

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal 2002
Catechetical outline for Pastoral Musicians
Diocese of Trenton

INTRODUCTION

The restoration of sacred music as an integral part of Catholic worship has had a major impact in the life of most parishes. [*The Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (hereinafter CSL)*] refocused the Church's attention on the role of sacred music as necessary to the celebration of liturgical prayer. No longer would music be seen as something special, or an added bonus, but as a "necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy." (CSL #112). The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* reminds us that it is the Church's earnest desire that "all the faithful be led to the full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy." (CSL #14). This desire for full and conscious participation is rooted in all believers' "right and duty by reason of their baptism." (CSL #14). The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* continues to develop the place and importance of sacred music in the Liturgy by stressing the preeminence of sacred song when it is closely "bound to the text," and when is it "closely joined to the liturgical rite." (CSL #112). Therefore, the Church has established that not only is music important to prayer and ritual, but that the purpose of sacred music is "the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful." (CSL #112).

Approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002, the English translation of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 3rd typical edition—hereinafter referred to as the General Instruction—not only emphasizes the importance of singing in the Liturgy, but also reaffirms active sung participation as part of the Catholic liturgical tradition.

"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 (cf. Col. 3:16). Singing is the sign of the heart's joy (cf. 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.'" [*General Instruction of the Roman Missal 2002 (hereinafter GIRM) #39*]

The General Instruction continues this development far beyond the 1975 General Instruction of the Roman Missal, by referencing the order of precedence regarding the parts of the Mass that should be sung. An earlier document issued by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the United States, *Music in Catholic Worship* (1972, revised 1983 #53-74), categorized and prioritized the sung ordinary and proper of the Mass as follows:

- **Acclamations:** (*Gospel Acclamation; Sanctus/Holy, Holy; Memorial Acclamation; Great Amen; Lord's Prayer Doxology*)
- **Processional songs:** (*Entrance/Gathering Song; Communion Song*)
- **Responsorial Psalm**
- **Ordinary chants:** (*Kyrie/Lord Have Mercy; Gloria/Glory to God; Creed; Lord's Prayer; Angus Dei/Lamb of God*)
- **Supplementary songs:** (*General Intercessions; Hymn at the Preparation of the Gifts; Post Communion Song of Praise; Sending/Recessional Song*)

The catechetical materials prepared for pastoral musicians and the parishes of the Diocese of Trenton have been developed to heighten everyone's awareness of the importance of music in the celebration of the liturgy. The implementation of the General Instruction provides the Diocese of Trenton with a wonderful opportunity to catechize the faithful in their role as singers of the liturgy. The power and mystery of liturgical prayer can be found in the hymns, Psalms, and chants sung when the Church gathers in the name of the Lord Jesus. This is the desire of the Church: that the gathered assembly raises its voice in praise and thanksgiving every time it celebrates the Paschal Mystery.

The Church recognizes that a parish's ability to sing the liturgy will be influenced by culture and resources. Pastors and Pastoral Musicians, aware of the gifts and resources of their parish, must become knowledgeable in order to develop plans that will introduce and sustain appropriate and singable music for the liturgy.

The full implementation of the General Instruction will encourage the faithful to embrace music in the Liturgy as not only necessary to the prayer of the Church, but also integral to their own prayer life. It is important that all those ministries connected to pastoral music have a common understanding that singing by all who gather for Mass is the norm in the Diocese of Trenton. The criteria for selecting appropriate music for the Liturgy as put forth in *Music in Catholic Worship* (MCW #26-41) — Musical Judgment, Liturgical Judgment, and Pastoral Judgment — are to be considered in developing the sung elements of the Mass.

PREPARATION BEFORE MASS

Silence
Instrumental or Vocal Prelude
Teaching Moment

“Even before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence ... be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner.” (GIRM # 45) Preludes—both instrumental and vocal—are appropriate during most seasons of the liturgical year. When occasion merits, teaching and rehearsal of new music may be appropriate. However, any musical rehearsal should be brief, simple, and well prepared.

