

MUSIC at a Memorial Mass **or Mass of Christian Burial (Funeral)**

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My condolences on the loss of your loved one. I have been through the process of planning funerals for my own family members, so I understand the huge and overwhelming task that it is. Having served as a funeral musician for hundreds of families, I have prepared this document in order to help you through the process. In some instances, a family wishes to be involved in every detail of the planning. In others, the burden of organizing a service can be too much.

Whether you wish to select all of the music, or would like me to choose for you – or maybe you have one or two requests – rest assured, I will assist you with the process of planning and providing the music at your service.

That being said, if you wish to have a hand in choosing the music, it is important to understand the Church's views on music in the liturgy.

About your music selections:

The planning of sacred music for Catholic Funeral Celebrations requires careful consideration. The following paragraphs, citing official Church sources, give an insight to what is appropriate to this type of Liturgy.

Funeral and Memorial liturgies are first and foremost a church ritual – a communal prayer that needs to follow the principles and rules of the official public rites of the Catholic Church. Music that is suitable for a regular Catholic Mass is what is usually recommended and most appropriate for use during a Funeral or Memorial liturgy.

The music is something that the assembly should be able to sing together. It should also fulfill the specified function of each part of the liturgy, fitting the purpose, length, and assigned texts, if any, for each particular moment.

“If it is done well, this special form of prayer unites the whole assembly together in one voice and becomes a window onto divine beauty.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church #1156; cf Sacrosanctum Concilium 112).

The Order of Christian Funerals indicates that the music selected for funeral rites should express Christ's Paschal Mystery and a Christian's participation in that Mystery (OCF, 30). As well, “the texts intended to be sung [at the liturgy]... should be drawn chiefly from Holy Scripture and from liturgical sources (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 121).” In sum, “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 (United

States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* [Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2007], 248).”

The bishops of the United States have indicated that pre-recorded music “lacks the authenticity provided by the living liturgical assembly gathered for the Sacred Liturgy (*Sing to the Lord*, 93).” It is not pre-recorded music, but rather, the “lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer, and work [which are to be] united with those of Christ and so acquire a new value (CCC, 1368)” through the celebration of the liturgy. For this reason, pre-recorded music should not, as a general norm, be used within the Church’s funeral rites.

If you have specific non-liturgical songs and/or recordings that you would like to use, please consider using them at a funeral home vigil or after the Mass if there is a reception. During the liturgy itself, live musicians and appropriate liturgical music is what is allowed.

Our Diocese (the Diocese of Sacramento) have published their own guidelines regarding the selection of music for a funeral or memorial Mass. They further emphasize and support the points stated above.

Guidelines from the Diocese of Sacramento

Music is integral to the funeral rites. It allows the community to express convictions and feelings that words alone may fail to convey. It has the power to console and uplift the mourners and to strengthen the unity of the assembly in faith and love. The texts of the songs chosen for a particular celebration should express the paschal mystery of the Lord’s suffering, death, and triumph over death and should be related to the readings from Scripture.” (OCF #30)

1. Music should be provided for the vigil and funeral liturgy and, whenever possible, for the funeral processions and the rite of committal. The specific notes that precede each of these rites suggest places in the rites where music is appropriate (OCF #32)
2. Secular music (live or recorded) is not appropriate during funeral liturgies.
3. “An organist or other instrumentalist, a cantor, and whenever possible, even a choir should assist the assembly’s full participation in singing the songs, responses, and acclamations of these rites.” (OCF #33)

Music should be part of the Funeral Liturgy. A parish cantor and other parish musicians can be most helpful in leading the assembly in sacred song. A parish funeral choir can also assist at the liturgy.

Payment and Reserving Services (the “business” part):

For funerals and memorial services that go through a funeral home, contracting the musician as well as payment is normally handled by the funeral home.

If the service is not done through a funeral home, the typical honorarium for this type of service is \$250.00 (cash or check).

Approved Songs & Hymns for Funerals

- Some of the titles below will be familiar and some may not be. Most of the hymns in Breaking Bread can be found on YouTube for listening to aid you in choosing just the right piece.
- Please note that, with very few exceptions, songs listed under “Bilingual, Multilingual Selections” can be done fully in either language, or split between the two (or more) languages.
- Songs with the word “Alleluia” in the lyrics are not allowed during the season of Lent.

