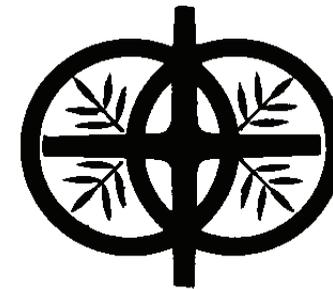


# Guidelines For Music During the Roman Catholic Rite of Marriage



Office of Worship  
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend  
Re-edited Summer 2006

Promulgated by Bishop John M. D'Arcy  
1995

Prepared by the  
Diocesan Music Committee  
and the  
Office of Worship  
Summer, 2006

Congratulations on your engagement!

This booklet is meant to help you with the important task of preparing the liturgy for your wedding.

*Who are the ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage?*

*Answer: The bride and groom minister the Sacrament of Marriage to one another.*

In the presence of the Church and by the Rite of Marriage, Christian Couples establish and celebrate a lifelong bond between themselves.

This relationship signifies and is “a share in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love that exists between Christ and his Church.”

YOUR UNION REFLECTS CHRIST’S UNION WITH HIS CHURCH!

*Christ the Lord raised this union to the dignity of a sacrament so that it might more clearly reflect his own unbreakable union with his Church.*

*(Gaudium et Spes, #48)*



7. “When the marriage is celebrated during Advent or Lent or other days of penance, the parish priest should advise the couple to take into consideration the special nature of these liturgical seasons. (Rite#11)
8. The music chosen should be accessible to the majority of those present and allow “full, active and conscious participation”.
9. “Enhancing the liturgical setting by the use of appropriate flowers, trees, and floral arrangements is to be encouraged, but this, too, should be done in keeping with the nature of the setting as liturgical space and with full awareness and respect for the liturgical season.” (Rite #11)
10. Video taping and picture taking should also be done in the spirit of the ceremony as a sacramental rite and should be mindful of the atmosphere of prayer surrounding these rites. It must not be intrusive or take away from the spirit of reverence and worship.
11. Recorded music may not be used before, during or after the liturgical celebration.
12. Since the Eucharist is the source and center of unity, the use of the unity candle should be down-played. It is not a part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage, but it could be used effectively at the reception.
13. “Just as the great liturgical music of the past is to be remembered, cherished and used, so also the rich diversity of the cultural heritage of the many peoples of our country today must be recognized, fostered and celebrated....liturgical music today must be as diverse and multi-cultural as the members of the assembly”. (Liturgical Music Today #54-55)
14. Some cultures have special devotional practices which are a part of their wedding tradition; e.g. the ropes and coins in the Filipino wedding liturgy, or the taking of flowers to the Blessed Virgin Mary in many weddings in the United States. Please check with your pastor and/or liturgy/music director regarding including these practices in your wedding liturgy.

## Glossary (continued from page 13)

**Sacrament:** A sign of grace, instituted by Christ, and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. There are seven sacraments of the Church: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Marriage, Ordination, Anointing of the Sick, Penance. (Catechism of the Catholic Church)

**Sacred Scripture:** Readings from the Bible. At your wedding, these readings from Sacred Scripture are from the New American Bible, and will be read from the Lectionary.

### Important Liturgical Considerations

1. The rubrics contained in the **Rite of Marriage**, as approved by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, are normative in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.
2. Commercial wedding coordinators and/or photographers have no jurisdiction in determining the music, what happens ritually, or the use of the worship space. The rites and their execution are determined by the norms contained in the **Rite of Marriage**, as approved by the Sacred Congregation for Worship and the Disciplines of the Sacraments, and are the responsibility of the local Ordinary.
3. Catechesis for marriage should include the teachings on marriage and the family, on the sacrament itself and its rites, prayers, and readings (Rite#75). This would be an appropriate time to discuss the kind of music acceptable for use at a sacramental rite.
4. Secular music is not acceptable before, during or after the Rite within the sacred space. It should be reserved for other settings during the wedding festivities. (See Music in Catholic Worship #23)
5. The music customarily used at the Sunday Eucharist is illustrative of the kind of music appropriate for the wedding rites (cf. Music in Catholic Worship #82). A list of hymns suitable for the Rite of Marriage can be found in most hymnals.
6. "If the marriage is celebrated on a Sunday or solemnity, the Mass of the day is used with the nuptial blessing and the special final blessing according to circumstances" (Rite#11). Adequate catechesis must be given beforehand to the assembly as well as the wedding party to assure that the prayerful quality and precedence of the Sunday Eucharist remains intact.

## A CELEBRATION OF THE CHURCH!

Weddings are not only private celebrations of the couple, their families, and their friends, but they are also manifestations of the sacramental life of the Church.