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Entrance/Gathering Song
Act of Penitence: Kyrie/Lord Have Mercy
Sprinkling Rite
Gloria/Glory to God

Entrance/Gathering Song

The Entrance/Gathering Song is the first of the two *processional songs* that are integral to the liturgy (the second being the Communion Procession Song). As all liturgical song, this is the sung prayer of the assembly. It creates an atmosphere of celebration, introduces the people into the mystery of the season or feast, helps put them in the proper frame of mind for listening to the Word of God, helps people to become conscious of themselves as a united worshipping community, and accompanies the procession of priests and ministers. When the celebrant and deacon reach their chairs in the sanctuary, they should continue singing the gathering song with the assembly until its proper conclusion. If there is no gathering song, the prescribed entrance antiphon should be recited. (GIRM # 48)

Act of Penitence

In the Introductory Rite, there are two *ordinary chants* that may be sung: the Kyrie/Lord Have Mercy and the Gloria/Glory to God. When using option “A” from the *Sacramentary*, the Kyrie/Lord Have Mercy may be sung after the recitation of the Confiteor/I Confess. When using option “C,” the complete threefold litany may be sung. Singing the Kyrie/Lord have Mercy is appropriate especially during the seasons of Lent and Advent, and on other days of a penitential character (e.g., All Souls Day). The cantor may and should sing these chants if the clergy are unable. The musical setting should be short and simple.

Sprinkling Rite

The Sprinkling Rite may take the place of the Act of Penitence on Sundays of Easter and on other appropriate feasts (e.g., The Baptism of the Lord). (GIRM # 51) Suitable instrumental or vocal music may accompany the sprinkling of the assembly.

Gloria/Glory to God

The Gloria/Glory to God is the second *ordinary chant* in the Introductory Rite. It is “a very ancient and venerable hymn in which the Church, gathered together in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb.” (GIRM #53) This hymn cannot be replaced by any other song. Everyone in the assembly should be encouraged to sing it, at least in some part (e.g., the refrain, “Glory to God in the highest ...”). The Gloria/Glory to God is omitted during the seasons of Advent and Lent. At other times of the year, if it is not sung, the prayer is spoken by all present.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Responsorial Psalm

Sequence

Gospel Acclamation and Dialogues

Creed/Symbolum/Profession of Faith

Prayer of the Faithful (General Intercessions)

“By their silence and singing the people make God’s word their own, and they also affirm their adherence to it by the Profession of Faith. Finally, having been nourished by it, they pour out their petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful for the needs of the entire Church and for the salvation of the whole world.” (GIRM #55)

The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation, and so any sort of haste that hinders recollection must clearly be avoided. During the Liturgy of the Word, it is also appropriate to include brief periods of silence ...” (GIRM #56)

Responsorial Psalm

The Responsorial Psalm by its nature is to be sung, the preferred manner in which the biblical text is prayed. At the very least, the people’s response should be sung. “If the Psalm cannot be sung, then it should be recited in such a way that it is particularly suited to fostering meditation on the word of God.” (GIRM #61)

Normally taken from the *Lectioary*, the Responsorial Psalm should correspond to each reading. However, prescribed seasonal or common Psalms, also given in the *Lectioary*, may replace the Psalm of the day. “Songs or hymns may not be used in place of the Responsorial Psalm.” (GIRM #61)

In the Diocese of Trenton, the Responsorial Psalm is sung from the Table of the Word, the Ambo.

Sequence

“The Sequence, which is optional except on Easter Sunday and on Pentecost Day, is sung before the *Alleluia*.” (GIRM #64)

Gospel Acclamation

“After the reading that immediately precedes the Gospel, the Alleluia or another chant indicated by the rubrics is sung, as required by the liturgical season. An acclamation of this kind constitutes a rite or act in itself, by which the assembly of the faithful welcomes and greets the Lord who is about to speak to them in the Gospel and professes its faith by means of the chant. It is sung by all while standing and is led by the choir or a cantor, being repeated if this is appropriate. The verse, however, is sung either by the choir or by the cantor.” (GIRM #62) In the Diocese of Trenton, the Gospel Acclamation should be omitted if it is not sung.

Creed/Symbolum/Profession of Faith

“The purpose of the Symbolum or Profession of Faith, or Creed, is that the whole gathered people may respond to the word of God ...” (GIRM #67) “The Creed is to be sung or said by the priest together with the people on Sundays and solemnities. It may be said also at particular celebrations of a more solemn character.” (GIRM #68) The Creed is an *ordinary chant* in the Liturgy. Recitation of the Profession of Faith by all gathered is the custom in the Diocese of Trenton.

Prayer of the Faithful (General Intercessions)

The Prayer of the Faithful is a litany, and when sung, is considered a *supplementary song*.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Music during the Preparation of the Gifts

**Sanctus/Holy Holy
Memorial Acclamation
Great Amen**

Music during the Preparation of the Gifts

A hymn or song may accompany the procession and preparation of the gifts. Because this is a *supplementary song* in the Liturgy, it is not always necessary or desirable. Instrumental music may be played or the choir or a soloist might appropriately sing at this time. Sacred silence is also an option.

