

# Music at our Liturgy



Music is an integral part of our Liturgical action, bringing people together and allowing them to be an assembly of worshippers in their community.

When choosing music for liturgy, due consideration must be given to the music itself, the text, the ritual function that it serves and the ability of those in music ministry and the assembly to deliver it.

- The primary sources for the texts of liturgical music are Scripture and the prayers of the liturgy.
- Many different forms of music are used in the liturgy according to the various needs of the rites, for example, responsorial psalms, acclamations, responses and hymns.

Instrumental music is also used to create an atmosphere of recollection, stillness and silent prayer.

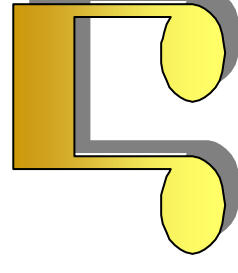
It is very important that music chosen reflects the nature of the occasion. The selection of music should begin with the liturgical texts themselves. Priority should be given to the parts of the Mass, and among these parts, priority should be given to the responsorial psalm, to the acclamations before the Gospel (Alleluia) and within the Eucharistic Prayer (the Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation, and Amen).

The most important questions are:

- In the music chosen, has the more important pieces been attended to in the first place?
- Has the congregation been thought about when choosing the music?

## **Sung Texts**

The Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and summit of our entire liturgical celebration. The whole prayer has been given musical settings by many composers down through the years. The acclamations are of particular importance and should be sung if possible.



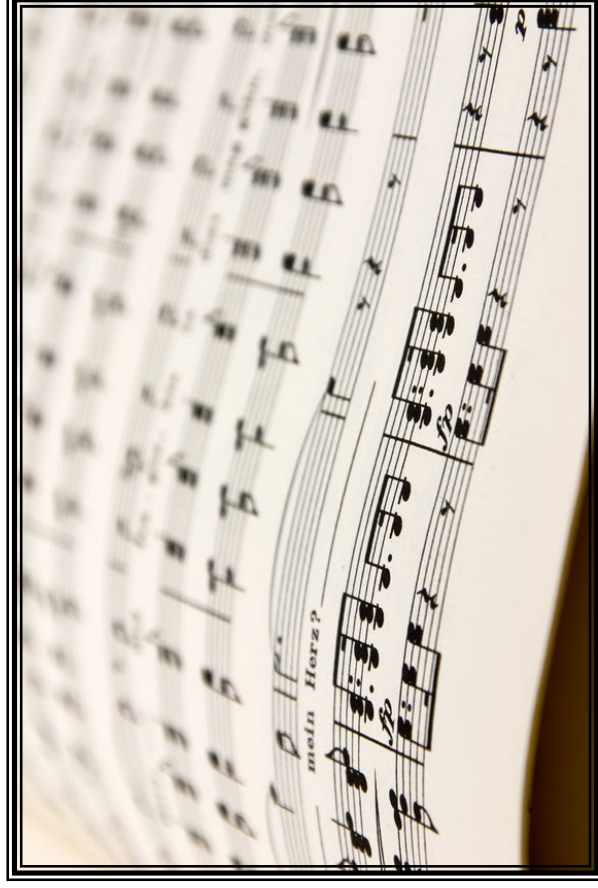
## **After choosing music, ask the following questions:**

- Have the priorities, as in the order of the listing been respected?
- What role has been given to the cantor?
- What part has the choir to play in the choices made?
- Is the participation of the congregation respected?

## **Ministers of Music**

A Psalmist, Cantor, Organist, instrumentalists, choir, director of music assist the congregation's full participation in singing the songs, responses and acclamations which are constitutive elements of the liturgy. These ministers of music exercise a liturgical function within the assembly and by their role, help to add beauty and solemnity to the celebration.

***SING A SONG TO THE LORD'S  
HOLY NAME***



### **Sanctus Acclamation**

This acclamation is a very important part of the Eucharistic Prayer. It belongs to priest and people together. It is a song, and should be sung and the text should be that of the *Missal*.

### **Memorial Acclamation**

The Memorial Acclamation of the people in the Eucharistic Prayer confesses the Church's belief in the mystery of our faith, the Paschal Mystery of Christ's death, resurrection and presence among his people.

- The Memorial Acclamations provided are not specific to the four Eucharistic prayers; they may be used with any of the prayers.
- They are intended to be sung.
- The texts of the acclamations should be those of the *Missal*.

### **Amen**

The Eucharistic Prayer ends with the Doxology, which expresses the glorification of God. In this, the Presider sings *Through him, with him in him etc*, and this is culminated with the GREAT AMEN. At all Masses, we should try to have the Great Amen sung, even if nothing else might be sung.

### **Gospel Acclamation**

The *Alleluia* or Gospel Acclamation is an acclamation which expresses the people's greeting of the Lord and their faith in his presence as he addresses them in the Gospel reading. As an acclamation, the *Alleluia* or Gospel Acclamation (during the season of Lent) should be sung by everyone present. The verse may be sung by cantor or choir.

### **Responsorial Psalm**

The Responsorial Psalm follows the First Reading and is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word. The psalms have been used to give prayerful expression to the faith and feelings of God's people over the centuries. They were used by Christ himself in prayer.

- The Psalm should normally be sung. The preferred form is responsorial, with a cantor singing the verses, and the whole congregation and choir taking up the verse.
- It may not always be possible to have a cantor, so the response only may be sung.
- The Responsorial Psalm is normally sung from the Ambo.

### **Entrance Song**

The purpose of the entrance song is to open the celebration, introduce the congregation's thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity, and accompany the entrance procession. The choice of song should be in keeping with this understanding.

### **Communion Song**

The Communion of priest and people is traditionally accompanied by the singing of a communion song. It may be helpful to encourage the singing of one piece only, that allows a common refrain to be taken up by the gathered assembly.

### **Kyrie**

The *Kyrie* is an ancient chant where the assembly acclaim the Lord and pleads for mercy.

### **Gloria**

The Gloria is one of the Church's most ancient hymns. It is by nature a festive hymn. It is not used during Advent or Lent.

### **Recessional Song**

The recessional procession may be accompanied by a psalm, or song, a seasonal hymn, appropriate instrumental music or indeed, silence.