Entrance Procession/Procesión de Entrada: *This song is sung at the beginning of Mass. When a casket is present, the bereaved meet at the entrance at the church and process in, arriving to the pews as the music is being sung.*

English-only Selections

- Come, Follow Me (Berberick/Walker)
- I Heard the Voice of Jesus (Kingsfold/Bonar)
- Morning Has Broken (BUNESSAN)

Spanish-only Selections

- Concédeles el Descanso Eterno (Pedro Rubalcava)
- En la Casa de Mi Padre (Carlos Rosas)
- La Muerte No Es el Final (Cesáreo Gabaráin)

Bilingual, Multilingual Selections

- Amazing Grace/Sublime Gracia/Hong An Tuyet Voi*
- Fly Like a Bird/Suba mi Alma (Canedo)
- Here I Am, Lord/Aquí Estoy, Señor (Schutte)

Responsorial Psalm / Salmo Responsorial: *Recommended Psalms are included below. Please consult guidebook for complete texts.*

- **Psalm 23:** The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
 - Or: Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil, for you are with me.
- **Psalm 25:** To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.
 - Or: No one who waits for you, O Lord, will ever be put to shame.
- **Psalm 27:** The Lord is my light and my salvation.
 - Or: I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.
- **Psalm 42:** My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see him face to face?
- **Psalm 63:** My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.
- **Psalm 103:** The Lord is kind and merciful.
 - Or: The salvation of the just comes from the Lord.
- **Psalm 116:** I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.
- **Psalm 122:** I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.
 - Or: Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.
- **Psalm 130:** Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord.
 - Or: I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.
- **Psalm 143:** O Lord, hear my prayer.

Preparation of the Gifts/Preparación de las Ofrendas: *The Offertory Procession music accompanies the action of preparing the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. At a funeral Mass this does not usually take much time. A short instrumental song is usually best at this point, but sung pieces are still suggested below. Just be aware that usually only one verse will be sung.*

English-only Selections

- Awake, O Sleeper (Ndolo)
- Because the Lord is My Shepherd (Walker)
- 10,000 Reasons/Bless the Lord (Myrin/Redman)
- There Is A Longing (Quigley)
- These Alone Are Enough (Schutte)

Spanish-only Selections

- Bienaventurados (Lourdes C. Montgomery)
- Dios Te Salve, María (Juan Sosa, Pbro.)
- Entre Tus Manos (Ray Repp)
- Pues si Vivimos (Tradicional)
- Visión Pastoral [Cien Ovejas] (Juan Romero)

Bilingual, Multilingual Selections

- Be Not Afraid / No Temas Más (Bob Dufford)
- Flos Carmeli (Manalo) English/Latin
- Hail Mary: Gentle Woman/María: Dulce Madre (Landry)
- Prayer of St. Francis/Oración de San Francisco (Sebastian Temple)
- Ubi Caritas (Hurd) [English/Spanish/Bilingual. Refrain is in Latin]

Communion Song / Canto de Comunión: *It is most fitting and appropriate that a Eucharistic hymn/song be proclaimed during the Communion Procession.*

English-only Selections

- Come to Me and Drink (Hurd)
- Gift of Finest Wheat (Kreutz/Westendorf)
- The Supper of the Lord (Rosania)
- Vine and Branches (Thomson)
- We Are Many Parts (Haugen)

Spanish-only Selections

- El Que Come Mi Carne (Cortés)

Tagalog Selections

- Ang Tanging Alay Ko
- Hindi Kita Malilimutan (Francisco)
- Tanging Yaman

Bilingual, Multilingual Selections

- Ang Katawan Ni Kristo/Behold the Body of Christ (Manalo)
- Miracle of Grace (Bread of Life)/Milagro de Gracia (Stephan)
- One Bread, One Body/Un Pan, Un Cuerpo (Foley)
- Pan del Cielo / Bread From Heaven (Díaz)
- Pescador de Hombres/Lord, You Have Come (Gabaráin)

