

My
Wedding

Music Guide
Within Mass



St Francis de Sales
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Hazel Green, WI 53811



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Hazel Green, WI 53811

GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING MUSIC WITHIN HOLY MASS



Everything about the wedding ceremony should witness to the sacred and holy Sacrament that it is. Therefore, everything about holy Mass, including the music, calls for careful planning that will contribute to this understanding. Everyone present at your wedding should be led by the dignity and beauty of the liturgy to a deeper understanding of Christian marriage and, consequently, to a greater commitment to it. In a sense, your wedding is your gift to your family and friends to help them strengthen their faith. Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations weaken and destroy faith. Because you have chosen to invite Christ to make your love a Sacrament, the music you choose for your wedding must express this unique and distinct encounter. Just as you would not expect to pronounce your wedding vows in street language, so you would not expect to hear “everyday” love songs within a ceremony celebrating sacramental married love. Certainly “your song” will have a place later in the day’s festivities; but during the wedding liturgy itself the emphasis should be a participation in divine LOVE, who is God, and your and the invited guest’s participation in this supernatural love. Music in Catholic Worship has a three-fold judgment: it must be musical, liturgical and pastoral.

MUSICAL JUDGMENT

Is the music technically, aesthetically and expressively good? This judgment is basic and primary and should be made by competent musicians. Only artistically sound music will be effective in the long run. To admit the cheap, the trite, the musical cliché often found in popular songs on the grounds of instant liturgy is to cheapen the liturgy, to expose it to ridicule, and to invite failure.



LITURGICAL JUDGMENT

The nature of the liturgy itself determines what kind of music is called for, what parts are to be preferred for singing and who is to sing them. The lyrics of songs chosen for the wedding liturgy should express the Christian concept of life, rather than one which is purely secular. The texts must always be in conformity with Catholic doctrine, indeed they should be drawn chiefly from Holy Scripture, and from liturgical sources (Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, Vatican Council II, #121)



Perhaps the best criterion is simply the question, “Can you pray the words of the text?” Does the music express and interpret the text correctly and manifest the meaning more clearly? Is the form of the text respected? In making these judgments the general classification of liturgical texts must be kept in mind: proclamations, acclamations, psalms, antiphons, litanies, hymns, and prayers. Each has a specific function and form which must be served by the music chosen for the text. Special musical concern must be given to the roles of the congregation, the cantor, the choir and the instrumentalist. Music chosen should be within the performance ability of all involved. The choices of sung parts, the balance between them, and the style of musical setting used should reflect the relative importance of the parts of the Mass and the nature of each part.

PASTORAL JUDGMENT

The pastoral judgment governs the use and function of every element of celebration. Ultimately, this judgment is made by the pastor. It is a judgment that must be made in this particular situation, in these concrete circumstances. Does music in the celebration enable these people to express their faith, in this place, in this age, in this culture?



The music chosen should be effective for this congregation. It should be suitable for use in a religious, liturgical service whose primary concern is the worship of God. Therefore, the role of music in the celebration of this Service and the Sacrament is threefold:

1. Music must fulfill a role of service.
2. Music must invite and involve congregational participation.
3. Music must be an integral part of the liturgy.

Because of the communal aspects of the celebration, the role of the soloist has evolved into that of cantor or leader of song, thus encouraging the congregation in its rightful role of active participation rather than observation, while still providing some solo vocal pieces when that is appropriate and desired.

PLACE OF MUSIC WITHIN THE WEDDING LITURGY

PRELUDE

The arrival of your wedding guests may be accompanied by instrumental music, a vocal solo, or choir. The music selected should be in keeping with the event to follow, i.e., a period of prayerful preparation. It is not the time for performing a ‘favorite piece’ that is unsuitable within the ceremony itself. Here are a few good choices:

- Angels Watching – The O’Neill Brothers*
- Ave Maria - Bach*
- For the Beauty of the Earth – Conrad Kocher*
- He Shall Feed His Flock - Handel*
- Let There Be Peace On Earth - Jackson/Miller*
- Lord of All Hopefulness - Traditional*
- Nearer My God to Thee - Mason*
- Now Thank We All Our God - Bach*
- Wachet Auf - Bach*

