

The following guidelines have been developed and set forth to help with the preparation and celebration of wedding liturgies. These guidelines offer guidance and uniformity with regard to music, which is integral to all Catholic liturgies.

Among the many signs and symbols used by the Church to celebrate its faith, music is of preeminent importance. As sacred song united to words it forms an integral part of the solemn liturgy. Yet the function of music is ministerial; it must serve and never dominate. Music should assist the assembled believers to express and share the gift of faith that is within them and to nourish and strengthen their interior commitment of faith. It should heighten the texts so that they speak more fully and more effectively. The quality of joy and enthusiasm which music adds to community worship cannot be gained in any other way. It imparts a sense of unity to the congregation and sets the appropriate tone for a particular celebration. (Music in Catholic Worship #23)

The essential principle to be kept in mind is that music is a part of the liturgy. Thus, the compositions that are sung, the persons who sing them and the times they are sung are to be in accord with the liturgy that is being celebrated and with the general principles of the liturgy.

According to the statement by the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Liturgy, "Music in Catholic Worship", the following judgments are involved in selecting music:

1. **The musical judgment:** Is the composition good and artistically sound, whatever the style?
2. **The liturgical judgment:** Is the selection appropriate for the particular part of the liturgical celebration? Do the words speak of Christ, community worship, the mysteries of faith and love? Are the people enabled to fulfill their role in singing the parts especially pertaining to them? Is the music religious in its associations?
To help determine the appropriateness of any given piece of music, the following question should be asked: Does the music in question bring to mind associations of the theater, opera, movies, commercials, television shows, or other secular connections? If so, it is probably not a suitable choice for the liturgy, although it might be very appropriate at the rehearsal or reception.
3. **The pastoral judgment:** Will the piece of music help those in attendance to pray and express their spirit of joyous worship? If persons of other faiths will be attending, will the hymns selected include some in which all faiths are able to participate?
4. **Theological adequacy** must also be used in the selection of music. When judging musical texts for theological adequacy, one should be guided by the following wording from the proposed "Directory for Music and the Liturgy for Use in the Dioceses in the United States of America" (USCCB, 2006), which in part, states that "Individual songs should be consonant with Catholic teaching and free from doctrinal error."

An important criterion in selecting music is its ability to elicit a prayerful response for this particular community. When the sacrament of matrimony is celebrated within the Mass, the centrality of the Eucharist must be understood. In addition to the covenant love being celebrated, the unifying nature of the Eucharist should be emphasized. Everything else surrounding the ceremony should be supportive, including the music.

One should always remember that the organ and orchestral instruments have always been associated with the liturgy. "While the organ is to be accorded pride of place, other wind, stringed, or percussion instruments may be used in liturgical services in the dioceses of the United States of America, according to longstanding local usage, provided

they are truly apt for sacred use or can be rendered apt." (GIRM #393,2) In assisting the bridal couple in design the music program, it should be noted that different combinations of instruments can be used effectively. The availability of instrumentalists will often be the deciding factor.

Opportunities for Music in the Wedding Liturgy (Please refer to your copy of *"Together for Life"*)

Prelude

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy makes it clear that the members of the assembly are to dispose themselves to that which is about to be celebrated. Prelude music, therefore, should foster an atmosphere of prayer and reverential silence while members of the assembly are gathering and being seated. Several selections may be used; combining instrumental as well as appropriate vocal pieces.

Procession / Entrance Song

Music for the entrance song should focus the assembly's attention on their role as active participants of the liturgy. The procession and entrance song should be appropriate. Whether instrumental or sung, the entrance song should be an appropriate hymn of praise or a hymn of petition, asking God's blessing on the couple to be married.

Responsorial Psalm

The musical setting of any psalm is appropriate here, provided it is responsorial in style, i.e. the cantor sings the verses and the assembly responds with the sung refrain. Psalms 33, 34, 103, 112, 128, 145, and 148 are very appropriate for weddings. The psalm should be sung. Songs based on psalms which paraphrase the text of the psalm are not to be used in place of the Responsorial Psalm.

Gospel Acclamation

The gospel acclamation should always be sung. An appropriate setting of the "Alleluia" or acclamation of praise during the season of Lent can be chosen.

Presentation/Preparation of the Gifts

Because in the context of a wedding this ritual action does not take a long time, it is important that music not be so long as to interrupt the flow of the liturgy. Often solos will do just that and place undue importance on this part of the liturgy. Instrumental music is highly recommended for the preparation of the gifts.

Eucharistic Acclamations

The Preface Acclamations, Memorial Acclamation and Concluding Doxology should be chosen from settings that are familiar to most practicing Catholics. As a matter of course, guests who make up the assembly often come from different parishes.

Communion Procession

The music for the communion procession should be Eucharistic in nature, i.e., expressing praise and thanksgiving and stressing our oneness in Christ.

Concluding Procession

The music at the Nuptial Procession is traditionally instrumental and joyful in nature. The style may vary from traditional to the avant-garde or from stately to dance-like. The operative words here are appropriate and dignified.

Liturgical Seasons

Music selections should be in keeping with the liturgical seasons, but not be in opposition to the liturgical season.