Procession to the Place of Committal (Closing Song) / Procesión al Lugar de Sepultura: *The priest leads the procession out of the church at which time the hymn is sung. The family follows behind the casket.*

English-only Selections

- A Rightful Place (Angrisano)
- America the Beautiful (America)
- Carry Me Home (Modlin)
- Go In Peace (Hart/Liles)
- I Know that My Redeemer Lives (S. Soper)
- Irish Blessing (Fabing)
- Pastures of the Lord (Stephan)
- Soon and Very Soon (Crouch)

Spanish-only Selections

- Caminaré (Espinosa)
- Resucitó (Argüello)
- Santa María del Camino (Espinosa)
- Soy la Resurrección (Domínguez)

Bilingual, Multilingual Selections

- Blest Be the Lord / A Mi Señor Bendeciré (Dan Schutte)
- En Sus Alas/On Eagle's Wings (Joncas)
- How Great Thou Art (Hine)

OTHER SELECTIONS IN VIETNAMESE

- Dong Co Tuoi*
- Loi Thieng*
- Ngay Ve*
- Tu Chon Luyen Hinh*
- Xin Ngai Thuong Con*

*Although I do not yet sing in Vietnamese, I have these songs and can play the songs instrumentally or accompany a singer who does. If you have other songs in Vietnamese that you would like done in this way, please see to it that I get a copy at least a few days in advance. Thank you!

If there is a song or hymn not on this list, feel free to ask if it is appropriate for a Catholic Mass. Songs published in Catholic Hymnals are normally suitable.

I hope this document has been helpful and reduces the anxiety and weight of planning your service. You may email or text your selections to the contact information on page 1. I do prefer communications in writing so I may review the entire conversation prior to the service. There are usually many, many services on my calendar, so keeping it in writing helps ensure that each family gets the correct music.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any further questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Mark Middleton

Choosing an outside musician at OLMC

If you choose to use an outside musician, OLMC has required that I approve the music for liturgical correctness and textual accuracy. I am also the contact person regarding the use of the piano, organ, microphones, and other sound equipment. Because of this, there is a \$150 bench fee, payable by cash or check (made out to Mark Middleton) that can be delivered to the OLMC office.

Outside musicians will be strictly held to the guidelines presented in this document.

The most important considerations on my end are less about the musicianship of the person/people you are bringing in. I am sure you have heard the musician(s) already through demos or live performance. Where I am most concerned is with the liturgical aspect of the music. The text/lyrics of each piece have to be appropriate, and the musician(s) have to know the current guidelines and order of the Catholic Mass.

It is important that, in addition to the hymns, they must use a Mass Setting with the EXACT words (The United States Congress of Catholic Bishops, USCCB, is very specific and clear about this). No words are to be added, removed, or changed with the exception that a word or phrase can be repeated due to musical considerations. (Example: in the “Glory to God” the words are “Glory to God in the highest.” Two of our musical settings repeat the first three words “Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest.”) An example of what cannot be changed is in the Mystery of Faith. The acceptable translation is “we proclaim your death, O Lord, until you come again.” Using a version with the text “we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory” would not be allowed.

- The Gloria must be sung at the Mass, this is part of the rite! (Exact words as described above).
- The Responsorial Psalm is sung. This should be as close as possible, but doesn’t need to be exact to the text.
- The Gospel Acclamation is sung.
- The Holy is sung (must be exact).
- The Mystery of Faith is sung (must be exact).
- The Great Amen is sung (must be exact).
- If the Our Father is sung, it must be exact. It also needs to be a musical setting that the people in attendance can sing (the Our Father is a community prayer). Typically, on Sundays this is recited.
- The Lamb of God is sung (must be exact).

Once the final selections are made, please submit them to me so I can double-check them, as we again want make sure everything is liturgically correct.

Regarding instruments and microphones:

Please keep me up-to-date with your sound requirements. If you need to use microphones or not, if you need more than 4 music stands, etc. The piano is OK to use as-is, but all other instruments are privately-owned and do not belong to the church. They are not to be used without prior permission.