Eucharistic Prayer

The **Sanctus/ Holy Holy, Memorial Acclamation, and the Great Amen** are the people's *acclamations* in the great dialogue with the priest in praying the "center and summit of the celebration ... namely, the Eucharistic Prayer ..." (GIRM #78). "It is very appropriate that the priest sings those parts of the Eucharistic Prayer for which musical notation is provided." (GIRM #147) This includes the singing of the prayers, introductions and dialogues that evoke the assembly's sung responses and acclamation. On appropriate occasions, this would also include singing the Preface Dialogue and even the Eucharistic Prayer itself. The unity of the Eucharistic Prayer is enhanced when the acclamations adhere to the prescribed texts and the musical settings convey a sense of cohesiveness in their compositional style.

THE COMMUNION RITE

**The Lord's Prayer and Doxology
Agnus Dei/Lamb of God Litany
Communion Song
Psalm or Hymn of Praise**

The Lord's Prayer and Doxology

The Communion Rite begins with the introduction to the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer, an *ordinary chant* in the Liturgy, may be sung by the assembly, but every care should be taken that the whole assembly participates in chanting it. The Lord's Prayer may never be a solo or choir piece at this point in the celebration of the Mass.

If the Lord's Prayer is sung, then its concluding *acclamation* ("For the kingdom ...") should be as well. The celebrant is encouraged to chant the embolism ("Deliver us, Lord ...") between the prayer and the doxology, further unifying the three elements of the complete prayer.

(Please note: The Sign of Peace, unfortunately, has been used in some parishes as an opportunity to sing an additional song, a practice that should be avoided. If the exchange of the Sign of Peace is prolonged—such as at a funeral or a wedding—then instrumental music may accompany the action. Maintaining a sacred silence, however, would be a more appropriate option.)

Fraction Rite: Agnus Dei/Lamb of God

The Agnus Dei/Lamb of God litany is an *ordinary chant* in the Liturgy. Neither hymns nor other litanies may be substituted for the Lamb of God. An accompaniment to the breaking of the Eucharistic Bread, the Lamb of God litany commences when

the celebrant begins breaking the Bread, and continues until the elements have been prepared for the distribution of Holy Communion.

The Communion Song

The Communion Song is the Communion prayer of the assembly and the second *processional song* integral to the Liturgy. Singing during Communion by all the people is very important. The song should begin as soon as possible after the assembly's response, ("Lord, I am not worthy to receive you"). "Its purpose is to express the communicants' union in spirit by means of the unity of their voices, to show joy of heart, and to highlight more clearly the 'communitarian' nature of the procession to receive Communion. The singing is continued for as long as the sacrament is being administered to the faithful." (GIRM #86)

The song may be seasonal in nature (e.g., carols during Christmastide). A Psalm or a hymn based on a Psalm that echoes the Responsorial Psalm of the day is also appropriate. A familiar refrain may be helpful in encouraging the faithful to sing as they approach the altar. If there is no communion song, the prescribed communion antiphon is recited (GIRM #87)

Benediction and Marian hymns are not suitable for the Communion Song.

Care and planning should be taken to ensure that all pastoral musicians receive Communion with ease and reverence.

"When the distribution of Communion is finished the celebrant and faithful spend some time praying privately [sacred silence]. If desired, a Psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may also be sung by the entire congregation." (GIRM #88) Because its inclusion is optional, the song after Communion is a *supplementary song* in the Liturgy.

CONCLUDING RITE

Sending Song/Recessional

The sending song/recessional, a *supplementary song* in the Liturgy, has never been an official part of the rite. Musicians, therefore, are free to plan music which provides an appropriate conclusion to the Liturgy. A song by the assembly is one option. However, if the people have sung a song after Communion, it may be advisable to use only an instrumental or choral recessional.

APPENDIX A

The Celebration of the Wedding Liturgy Diocesan Guidelines for the Diocese of Trenton

Introduction

Your love for each other and your desire to share your lives together is a sign of God's presence in your life, and a call to the vocation of marriage. At your wedding you make a solemn, life-long promise, a covenant with each other and with God, witnessed by God's people, your friends and relatives. It is the Church's Sacrament. The wedding liturgy, therefore, should be carefully prepared to celebrate your love and the Sacrament of Marriage.

Remember that the Church, your family and friends, witness your solemn promise in a special, holy place – your parish church. Welcome the assistance of the Church – your clergy, pastoral minister, and musician to guide you in the selection of appropriate readings from scripture, liturgical environment, and ritual music.