Other Music Issues

Recorded Music

In keeping with the General Principles on the Structure of the Liturgy, *Liturgical Music Today* (1982) offers the following guidelines on "Recorded Music."

60. The liturgy is a complex use of signs expressed by living human beings. Music, being preeminent among those signs, ought to be "live". While recorded music, therefore, might be used to advantage outside the liturgy as an aid in the teaching of new music, it should, as a general norm, never be used within the liturgy to replace the congregation, the choir, the organist or other instrumentalists.

The Unity Candle

The lighting of the unity candle to symbolize the uniting of two individuals or two families is not part of the Catholic wedding liturgy. Candles lit during the liturgy represent the light of Christ, not an individual or family. The use of candles to symbolize something other than Christ weakens the value of the symbol. The union of the couple is ritualized in the wedding liturgy by the exchange of consent, vows, rings, nuptial blessing, and (for two Catholics) within the context of a Mass, by the sharing of the Eucharist. It is advisable to light a secular candle "symbolizing unity" at the wedding reception.

Marian Devotion

It is hopeful and encouraged that a couple has a spiritual devotion to the Blessed Mother as part of their married life together. The practice of bringing flowers to the Marian shrine, however, is not part of the Catholic wedding liturgy. This practice stems from different cultures and ethnic traditions and has grown "popular" in recent times.

Private devotions interrupt the flow of the Marriage Rite. It is like taking time out from the community's actions for a private moment for the bride or couple. Such devotions should be done privately at another time; possibly at the rehearsal.

Wedding Music Suggestions

The following selections of music appropriate to Wedding liturgies are intended to be used as suggestions by helping couples and musicians choose from many selections of available music that are acceptable to Catholic wedding liturgies. This is not to be considered an exclusive list of music selections, but should be considered a guide in liturgical preparation for Weddings.

Prelude Music (Festive)

Praeludium in E Major Vincent Lübeck
Prelude and Fugue in G Major (S.541 J. S. Bach
Prelude on "Simple Gifts" Wilbur Held
Voluntary in C Major John Stanley

(Meditative)

Meditation on "Brother James' Air" Harold Darke
Epithalamium (Wedding Song) Healey Willan
Slow Movements of Sonatas I, III, or IV Felix Mendelssohn
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring J. S. Bach

(Vocal Solos)

The Call (Five Mystical Songs) Ralph Vaughan Williams
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring J. S. Bach
Wither Thou Goest Heinrich Schütz/Ludwig Lenel
The Gift of Love (O waly, waly) arr. Hal Hopson
Ave Maria Jacques Arcadelt, Bach/Gounod, Giulio
Caccino, Flor Peeters, Franz Schubert
Wherever You Go Weston Priory, David Haas

Procession

St. Anthony Chorale Franz Joseph Haydn/Johannes Brahms
Voluntary in G Major John Stanley
Trumpet Tune in D Major* David Johnson
Rigaudon* André Campra
Trumpet Voluntary* Jeremiah Clarke
Procession for Organ (Lobe den Herren) Martin Shaw
(*available in organ, solo or trumpet/organ arrangements)

Entrance Songs

All Creatures of Our God and King	Lasst uns erfreuen
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee	Hymn to Joy
God of Love and Joy and Laughter	Hymn to Joy
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	Hyfrydol
Hear Us Now, Our God and Father	Hyfrydol
May the Grace of Christ Our Savior	Stuttgart
Now Thank We All Our God	Nun danket
Praise to the Lord	Lobe den Herrn
O Father, All Creating	Aurelia
God in the Planning	Slane

Responsorial Psalm

Ps.33, "The earth is full..."	
Ps. 34, "Taste and see..."	
Ps. 103, "The Lord is kind..."	
Ps. 112, "Happy are those..."	
Ps.145, "The Lord is compassionate..."	
Ps.148, "Let all praise..."	

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia	Chant (Mode VI), Murray, or Melchior Vulpius
Celtic Alleluia	Fintan O'Carroll/Christopher Walker
Praise to You., (Lent)	Randall de Bruyn or Marty Haugen

Preparation of the Gifts

See Organ Prelude (Meditative) or
Prelude Vocal Solos (except Ave Marias)

Service Music Mass of Creation	
Marty Haugen	
Mass of Christ the Savior	

Communion Procession

Gift of Finest Wheat	Omer Westendorf
I Received the Living God	Anonymous
One Communion of Love	Marchionda
Wisdom's Feast	Omer Westendorf
Taste and See	Various Composers
One Bread, One Body	

Concluding Procession

The Rejoicing	George Frederic Handel
Trumpet Tune	Henry Purcell
Trumpet Tune	David Johnson
Toccatà from Symphonie No. 5	Charles-Marie Widor
Allegro Maestoso from Watermusic	G. F. Handel
Ode to Joy	Ludwig van Beethoven
Prelude in Classic Style	Gordon Young
Toccatà in F	Dietrich Buxtehude
Rondeau	Jean-Joseph Mouret
Trumpet Voluntary	John Stanley
Cwm Rhondda	Paul Manz
Procesión Alegre (Joyous Procession)	Garry Cornell