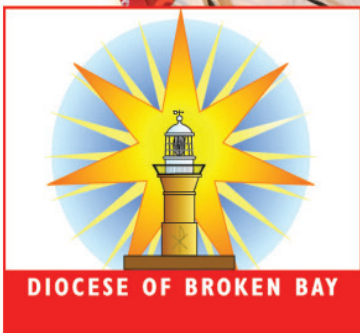


Music *within the* Mass





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Music within the Mass

Introduction

As Catholic Christians, celebrating the liturgy of the Church is an important part of the way we give worship to God. The term 'liturgy' has its origins in Greek and can be translated as 'public work.' Divine Liturgy is the public work of the triune God. This means that the liturgy, which includes the Mass, is our way of participating publicly in the work of Christ to the glory of God – a worthy job for us to do indeed! And “when song and music are signs of the Holy Spirit’s presence and action, they encourage, in a certain way, communion with the Trinity” (John Paul II, Address to the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, 3; Chirograph on Sacred Music, 3).

Choosing music for Mass is then an important part of planning liturgies. The roles of the specialist music ministers who lead the assembly’s participation are vital. This document provides some introductory material for those who are privileged to serve in the planning and leadership of the music for Mass, helping the entire People of God, the community as the body of Christ, to pray wholeheartedly in “spirit and truth” (Jn 4:23).

Function of Music

“One cannot find anything more religious and more joyful in sacred celebrations than a whole congregation expressing its faith and devotion in song” (Instruction on Music in the Liturgy: *Musicae Sacram* (MS), 16). With music,

- (1) prayer is expressed in a more attractive way,
- (2) the mystery of the liturgy, with its hierarchical and community nature, is more openly shown,
- (3) the unity of hearts is more profoundly achieved by the union of voices,
- (4) minds are more easily raised to heavenly things by the beauty of the liturgy, and
- (5) the whole celebration more clearly prefigures the heavenly liturgy (cf. MS, 5).

Role of the Music Minister

“From the smooth coordination of all – the priest celebrant and the deacon, the acolytes, the altar servers, the readers, the psalmist, the *schola cantorum*, the musicians, the cantor and the assembly – flows the proper spiritual atmosphere which makes the liturgical moment truly intense, shared in and fruitful” (Chirograph, 8).

The primary music minister in the liturgy is the assembly. From within the assembly, specialist music ministers play a role of guidance and support. We have a responsibility to help the assembly take an active part in the singing. At certain times we may have a specific role of our own. But there is no place in the liturgy for solo or group performances of musical art for art’s sake.

Of special importance are the roles of music group leaders such as the Choir Director or Music Director, who are responsible for rehearsing and conducting the musical aspects of liturgical celebrations.

Choosing Appropriate Music

“The criterion that must inspire every composition and performance of songs and sacred music is the beauty that invites prayer” (John Paul II, Address to the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, 3; cf. Chirograph, 3).

There are some guidelines for choosing music for a particular occasion. Just because someone likes a particular song or the band plays a song well should not be the reason why the song is chosen. Planning involves the liturgy team, the musicians, the presider and the assembly. All need to work in collaboration, respecting the particular expertise each one brings to the process.

There are three long-held principles that help us to choose the most appropriate music (cf. Chirograph, 4-6):

1. Liturgically, it must be holy

To be holy, the music must serve the spirit and norms of the liturgy and the faith it expresses.

Is it closely connected with the liturgical action?

Not all music is suitable. Even some repertoires of so-called sacred music “cannot be part of the celebration without violating the spirit and norms of the Liturgy itself”(Chirograph, 4). For example, a hymn to Our Lady would be inappropriate at communion if it is not consistent with the readings and prayers of the particular day, feast or season (see Summary of Purpose in the table on page 4). “The meaning and the proper nature of each part and of each song” must be carefully observed (MS, 6) so that the music relates closely connected to what actions are happening at each part of the liturgy. These norms are detailed in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) and summarised on page 4.

Does it express the Church’s faith and teaching?

