

Diocese of Sioux City Office of Worship



Diocesan Music Guidelines

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INTRODUCTION

Saint Augustine says, “Singing is for the one who loves.” When the people of God gather for the celebration of the Mass it is an expression of the love that Saint Augustine mentions. In the celebration of the Mass, the sacrifice of Christ is represented for us in an unbloody manner. That sacrifice shows us just how much God loves us. The Mass is our opportunity to show our love and gratitude back to God for the gift of our salvation. Bishop Nickless points out in his pastoral letter, *Ecclesia Semper Reformanda*, “the primary purpose of all liturgy, especially the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, is the worship of God.” All of our music at Mass must be directed to this end and everything that we do during the celebration of Mass must draw out this fundamental purpose of the Mass itself. Bishop Nickless further points out, “since, in the Church’s liturgy, we meet God in a unique way, how we worship- the external rites, gestures, vessels, music, indeed, the building itself- should reflect the grandeur of the Heavenly liturgy.”

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES

This document is intended to serve as a guide in liturgical and sacred music for the Diocese of Sioux City. First and foremost, the basic guiding rules and principles can be found in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and in *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

All music at Masses should have words of praise to God or are primarily made up of scriptural quotes. Music that focuses primarily on the congregation, rather than on worship of God, even included in Catholic hymnals, is not appropriate for any Mass.

We must also be careful that the music we use conforms to the theology of the Church and the faith that we profess. The Church has long taught, *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi* (the law of prayer is the law of belief). In other words, the words that we pray and sing during the Mass reflect our belief. *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* states, “Liturgical songs must never be permitted to make statements about faith which is untrue.” Those responsible for music in the liturgy must be ever diligent to transmit the faith of the Church in a clear and correct manner. The music minister must be one who is catechized, who knows and understands the faith, and who proclaims this faith in music. *Sing to the Lord* also states, “to be suitable for use in the Liturgy, a sung text must not only be doctrinally correct, but must in itself be an expression of the Catholic faith.”

We must always remember that the music we use at Mass must always express and show forth the meaning of the Mass itself, for the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful. As Bishop Nickless so eloquently said, “Our liturgy should radiate true beauty, reflecting the beauty of God Himself and what he does for us in Christ Jesus” (*Ecclesia Semper Reformanda*).

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

The first part of the Mass consists of rites that “have the character of a beginning, introduction, and preparation (GIRM 46). They include the Entrance chant (*introit*), the reverencing of the altar, a greeting of the people, an Act of Penitence and the *Kyrie* (or the Sprinkling Rite), Glory to God and Collect. These rites are designed “to ensure that the faithful who come together as one establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God’s word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.” (GIRM 46).

The Entrance Chant

The text and music for the Entrance chant may be drawn from a number of sources:

1. The antiphon and psalm from the *Graduale Romanum*
2. The seasonal antiphon from the *Graduale Simplex*
3. A song from another collection of psalms and antiphons (approved by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop)
4. A suitable liturgical song similarly approved by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop

In accord with an uninterrupted history of nearly five centuries, nothing prevents the use of some congregational hymns coming from other Christian traditions, provided that their texts are in conformity with Catholic teaching and they are appropriate to the Catholic Liturgy. (STTL/MDW 115d)

The Act of Penitence

After the greeting, the Act of Penitence follows as the entire assembly prays a formula of general confession.

The ancient invocation *Kyrie eleison* is a “chant by which the faithful acclaim the Lord and implore his mercy.” (GIRM 52) If the *Kyrie* is not included in the Act of Penitence, it is sung or said immediately afterwards. It is usually sung in dialogue by the entire liturgical assembly with the choir or cantor.

The Blessing and Sprinkling of Water

“On Sundays, especially in the season of Easter, in place of the customary Act of Penitence, from time to time the blessing and sprinkling of water to recall Baptism may take place.” (GIRM 51) The song accompanying the sprinkling with blessed water should have an explicitly baptismal character. Note that this is **not** a part of the Glory to God. These are two separate liturgical acts and should not be combined into one so as to confuse the Lord’s mercy with the ancient hymn of praise.

The Gloria

“The *Gloria* 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. The text of this hymn **may not be replaced by any other text.** It is sung or said on Sundays outside the seasons of Advent and Lent, on solemnities and feasts, and at special celebrations of a more solemn character.” (GIRM 53)

The *Gloria* is sung by all, by the people alternately with the choir or cantor, or by the choir alone. If not sung, it is recited.

