

GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF MUSIC AND SONGS DURING NUPTIAL MASSES

The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish a life-long partnership between themselves, derives its force and strength from creation, but for the Christian faithful it is also raised up to a higher dignity, since it is numbered among the Sacraments of the new covenant. (Order of Celebrating Matrimony #1)

The chants to be sung during the Rite of Marriage should be appropriate and should express the faith of the Church, with attention paid to the importance of the Responsorial Psalm within the Liturgy of the Word. What is said concerning the chants applies also to the selection of other musical works. (OCM #30)

The Choice of Music in the celebration of Nuptial Masses

1. Since the Rite of Marriage is held within the liturgy, appropriate hymns must be selected throughout the entire celebration, beginning with the entrance hymn up to the recessional, especially with the Proper of the Mass.
2. The primary consideration of those preparing the music in the celebration of Marriage within the Mass is the promotion of the full, conscious, and active participation of the whole assembly. Whenever appropriate therefore, hymns which are familiar to a majority of the faithful must be given priority.
3. When the nuptial mass is celebrated within the various liturgical seasons apart from Ordinary Time, their special nature and themes are considered in the selection of hymns and musical arrangements.
4. Secular songs and music are more appropriately used outside of the church, in particular during the wedding reception.
5. The traditional music for the entrance of the bridal entourage are to be used as they make their way towards their respective places in the nave of the church. The bridal march does not replace the entrance hymn of the Mass.
6. The Entrance hymn, no matter how short, is sung as the Mass begins and while the presider proceeds to the sanctuary and his chair. Otherwise, the entrance antiphon is recited.
7. The traditional imposition of the veil and cord is done at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, that is the Preparation of the Gifts and the Altar.
 - a. The imposition of the veil and cord may be accompanied by instrumental music.
 - b. If appropriate (if the gifts are offered), the hymn for the Preparation of the Gifts may be sung.
8. During the rite of marriage, the questions before the consent and the exchange of consent are the highpoint of the celebration and must be carried out without music, whether sung or instrumental.
9. The hymns for the Proper of the Mass (Entrance, Preparation of the Gifts and the Altar, Communion, Recessional) must follow the requirements of liturgical music.

The Choice of Musical Instruments

1. The pipe organ is to be held in high esteem in the Church since it is a traditional instrument, the sound of which can add a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lift up men's minds to God and higher things.
2. The use of an electronic organ or organ registration of the keyboards can be used if there are no certified pipe organists or pipe organ available. If there is no available Church organ, the acceptable alternative instrument is the classical guitar.
3. In permitting and using other musical instruments, the culture and traditions of individual peoples must be taken into account. However, those instruments which are, by common opinion and use, suitable for secular music only, are to be altogether prohibited from every liturgical celebration and from popular devotions.

Other considerations

1. In order to ensure that the dignity and religious nature of the celebration of the Mass and marriage rites are strictly maintained, the couple, or any one of their designated representatives must submit a list of songs and other musical arrangements to the parish wedding ministry team or the head of the ministry of liturgical music for evaluation and presented to the parish priest for approval.
2. The regulations indicated herein apply similarly to parish choirs who are designated to assist in nuptial masses.
3. The parish shall reserve the right to restrict the movements of song leaders, choral groups, or instrumentalists when the aforementioned guidelines and regulations are violated or disregarded.