The text should be based on appropriate scriptural or liturgical texts. It should refer to God in the persons of the Trinity. It should express the nature of the Church as the People of God and the Body of Christ. It must not conflict with the catechetical teaching and tradition of the Church.

2. Musically, it must be beautiful

Much of the beauty of liturgical music is in its apt suitability to liturgical prayer.

Does it possess sound form?

The melodic range and contour, the harmony, rhythm and tempo must be aptly suited to singing by the intended music ministers-priests, cantor, choir and assembly. The form of song must be aptly suited to the particular part of the liturgy – cantillation (for prayers, readings and proclamations), dialogue, acclamation, litany, responsorial psalm, processional antiphon or song with repeating refrain, or hymn.

Is it true art?

It must have enduring appeal, able to bear the weight of repeated singing over time.

Does it fully adhere to the text it presents?

It must suitably embody the text of the liturgy. Prescribed texts (e.g. Holy, Holy) must be used without variation. Where texts are not prescribed, “they must be in keeping with the parts of the Mass, the feast or the liturgical season” (MS, 36).

Does it synchronise with the intended time and moment in the liturgy?

The music should be synchronised to begin and end at the times specified by the rite. “The various moments in the Liturgy require a musical expression of their own. From time to time this must fittingly bring out the nature proper to a specific rite, now proclaiming God’s marvels, now expressing praise, supplication or even sorrow” (Chirograph, 5). (See the notes on “timing” in the table on page 4.)

Does it reflect the gestures of the rite?

It must be aptly suited to any gestures, actions or processions it accompanies (e.g. the breaking of the bread, the procession and presentation of the gifts).

3. Pastorally, it must be universal

The music must be suited to the particular assembly while respecting the need for universal appeal.

Does it comply with the legitimate demands for adaptation and inculturation?

The music should be in a language that is comprehensible to the majority (Chirograph, 6). There are many local cultural adaptations as well as special provisions for Masses with children and other special groups that must be considered. Your parish priest is best placed to discern what adaptations are applicable for a given situation.

Does it involve the entire assembly in the celebration?

The music must invite prayerful participation in each and every person, young and old.

Is it deserving of universal esteem, offending nobody?

Personal tastes in music vary greatly in a parish assembly. While not everything chosen will be everyone’s favourite, all the music must be deserving of everyone’s esteem. Music that offends anyone’s prayerful sensibilities should be avoided.

For each music selection, we should do the liturgical-musical-pastoral analysis and then ask the question: “Does this particular piece of music possess the universal beauty that invites the involvement of the entire assembly in this particular prayer?”

Example

The use of “Lord, the Light of your Love” (a.k.a. “Shine, Jesus, Shine”), by Graham Kendrick, as a recessional song for the Second Sunday of Lent, Year A, by an assembly comprising youth and older people.

We ask ourselves, is it:

- Liturgically holy, well suited as a recessional song?
The song’s energy and prophetic refrain are well suited to the ritual act of being sent forth. It is a strong expression of the Church’s faith and teaching about Christ the King, the Light of the World, the nature of the Trinity, salvation through the blood of Christ, transformation through meditation on Christ, and the mission of the mystical body of Christ in the world today.
- Musically beautiful, inviting participation?
The song possesses sound form: rhythm and tempo are aptly suited to a procession song; the melodic range is manageable with accompaniment in the key of D. The harmony is sound and the melody is a strong artistic expression of prayerful joy. The song has enduring appeal. The text is very expressive of the Gospel of the day, which is about the Transfiguration of Jesus. The music can be synchronised to the ministers’ procession by singing only some verses.
- Pastorally universal, involving the entire assembly?
The song has universal appeal; no one would be offended by it. It is particularly suited to youth, but is also suitable for older age groups. It has the capability to involve the entire assembly in the act of sending forth. It lends itself to adaptation to contemporary music ensembles, with percussion and clapping.

Conclusion: Yes, “Lord, the Light of Your Love” possesses the universal beauty that invites the involvement of the entire assembly in the recessional song for the Second Sunday of Lent, Year A.