The *Gloria* may not be moved to a different part of the Mass than the one assigned to it by the *Roman Missal*. It may not, for example, be used in place of the Entrance chant, or during the sprinkling with blessed water. (STTL/MDW 150)

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings and responses from Sacred Scripture. In receiving the Word of God with their hearts and minds, and in responding to it in song, “the people make God’s Word their own.” (GIRM 55)

While the readings are normally read in a clear, audible, and intelligent way, they may also be sung. This singing, however, must serve to bring out the sense of the words, not obscure them.

The Responsorial Psalm

The Responsorial Psalm follows the first reading. Because it is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word, and is in effect a reading from Sacred Scripture, it has great liturgical and pastoral significance. Corresponding to the reading that follows it, the Responsorial Psalm is intended to foster meditation on the Word of God. Its musical setting should aid in this, being careful to not overshadow the other readings. (Lectionary for mass, no. 19)

As a rule the Responsorial Psalm should be sung. Preferably the Psalm is sung responsorial form: “the psalmist, or cantor of the psalm, sings the psalm verses and the whole congregation joins in by singing the response.” (Lectionary for Mass, no. 20)

In the Diocese of Sioux City, it is the norm for the proper Responsorial Psalm from the *Lectionary for Mass* to be used. Only musical settings of psalm texts taken directly from the *Lectionary for Mass* may be used at this place in the liturgy. Songs or hymns, or collections of psalms that paraphrase the psalm text, may not be used in place of the proper text. These collections of psalms may be used at other times in the liturgy (the communion chant, at the offertory, etc.). This is true for all Masses, including weddings and funerals.

The Gospel Acclamation

In the Gospel Acclamation, the assembled faithful welcome “the Lord who is about to speak to them.” (Lectionary for Mass, no. 23) During most of the church year, the *Alleluia* with the proper verse serves as the Gospel Acclamation. During the season of Lent, alternate acclamations with their proper verse are used. The Gospel Acclamation may be omitted when it is not sung.

The Sequence

The Sequence is a liturgical hymn that is **sung** before the Gospel Acclamation on certain days. On Easter Sunday (*Victimae paschali laudes*) and Pentecost Day (*Veni Sancte Spiritus*), the Sequence is required. (GIRM, no. 64) The sequence is optional on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord (*Lauda Sion*) and Our Lady of Sorrows (*Stabat Mater*).

The Sequence may be sung by all together, or in alternation between the congregation and choir/cantor, or by the choir/cantor alone.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The Liturgy of the Eucharist is made up of three main parts: the Preparation of the Gifts, the Eucharistic Prayer, and the Communion Rite.

The Preparation of the Gifts

After the altar has been prepared, gifts of bread and wine are brought to the priest or deacon by members of the assembly. This procession is accompanied by an Offertory chant or song (GIRM nos. 37b, 111), which continues at least until the gifts have been placed on the altar. The norms on the manner of singing are the same as for the Entrance chant (*Graduale Romanum*, *Graduale Simplex*, another collection of antiphons and psalms, or a suitable liturgical song). Instrumental music is also appropriate (STTL/MDW 174).

The Eucharistic Prayer

The people take part in the Eucharistic Prayer by listening attentively to the words sung or spoken by the priest and joining their hearts and minds to the actions of the prayer. Their voices should be joined together in the acclamations which include the *Sanctus*, the *Myterium Fidei* (the Mystery of Faith), and the *Amen*. These acclamations should be sung, especially on Sundays and solemnities. (GIRM 40)

The texts for these acclamations must come directly from the translation in the Roman Missal. The music should not distract from the liturgical act. Elongated introductions or codas, as well as repeats *ad nauseum* are to be avoided.

While the priest proclaims the Eucharistic Prayer there should be no other prayers or singing, and the organ or other musical instruments should be silent, except for the people's acclamations. (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 53)

The Communion Rite

The high point of the Communion Rite is the reception of Holy Communion. This is preceded by rites that prepare the faithful to receive the Lord's Body and Blood as spiritual food. (GIRM 155)

The Lord's Prayer and Sign of Peace are followed by the Breaking of the Bread, "which gave the entire Eucharistic Action its name in apostolic times and which signifies that the many faithful are made one body by receiving Communion from the one Bread of Life which is Christ, who died and rose for the salvation of the world. (GIRM no. 83) This fraction rite, accompanied by the *Agnus Dei* chant, is followed by the *Ecce Agnus Dei* and the reception of Holy Communion. The Communion rite concludes with the Prayer after Communion.

