimes done by couples. This devotion is a way of offering thanksgiving to Christ, through the intercession of his mother.

While a vocal solo could be placed here, a congregational song would best represent the communal thanksgiving to Christ through Mary. Suggestions of congregational hymns include:

- Hail Mary: Gentle Woman (Landry)
- Immaculate Mary (LOURDES HYMN)

CONCLUDING RITE

RECESSIONAL

Some often-used instrumental recessionals include:

- Hornpipe from "Water Music" (George Frederic Handel)
- Concerto in G for organ (J. S. Bach)
- Rondeau (Jean Joseph Mouret)
- The Rejoicing from "Royal Fireworks Music" (George Frederic Handel)
- Trumpet Tune in D (Henry Purcell)
- Fanfare (William Mathias)
- Toccata in 7 (John Rutter)
- Now Thank We All Our God (arr. J.S. Bach)