The Importance of Singing

“The Christian faithful who gather together as one to await the Lord’s coming are instructed by the Apostle Paul to sing together psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Singing is the sign of the heart’s joy (Acts 2:46). Thus St Augustine says rightly, ‘Singing is for one who loves.’ There is also the ancient proverb: ‘One who sings well prays twice.’

Great importance should therefore be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass, with due consideration for the culture of the people and abilities of each liturgical assembly. Although it is not always necessary (e.g. in weekday Masses) to sing all the texts that are of themselves meant to be sung, every care should be taken that singing by the ministers and the people is not absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and on holy days of obligation.

In the choosing of the parts actually to be sung, however, preference should be given to those that are of greater importance and especially to those to be sung by the presider or the deacon or the lector, with the people responding, or by the presider and people together” (GIRM, 39-40; cf. MS 6, 7, 16, 28-36).

The amount of singing should correspond to the degree of festivity and solemnity of the particular celebration of the day, feast or season (for example, weekdays are more subdued than Sundays; the major Sunday community Mass is more festive than other Sunday Masses; major feasts such as Trinity Sunday or Pentecost are more festive than other Sundays; the seasons of Lent and Advent are more subdued and the seasons of Christmas and Easter are more festive).

The following table shows each part, its priority for singing, its song form, a summary of its purpose in the liturgy, and the GIRM paragraph numbers that detail the norms for the part. Those parts with more stars should be included for singing before those with fewer stars. As a rough guide, 5 stars for all Masses, 4 and 3 stars for Sundays, 2 stars for major feasts and celebrations, 1 star for the most festive and solemn celebrations.

	Ritual Element	Priority	Form	Summary of Purpose & Timing (cf. GIRM paragraph)
Introductory Rites	Entrance Song	★★★★★	P	Foster unity; reflect on the day, feast or season. Start before ministers begin procession; end when ministers are in place and any incensing is finished. (47-49)
	Sign of Cross & Greeting	★★	D	Symbolise unity of priest and assembly with Christ. (50)
	Kyrie / Penitential Rite	★★★☆☆	L	Pray, acknowledging God's grace in Christ. Allow a time of silence before sung invocations. (51-52)
	(Sprinkling Rite)	★★★★	P	(Option for Sundays, especially in Easter season.) Recall the grace of baptism. Start when priest begins sprinkling; end when priest returns to sanctuary. (51)
	(Glory to God)	★★★★☆	H	(Sundays and major feasts, except in Advent and Lent.) In union with the Spirit, praise the Father and Son. Agree with presider a time and signal to begin. (53)
	Opening Prayer	★★	C	Pray, reflecting on the day, feast or season. (54)
Liturgy of the Word	1 st Reading	★	C	Proclaim / reflect on the Word in the Old Covenant. (59)
	Responsorial Psalm	★★★★★	R	Reflect on Christ in the songs of the Old Covenant. Allow silent period after reading before beginning. (61)
	(2 nd Reading)	★	C	Proclaim / listen to the teaching of the Apostles. (59)
	Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia or Lenten Acclamation)	★★★★★	A/P	Acclaim the arrival of Jesus Christ. Start when minister stands; allow time for procession of book of Gospels; end when minister reaches lectern. (62-64)
	Gospel Greeting	★★	D	Rouse the assembly to listen to the Gospel. (60)
	Gospel	★	C	Proclaim / listen to the life and teaching of Jesus. (60)
	Homily			Break open the Word. (65-66)
	(Creed)	☆☆	C	(Sundays and Solemnities) Proclaim our faith. (67-68)
	Prayer of the Faithful	★★☆	L	Pray for the church, the world, the needy & us. (69-71)
Liturgy of the Eucharist	Preparation of the Gifts	★★★★	P	Reflect on the people and their gifts, the day, feast or season. Start immediately after the Prayer of the Faithful; end no earlier than the placing of the gifts on the altar and no later than the washing of hands. (74-76)
	Prayer over the Gifts	★★	C	Pray, reflecting on our gifts & Christ's offering. (77)
	Preface Dialogue	★★	D	Rouse the assembly to praise & thanksgiving. (78-79)
	Preface	★★	C	Thanksgiving for all God has done for us. (78-79)
	Holy Holy	★★★★★	A	Praise God in union with the praise of heaven. (78-79)
	Eucharistic Prayer	★★	C	In union with Christ, confess the great works of God, and offer sacrifice. Recall the mystery of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. (2) Invoke the Holy Spirit to transform the gifts, that they may become the body and blood of Christ, and that we in turn may become one body in Christ. Pray for the Church and the reign of God in the world. Give glory to the Father, through the Son with the Holy Spirit. (78-79)
	Eucharistic Acclamations	★★★★★	A	Acclaim Christ's death, resurrection and return. (78-79)
	Great Amen	★★★★★	A	Give assent to the whole Eucharistic prayer. (78-79)
	The Lord's Prayer	★★★★	C	Pray to the Father in the words of Jesus. (81)
	Sign of Peace	★★	D	Rouse the assembly to peace and communion. (82)
	Lamb of God	★★★★☆	L	Pray, acknowledging God's grace in the Lamb. Begin when the presider begins breaking the bread. (83)
	Communion Song	★★★★	P	Express our joy and unity; reflect on the day, feast or season. Start when the priest receives the sacrament; end when the last of the faithful receive the sacrament, usually the choir and the musicians! (86-87)
	(Thanksgiving Song)	★★★★	H	(This is optional, after time of silent prayer.) In union with the Spirit, praise the Father and the Son. (88)
	Prayer after Communion	★★	C	Pray for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated. (89)
Dismissal	Blessing & Dismissal	★★	D	Rouse the assembly to Christ's mission. (90)
	Recessional Song	★★★★	P	Express our mission to the world; reflect on the day, feast or season. Start immediately after the dismissal; end when the ministers have left the church. (MS, 36)