The *Agnus Dei* accompanies the Fraction Rite. It is, as a rule, sung by the choir or cantor with the congregation responding, or it is, at the least, recited aloud. No other Christological invocations may be substituted for the text *Lamb of God*. This is a change made after STTL/MDW was first promulgated.

The Communion Chant

"While the priest is receiving the Sacrament, the communion chant is begun. Its purpose is to express the communicants' union in spirit by means of 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 begins immediately and continues for as long as the Sacrament is being administered to the faithful." (GIRM 86)

The Communion chant is sung by the people with choir or cantor, or by the choir alone (notice it doesn't say the cantor alone). Because the Communion chant expresses the unity of those processing and receiving the Holy Sacrament, communal singing is commendable. The singing of the people should be preeminent.

Accommodation should be made for musicians who wish to receive the Sacrament as well, but the chant should begin as the priest receives.

Careful attention must be paid to the selection of the chant/song during this important sacramental moment. One should "look for texts that have themes of joy, wonder, unity, gratitude, and praise." (STL 193). The text of the communion chant need not specifically reference the Sacrament, as following the ancient Roman tradition, the Communion song might reflect themes of the Gospel reading of the day (STL 191). Above all, songs or chants must clearly radiate a solid Catholic theology. There are four options for the Communion chant:

1. The antiphon with its psalm from the *Graduale Romanum*
2. A seasonal antiphon from the *Graduale Simplex*
3. A psalm from another collection of psalms and antiphons.
4. Another suitable liturgical song.

When the Communion procession is lengthy, more than one piece of music might be desirable. In this case, another congregational song or a piece for choir alone is suitable.

Song after Communion

When the distribution of Communion is finished, the priest and faithful spend time praying privately. If desired, a psalm or other canticle of praise may be sung *by the entire assembly*. (GIRM 88) The song after communion should focus the assembly on the mystery of the Holy Communion in which it participates. It should **never** draw undue attention to the choir or other musicians. (STTL/MDW 196) The practice of a post-communion “song of meditation” sung by either the choir or a soloist is therefore not allowed for in the mass, including school masses, weddings, or funerals.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

Especially on Sundays and other solemn occasions, the blessing may be sung by the priest with the assembly singing the Amen, and the dismissal sung by the deacon or priest with the assembly singing *Thanks be to God*.

Although it is not necessary to sing a recessional hymn (GIRM 90), when it is the custom, all may join in a hymn or suitable liturgical song after the dismissal. Other options include a choral or instrumental piece or, particularly during Lent, silence. (STTL/MDW 199).

MUSIC AT FUNERALS AND WEDDINGS

Music at Funerals

Sacred music has an integral role in the funeral rite, since it can console and uplift while at the same time unite the assembly in faith and love. Music at funerals should express the Paschal Mystery and the Christian’s share in it. Since music can evoke strong feelings, it should be chosen with care. It should console the participants and help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ’s victory over death and in the Christian’s share in that victory.

Secular music, even though it may reflect on the background, character, interests, or personal preferences of the deceased or mourners, is **not appropriate for the Sacred Liturgy**. Music should never be used to memorialize the deceased, but rather to give praise to the Lord, whose Paschal Sacrifice has freed us from the bonds of death.

The psalms are to be given pride of place in the funeral rites because “they powerfully express the suffering and pain, the hope and trust of people of every age and culture. Above all the psalms sing faith in God, of revelation and redemption.” (Order of Christian Funerals, no. 25)

Music at Weddings

The preparation of the Liturgy must concern not only those involved but also the norms of the ritual itself. The marriage Liturgy presents particular challenges and opportunities to planners. Both

musicians and pastors should make every effort to assist couples to understand and share in the planning of their marriage Liturgy.

Oftentimes the only music familiar to the couple is not necessarily suitable to the sacrament, the pastor and musician will make an effort to demonstrate a wide range of music appropriate to the Liturgy. Secular music (or even music from other Christian traditions), even though it may emphasize the love of the spouses for one another, is **not appropriate** for the Sacred Liturgy.

Vocalists may sing alone during the Preparation of the Gifts or during certain devotional aspects of the liturgy (prayers and flowers to the BVM for example). Soloists should not usurp parts of the Mass designated for congregational participation (the Lord's Prayer is an example of this abuse).

These guidelines are considered normative for the Diocese of Sioux City. Given from the Chancery Office, and approved by the Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless, Bishop of Sioux City on September 23, 2014.



Brent C. Lingle

Father Brent C. Lingle
Director of Worship