The Church loves you, and asks that you have a high regard for the Sacrament of Marriage and the celebration of your wedding liturgy. Consider your choices of texts and music in the light of the Church's guidelines. As you follow these guidelines, you will help express your faith and enhance your wedding celebration as an act of worship.

The Wedding Liturgy

The words, gestures, and music for your wedding liturgy should manifest to all present what is happening within you, namely, an encounter with Christ through the Sacrament of Matrimony. Therefore, whatever music is chosen for your celebration should demonstrate for all gathered your love for one another in Christ. Instrumental music may also express to everyone present the festive nature of the occasion. Please avoid any music that has strong associations either for you or your guests with situations and activities contradicting Roman Catholic values on marriage.

Although you may not be aware of it, there is much beautiful and exciting music speaking of God and Christ in your lives, of the holiness, joy, and beauty of marriage, and of the special Christian significance of "your day." Before choosing music for your wedding, know all the possibilities. Your parish musician can advise you. This takes time, so be sure to make contact well in advance of the wedding date.

The model of all Roman Catholic worship is the Sunday Mass. The Nuptial Mass includes the Entrance Rite, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rite. The Church invites all the faithful to full, conscious and active participation in the Mass. Your active involvement in preparing your wedding liturgy will invite all present to fully participate in the celebration. Therefore, all ritual music of the Mass is to be sung by all who have assembled for your wedding.

“Singing by the assembly at a wedding expresses the joy and unity of the people gathered.” (*Celebrating Marriage, Paul Covino Pastoral Press, Portland, 1994, page 86*)

The ritual music of the Mass includes the following: **Gathering Song, the Responsorial Psalm, the Gospel Alleluia, the Holy, Holy, the Memorial Acclamation, the Great Amen, the Lamb of God, the Communion Song, and a post-communion Song of Praise.** Other opportunities for music within the Nuptial Mass are before the Entrance Procession, and at the Preparation of the Gifts.

The Rite of Marriage outside of Mass includes the Entrance Rite, the Liturgy of the Word, the Rite of Marriage and the Concluding Rite. The appropriate place for communal singing would be **the Gathering Song, the Responsorial Psalm, and the Gospel Alleluia.**

Two distinctive elements of the wedding liturgy are the processions which take place at the beginning and at the end of the celebration. Often accompanied by instrumental music, these two ritual actions may also include communal or choral song.

Liturgical Ministers

The Church recognizes the bride and groom as the principal ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage. Clergy, best man and maid/matron of honor, along with your family and friends, witness your exchange of vows, which is the primary sign of this Sacrament. The priest or deacon will preside at the liturgy, while the liturgical ministers will assist the gathered assembly in worship. These Liturgical Ministers are as follows:

Ministers of Holy Communion: A member of your family or of the parish, commissioned by the Bishop, they assist in the distribution of the Body and Blood of Christ during the Communion Rite.

Gift Bearers: Two or more members of your family, they bring up the gifts of Bread and Wine. A symbolic gift for the poor may also be presented at this time.

Reader: A member of your family, or of the parish, the reader proclaims the Scripture readings during the Liturgy of the Word. A reader may also read the Prayer of the Faithful.

Altar Servers: Members of your family, or of the parish, the altar servers assist the priest and deacon in the celebration of the Wedding Liturgy, by acting as cross-bearer and acolyte.

Ministers of Hospitality: Members of your bridal party or of the parish, these men and women welcome your guests and answer questions concerning personal comfort or need.

Music Ministers: Parish cantors, organist, choir and instrumentalists are employed by the parish to assist in planning and implementing the appropriate liturgical music for your celebration.

The practice of having a soloist perform all the music during the wedding liturgy is to be discontinued and discouraged. The liturgical directives for the celebration of liturgy within the Roman Catholic Church stress the full participation of all present in the singing of the liturgy. Therefore, the proper minister to lead the singing at the wedding liturgy would be a cantor. The normative position of the cantor in the Diocese of Trenton is in the front of the assembly. If requested, an individual, other than the cantor, may sing one piece of music at an appropriate place within the liturgy- i.e., the Preparation of the Gifts, or a Song of Praise but not the Communion Song.

The preparation for marriage differs from parish to parish. In this process you will become acquainted with your parish's music ministers. Your consultation with your music ministers is an ongoing part of this process and needs to be done in a timely fashion.