The Forms of Liturgical Song

- A – An **acclamation** is a spontaneous joyful vocalisation sung by all, accompanied or unaccompanied.
- C – **Cantillation** is a kind of spoken singing, usually unaccompanied, where the melody and rhythm is close to that of speech. It is used when prayers, readings and proclamations are sung instead of recited. Cantillations are sung by the priest celebrant or other minister and conclude with an acclamation of assent sung by all.
- D – A **dialogue** between priest and people is used at the start of the Mass, and to introduce each major part – the Gospel, the Eucharistic Prayer, the Communion, and the dismissal. Dialogues are sung unaccompanied.
- H – A **hymn** is a song of praise with no other accompanying liturgical action. There are only two hymns in the Mass. Singing of the Glory to God is by the choir or cantor alternating with the people, or entirely by the people or entirely by the choir alone. The entire assembly sings the Thanksgiving song.
- L – A **litany** is a prayer with a series of invocations or intercessions sung by a cantor or other minister, with a repeated response sung by all.
- P – A **processional song** is one that accompanies another liturgical action. Songs with refrains and a variable number of verses are most appropriate. The beginning and ending should match the liturgical action. Singing is by the choir or cantor alternating with the people, or entirely by the people or by the choir alone.
- R – The **responsorial psalm** is sung scripture with no other accompanying liturgical action. All sing the psalm response at the beginning and after each verse; the cantor of the psalm sings the intervening verses.

Music Languages & Styles

If we follow the principles above then no style is off limits! For the sake of the assembly, we should step out of our comfort zone to embrace other styles that we might personally have written off. We will be surprised at how well they are received by different groups within the assembly. For example, in the same liturgical celebration we might sing songs accompanied by organ, piano, guitar and other instruments. We might just have an instrumental for the Procession of Gifts and we might have some unaccompanied singing (e.g. the Our Father).

A typically folk or contemporary style band should try some of the popular traditional hymns, Taize and other chants (remember Gregorian chant hit the Top 40 charts a few years back!) A more traditional, classical group should try doing some more contemporary popular songs and the new English-language chants arranged for the assembly's participation. The Catholic Church has a rich and diverse heritage of sacred music. We may be surprised by the positive reaction to a diversity of repertoire from assemblies who have known only one particular style at their regular celebration.