In the Rite of Marriage  
we read.....

"For that reason, Catholics celebrate weddings, not just as private rites and ceremonies, but as an act of worship, a prayer of the Church community addressed to God by those present. It is the celebration of a sacrament—a serious, and at the same time, joyous encounter with God which presupposes and demands faith." (#7)

The music, readings, gestures, and decorations for your wedding... all speak of this sacramental encounter with God and they help form the deeply religious nature of this occasion.

The engaged couple, consulting with their pastor, music minister, and parish wedding coordinator (if applicable), will make informed decisions about the best liturgical choices of readings, music, decorations, and liturgical ministers for your wedding.



*Your pastor, liturgy director or music director, and parish wedding coordinator will help you choose prayers, readings and music that will make your wedding uniquely sacred and beautiful.*

## YOUR WEDDING..... A CELEBRATION OF GOD'S LOVE AND HUMAN LOVE!

The entire **Rite of Marriage** is designed by the Church to be more than a celebration of human love. It is a sacred event in which God's presence is recognized as the source of fidelity, love, companionship and all the qualities that are a part of your vocation to the married life.

The **Rite of Marriage** is a statement of how seriously you, the couple, take your relationship with God, with each other, and with the entire Church.

### PRAYER, REFLECTION, DISCUSSION...

You prepare for the Rite of Marriage by many weeks of *prayer, reflection, discussion,* and *attention to all the details* which make your commitment in the presence of Christ and the Church a living and dynamic sacramental celebration of love.

What a graced time for the engaged couple!



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Cantor:** The person who sings the verses of the responsorial psalm (the assembly sings the refrain), and who leads the assembly in the other sung parts of the wedding liturgy. The cantor is not a "soloist" although he/she may sing a sacred solo as part of the music before the wedding liturgy begins.
- Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion:** Lay persons who are trained to distribute the consecrated host and the Precious Blood to those receiving communion at Mass.
- Gaudium et Spes:** Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Pope Paul VI. December 7, 1965. One of the most important documents to come out of the Second Vatican Council.
- Gift-bearers:** Lay persons who bring up the bread and wine at Mass. The bread and wine will be consecrated and become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.
- Lectionary:** The sacred book used at Mass which contains the readings from Sacred Scripture. The reader proclaims the reading from the Lectionary.
- Liturgy:** The "work of the Church" through which Christ redeems his people. Liturgy is group prayer, and it has a formal structure, and a set of regulations which govern it. The Rite of Marriage, celebrated with or without Mass, is a liturgy.
- Liturgical Music Today:** A document produced by the Conference of Catholic Bishops (1982) regarding music in the liturgy for the United States.
- Music in Catholic Worship:** A document produced by the Conference of Catholic Bishops (1972) regarding music in the liturgy for the United States.
- Nuptial Blessing:** A special blessing given to the newly married couple during the wedding liturgy.
- Reader:** The person or persons who reads the first and second reading at your Wedding. A reader will also lead the Prayers of the Faithful.
- Rite:** The liturgical traditions in which the Roman Catholic faith has come to be expressed and celebrated in various cultures and lands. "Rite" and "ritual" are sometimes interchanged, as in "the sacramental rite" or "the sacramental Ritual." (Catechism of the Catholic Church)
- Rite of Marriage Within Mass:** Mass is celebrated, the Rite of Marriage takes place during the Mass, and the people have the option of receiving Communion.
- Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass:** The Rite of Marriage takes place within a Liturgy of the Word. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is not celebrated, and communion is not offered.

## **Celebration of the Rite of Marriage**

### **Introductory Dialogue between Presider and Couple**

#### **Consent of the Couple**

*(Your consent may be followed by a sung Amen)*

#### **Blessing and Exchange of Rings**

*(The exchange of rings may be followed by a sung Alleluia)*

#### **General Intercessions**

*These may be spoken or sung, and may be written by the couple.*

#### **Nuptial Blessing**

### **Concluding Rite**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Spoken or sung by the assembly. This is not a place for a solo.*

#### **Sign of Peace**

#### **Final Blessing**

**Recessional:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **LOOKING NOW AT THE MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING.....**

Choosing Music for Worship requires a Threefold Judgment.

### **First you will consider the Liturgical Judgment**

Is the text of the music consistent with the nature of liturgy  
as the assembly's worship of God?

Is it sacred and not "secular" or "pop"?

Does the music support the text as an expression of  
Christian faith?

Is it an expression of YOUR faith as a couple?

Is the music a part of Roman Catholic Liturgy?

You will choose liturgical music which all of  
your guests will be asked to join in singing such as:

Gathering Hymn  
Responsorial Psalm  
Alleluia.