PROCESSIONAL

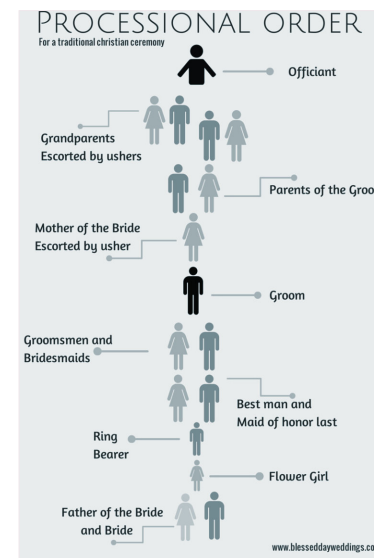
The procession is a liturgical action described in the *Rite of Marriage*, as the ritual entrance of the



ministers for the liturgy. The couple, as ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage, is included in the procession. This also reflects the Church’s understanding that the bride and groom are complementary in marriage. The actual order of the procession may be planned with the presiding priest. The procession and the music accompanying it should reflect the joyous dignity of the moment. Many appropriate selections were originally composed for royal or state, as well as religious occasions. On Sunday, the opening hymn acts as the “processional music”, and an opening hymn can accompany a wedding procession as well. Generally, however, wedding processions are accompanied by instrumental music (organ, brass, strings, etc.) or vocal music (solo or group). The so-called “traditional wedding marches” by Wagner and Mendelssohn are not to be used: both are “theater” pieces which have nothing to do with the Sacred Liturgy. The “Bridal Chorus” from Wagner’s opera, *Lohengrin*, actually accompanies the couple to the bedroom, not the altar! Mendelssohn’s incidental music to



Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream* accompanies a farcical wedding (the play is a comedy). More importantly, they have been used to accompany “weddings” in countless movies, TV shows and game shows. The majority of images these pieces conjure in the minds of the congregation may have a lot to do with sentimentality but very little to do with worship. Because of this, even though they are frequently used in the United States in Protestant churches or non-religious wedding settings, they are rarely used in Catholic churches. Some of the more popular selections include:



INTRODUCTORY RITES

- Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring - J. S. Bach*
- Canon in D Major - J. Pachelbel*
- Trumpet Tune - Purcell/Clarke*

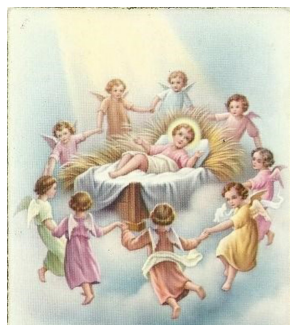
*Trumpet Voluntary - J. Clarke (also known as
The Prince of Denmark's March)*
Trumpet Voluntary - Stanley
Overture from Royal Fireworks Suite - G.F. Handel
Rondeau from Premier Suite - J.J. Mouret
The Ash Grove - Traditional
Canon in F - The O'Neill Brothers
Hymne - Vangelis
Morning Has Broken - Shaw
Quaker Hymne (Lord of the Dance) - Traditional
Reminiscent Joy - The O'Neill Brothers



OPENING HYMN

The processional may also be a congregational hymn setting or may be followed by one. It should be one that is familiar to many Christians, since there will probably be non-Catholics in attendance. The following are a few excellent choices:

Love Divine, All Love's Excelling
Joyful, Joyful We Adore You
May the Grace of Christ



PENITENTIAL RITE

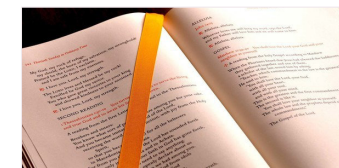
The penitential rite is kept very simple in keeping with the nature of the wedding liturgy. It can be spoken or sung. If sung, a simple setting that has a short refrain for the congregation to repeat after the cantor would be best.

GLORIA

The Gloria is always sung or spoken, even on a Sunday during Advent and Lent. After looking at our sins and asking for God's mercy, we are now able to sing joyfully the praises of God, who has come in the flesh to save us.

OPENING PRAYER

LITURGY OF THE WORD



FIRST READING – Recited

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

A brief period of reflective silence follows the first reading, then the responsorial psalm if at all possible, is sung. The congregation sings the antiphon with the cantor singing the verses. Psalms 33, 34, 103, 112, 128, 145 and 148 are recommended in the Roman Ritual.

SECOND READING – Recited

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The Gospel Acclamation (or Alleluia) must be sung. If it is not sung, it is omitted. The most commonly used settings of this include the plainsong chant and the Celtic Alleluia. There are many other alleluias and acclamations that would work, especially if the music is printed in your worship aid.

GOSPEL

The Priest or Deacon will proclaim the Gospel.

HOMILY

The preaching should point to the supernatural origin and destiny and the purpose of this Sacred Bond.



RITE OF MARRIAGE

The actual Rite of Marriage does not call for any specific music, but a short acclamation of praise such as an alleluia refrain can be sung by the congregation after the exchange of vows and again after the exchange of rings.

UNITY CANDLE—not during holy Mass

The unity candle can be an outward symbol of the two hearts that are now joined in

the oneness of Christ and His love. However, at holy Mass, the Eucharist becomes that symbol of oneness. The Unity Candle can be lit later at the festivities following holy Mass.