Accessibility of Lyrics

Even if we think 99% of the congregation know a song or prayer, we should have the words ready as a PowerPoint, overhead or song sheet so no one will feel left out of the community that we are helping create! As different people respond best to different types of media, a combination of various audio and visual media may prove helpful. The opportunities for encouraging the congregation to participate can be enhanced. As a good example, PowerPoint can be used to display the parts sung by the cantor in yellow, and the congregation responses in white. Using a system of colour allows everyone to know when to sing which words in a simple, visual manner with minimum fuss.

Watch your Language!

It is important these days to be aware of gender inclusive language in music, and also the theology behind parts of the Catholic Mass where music is used. Most Catholic lyricists are aware of this issue and many recent editions of songs have been changed. It is appropriate to check with the publisher before changing any lyrics!

Copyright

There is a moral responsibility to copyright owners when copying lyrics and music. Parishes and schools should have copyright licence agreements for music used in liturgy, keeping track of all copies made. For most license agreements, two originals of sheet music should be owned before making additional photocopies.

- Display the Parish's licence number at the bottom of printed lyrics/PowerPoint slides/overheads.
- Copyright should be attributed in the following way:
© (year written) (composer) (publisher). Used with permission. Licence No: ____ Word of Life International. All rights reserved.
- For more information, contact Word of Life International and CCLI:
 - Word of Life International <http://www.freelink.com.au> ph: 03 5664 9245
 - CCLI <http://www.ccli.com> ph: 1800 635 474

Other Resources

Further Reading

The following documents are available at the Vatican website (www.vatican.va) or in the book Documents on the Liturgy (see Other Books)

Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963)

Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction on Music in the Liturgy, *Musicae Sacram* (1967)

Instruction on Masses with Special Groups (1969)

Congregation for Divine Worship, Directory for Masses with Children (1973)

Lectionary for Mass, Introduction, 2nd Edition (1981)

Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, General Instruction on the Roman Missal, 3rd typical edition (2002)

John Paul II, Chirograph on Sacred Music (2003)

Planning Resources

LabOra (The Liturgical Commission, Brisbane)

LiturgyHelp.com

Liturgy News (The Liturgical Commission, Brisbane)

Ordo (The Liturgical Commission, Brisbane)

Pastoral Liturgy (Notre Dame, Fremantle)

Powerful Points for Liturgical Ministers (The Liturgical Commission, Brisbane)

The Summit (Office for Worship, Melbourne)

Liturgical Song Books and Hymnals

As One Voice I (Willow Publishing: Manly Vale)

As One Voice II (Willow Publishing: Manly Vale)

AOV for Kids (Willow Publishing: Manly Vale)

As One Voice: Next Generation (Willow Publishing: Manly Vale)

Gather Australia (NLMC: Ashburton, Victoria)

Catholic Worship Book (out of print)

Spirit and Song (OCP: Portland, OR, USA)
(<http://www.ocp.org>)

Other Books

Lucien Diess, *Visions of Liturgy and Music for a New Century* (Collegetown, MN: Liturgy Training Publications, 1996)

Joseph Gelineau, *Liturgical Assembly, Liturgical Song* (Portland, OR: Pastoral Press, 2002)

International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* (Collegetown, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982)

Gerard Moore, *Why the Mass Matters: A Guide to Praying the Mass* (Sydney: St Pauls, 2004)

Australian Liturgical Music Resources

Amanda McKenna

(<http://www.amandamckenna.com.au/>)

Butterfly Music – Andrew Chinn

(<http://www.butterflymusic.com.au/>)

Christopher Willcock SJ

(<http://home.mire.net/~jesuits/cjw/>)

Emmanuel Worship

(<http://www.emmanuelworship.com>)

In Voce Editions – Bernard Kirkpatrick

(http://www.sibelius.usic.com/html/sibeliusmusic/cached_stores/45998_0.html)

John Burland

(<http://www.johnburland.com>)

Kevin Bates

(<http://www.kevinbates.com.au/>)

Litmus Productions – Michael Mangan

(<http://www.litmusproductions.com>)

Liturgical Song – Paul Mason

(<http://www.liturgicalsong.com>)