If you are having the wedding within Mass, you will  
also choose the sung Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Amen  
Lamb of God and the Communion Hymn.

Where to put your favorite non-liturgical piece of music? Give it place of preference  
at the rehearsal dinner and/or wedding reception, but NOT before, during or after the  
wedding liturgy itself.

Second you will consider  
**The Musical Judgment**

Is the music technically, aesthetically, and expressively good?

Is it an artistic expression of faith and Christian love?

All musical styles (Contemporary, classical, cultural, or folk)  
can assist the assembly to express and share  
the gift of faith that you have as a couple.

One important point: Although all liturgical music should be good,  
not all good music is appropriate for use at the wedding liturgy.

Third, you will consider  
**The Pastoral Judgment**

Does the music allow the assembly to participate fully  
in singing and praying?  
Have you chosen music that people will know?

If this is a wedding with a significant number of people from  
other Faith traditions, have you included music  
that is ecumenical (i.e. known by other Faith traditions)?

Music is a ministry, and therefore all music must be  
led by real people....not recordings.

How are the people going to have the words and music  
for the hymns and responses?

Your cantor/song leader and organist, pianist or guitarist  
should be accustomed to leading Catholic liturgical music.

## Wedding Rite Outside of Mass

**Prelude Music:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Processional Music:** \_\_\_\_\_

You may have instrumental music, followed by the Gathering Hymn, or the Gathering Hymn may be your processional music.

*There are a variety of options for your wedding procession and your pastor, liturgy director or parish wedding coordinator can help you choose.*

**Gathering Hymn:** \_\_\_\_\_  
This hymn is sung by the assembly and has the effect of joining all of your guests into active participation in your wedding liturgy.

**Greeting/Introduction**

**Opening Prayer**

### Liturgy of the Word

**Reading from Sacred Scripture:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Responsorial Psalm:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reading from Sacred Scripture (a second reading is optional) :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Alleluia:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gospel:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Homily**

**Communion Rite**

**The Lord's Prayer**

*Spoken or sung by the assembly. This not the place for a solo.*

**Nuptial Blessing**

**Sign of Peace**

**Lamb of God:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Communion Hymn:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Concluding Rite**

**Final Prayer**

**Final Blessing**

**Dismissal**

**Recessional:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(This may be instrumental or sung)*

**Ministers for the Rite of Marriage**

**Church:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Presider:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bride:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Groom:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bridal Attendants (number):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Concelebrating priests:** \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no. If "yes", how many: \_\_\_\_

**Homilist (if priest or deacon other than the presider)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Director of Liturgy/Music:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organist/pianist/guitarist (if different from the Director of Liturgy/Music):**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cantor (s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Choir:** \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no. If "yes", what is the choir: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reader 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reader 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reader 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Servers:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Gift-bearers (if the wedding is within Mass):**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (if the wedding is within Mass):**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Greeters:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## The Rite of Marriage Within Mass

### Prelude Music:

---

---

---

### Processional Music: \_\_\_\_\_

You may have instrumental music, followed by the Gathering Hymn, or the Gathering Hymn may be your processional music.

*There are a variety of options for your wedding procession and your pastor, liturgy director or parish wedding coordinator can help you choose.*

### Gathering Hymn: \_\_\_\_\_

This hymn is sung by the assembly and has the effect of joining all of your guests into active participation in your wedding liturgy.

### Greeting/Introduction

### Opening Prayer

## Liturgy of the Word

### Reading from Sacred Scripture: \_\_\_\_\_

### Responsorial Psalm: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reading from Sacred Scripture (a second reading is optional) : \_\_\_\_\_

### Alleluia: \_\_\_\_\_

### Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_

### Homily

## Celebration of the Rite of Marriage

### Introductory Dialogue between Presider and Couple

#### Consent of the Couple

*(Your consent may be followed by a sung Amen)*

#### Blessing and Exchange of Rings

*(The exchange of rings may be followed by a sung Alleluia)*

#### General Intercessions

*These may be spoken or sung, and may be written by the couple.*

## Liturgy of the Eucharist

**The altar is prepared and the gifts of bread and wine are brought forward and presented.**

*Music chosen for this time should be brief. This is not a long process.*

### Music (instrumental or vocal): \_\_\_\_\_

### Eucharistic Prayer

*The following acclamations are sung by the assembly.  
Choose a Mass setting which will be familiar to your guests.*

### Holy, Holy: \_\_\_\_\_

### Memorial Acclamation: \_\_\_\_\_

### Great Amen: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions: Mass of Creation (Haugen)  
Community Mass Mass of Light