INTERCESSIONS—Recited

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

An instrumental or vocal selection or a congregational hymn may accompany the presentation and preparation of the gifts. The music used here should not prolong this (minor) part of the liturgy. If a congregational hymn is chosen, it should follow the same criteria stated for the processional hymn. If a vocal solo is done it should reflect God's love for you and his blessing on your marriage. A few ideas are:

Classical:

Wedding Song - Peeters or Schütz
Be Thou With Them - J.S. Bach

Contemporary:

The Gift of Love - Hopson
When Love Is Found - Wren
A Nuptial Blessing - Joncas or Proulx

EUCHARISTIC ACCLAMATIONS

In the Eucharistic celebration the acclamations which ought to be sung are:

Holy - Holy - Holy, Memorial Acclamation and Great Amen. Some of the most well-known Eucharistic Prayer acclamations include:

Mass of Creation - Haugen
Mass of Light - Haas
Community Mass - Proulx



Heritage Mass - Alstott
People's Mass - Vermulst

LORD'S PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer is the congregation's common prayer, and the people should be able to participate. Generally it is spoken, but may be sung if the majority will be familiar with the setting. A solo version is not appropriate.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Right after the Our Father, the priest extends his hands over the couple and prays for a special blessing to come upon them. After this blessing, the Mass continues normally.

SIGN OF PEACE

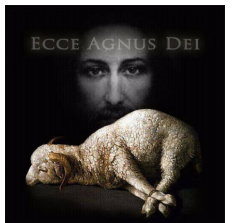
A sign of peace may be given to the persons next to one another. On this special occasion, the couple can also leave their place before the altar and extend a sign of peace to their parents in the pews. During flu season might be omitted.

LAMB OF GOD

The Lamb of God is a litany which accompanies the breaking of the bread. It is preferable to do a *Lamb of God* setting from the same Mass setting as the Eucharistic Prayer Acclamation whenever this is possible.

HOLY COMMUNION

Groom and Bride will receive Holy Communion, usually under both species: the Body of Christ and the Blood of Christ. After they have received, those who are Catholic and able to receive can come forward for Holy Communion under the form of the Body of Christ only.



Guidelines for reception of Holy Communion:

Catholics in good standing can receive Holy Communion. All others can come forward, only to receive a blessing instead, but not the Eucharist. Thank you!

COMMUNION SONG

Congregational singing is appropriate here because it gives expression to our unity in the Body of Christ. Preferably a song with repeated refrain for the congregation should be sung. A suitable vocal or instrumental solo or a choral piece could also be used here. Some ideas for a congregational song are:



Gift of Finest Wheat
I Am the Bread of Life
Gather Us Together
Ubi Caritas - Taize or chant
Eat this Bread
Taste and See - Haugen, Kreutz or Moore

CONCLUDING RITE

PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

DEVOTION TO MARY

It is a wonderful custom that the newlywed couple place flowers at the shrine or altar of our Lady. This is accompanied by a Marian song or an instrumental piece. While the music plays, the couple consecrates their lives to God and ask for help from the Blessed Mother, to be with them on their journey. It should take place after the final blessing and before the dismissal.



RECESSIONAL

A festive instrumental piece of music is most effective as accompaniment to the recessional.

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring - Bach
Joy - Winston
Ode to Joy - Beethoven
Rondeau - Mouret
Trumpet Tune - Purcell

MAY I INTRODUCE TO YOU: MR. & MRS....



OTHER CATHOLIC WEDDING HYMNS:

All Hailed Adored Trinity
All That I Am
God Father Praise and Glory
God is Love
Holy, Holy, Holy
One Bread, One Body
Only a Shadow
I Have Loved You
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
Like a Seal on Your Heart
Love Divine, All Love Excelling
Love is the Sunlight
Set Me Like a Seal
Sing a New Song
Wherever You Go
Taste and See
The Gift of Love
CELEBRATING MARRIAGE
Paul Covino, ed.
The Pastoral Press



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

GIFT & PROMISE - bilingual
Instituto de Liturgia Hispana
Oregon Catholic Press

HANDBOOK OF CHURCH MUSIC FOR WEDDINGS
Mary A. Simcoe, ed.
Liturgy Training Publications

PREPARING THE WEDDING SERVICE
Novallis (video)
Kenneth Hendrick
Liturgical Press

PARISH WEDDINGS
Austin Fleming
Liturgical Training Publ.

TOGETHER FOR LIFE
Joseph Champlin
Ave Maria Press

WHEN LOVE IS FOUND
Jeanne Cotter & David Haas;
GIA



NOTES