Music in the Liturgy

The worship of God must be authentic. The faithful bring their true selves to be transformed by Word and Sacrament. Full and conscious participation allows all to enter into the mystery of faith. The preeminent form of liturgical participation is in song. The power and grace of music draws all present into community, the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ, made real in the gathering of believers, the Word proclaimed, and in the Eucharist, reflects the ever presence of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to introduce into the liturgy recorded or "canned" music. In the selection of music for the wedding liturgy care should be given in the following areas:

Prelude: As family and friends gather, this selection of music sets an environment of joy and prayer. Music that might not be appropriate for the liturgy may be acceptable here.

Procession: Instrumental music that accompanies the movement of ministers and bridal party to the altar. Often these selections of music are taken from classical repertoire, offering a wide variety of mood and style.

(The “Marches”, composed by Wagner and Mendelssohn, have become closely associated with weddings in our American culture. These two musical selections evoke both negative and positive responses from couples, families and parish staffs. They are to be chosen with care and pastoral discretion.)

Entrance Song: The Entrance Song moves the assembly’s participation from passive to active. The Entrance Song also shapes the gathered assembly into the worshipping community, the Church.

Ritual Music: Those parts of the liturgy that are always to be sung: Responsorial Psalm, Gospel Acclamation, the Holy, Holy, the Memorial Acclamation, the Great Amen.

Preparation of the Gifts: (Nuptial Mass only) A period of transition in the celebration of the Mass, this would be an appropriate opportunity to select music to be sung by cantor alone, or by the assembly.

Communion Song: (Nuptial Mass only) is the assembly’s Communion prayer. Therefore, care should be given to select a psalm or hymn that will focus on the Holy Eucharist as Christ’s presence among us.

Song of Praise: Sung within the Communion Rite, as the assembly’s Song of Thanksgiving, this selection of a psalm or hymn invites those who have gathered to raise their voices in praise and joy.

Recessional Music: Chosen from classical or parish repertoire, this music accompanies the bridal party as they leave the Church.

The celebration of your wedding liturgy is an expression of your faith. It should reflect the gratitude and joy that you feel towards God for all the blessings shown to you throughout your life, especially on your wedding day. In the words of the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, from the Second Vatican Council, “Each member of the laity stands before the world: as witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus, and symbol of the living God.” (GIRM # 38) Let your wedding liturgy and the music you select, reflect this.

APPENDIX B

Financial Compensation

Each parish sets the appropriate stipend, donation, and fee for all those who are involved in the preparation and celebrating of the wedding liturgy. It is up to the couple to be aware of these expenses and ensure they are paid in a timely manner. It is customary to pay the fee for the parish musicians in advance of the ceremony. This payment may go directly to the musicians or to the parish. Each parish has arranged this process to meet its own pastoral needs. Unique and special circumstances must be discussed with the pastor of the parish, and sole discretion rests with his decision in this matter.

Devotional Practices within the Wedding Liturgy

Some parishes have incorporated several devotional practices into the period after Communion. This violates the integrity of the Communion Rite, and it would be inappropriate to observe any gesture that does not center on the Holy Eucharist.

One practice that has remained in the wedding liturgy is the bride leaving her flowers or part of her wedding bouquet at the Shrine of Mary. A devotional act performed by a member of the Sodality of Mary, the bride would leave part of her wedding bouquet on the Marian altar, as she left the Church. Even as this Marian society has faded from parish life, this gesture has endured as an “addition” to the Catholic wedding rite. Such a devotional action is not part of the liturgy, and some parishes have discontinued it. If the bride and groom have a deep and personal devotion to the Blessed Mother, and wish to demonstrate this devotion on their wedding day, then pastoral discretion must discern where this pious gesture may be placed. If this practice still finds itself added to the liturgy, then it is not to take place after Holy Communion, as a meditation. An appropriate place for this pious gesture would be after the Communion Prayer or the Final Blessing. The assembly does not have to be seated for this private ritual and the Recessional should follow shortly after.

Another non-liturgical gesture that has found a place within the wedding liturgy is the “Wedding Candle” or “Unity Candle”. Although not part of the Rite of Marriage this gesture has become a very visible symbol for the celebration of weddings. In 1999, the Archdiocese of Newark prepared a “Table Prayer” or prayer before the meal for the wedding banquet that incorporates the use of the wedding candle. This Table Prayer is an alternative to those couples who wish to include this ritual in the celebration of their wedding. In the Diocese of Trenton, the Unity Candle may be placed as a prayer at the rehearsal, or at the reception. Inclusion of this practice in the liturgy should be discouraged. Pastoral discretion on the use of the wedding candle is left to the pastor and those he has assigned to work with you in the preparation and celebration of your wedding.