

GUIDELINES FOR THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC DIOCESE OF VENICE, FLORIDA

PASTORAL MUSIC

Among the many signs and symbols used by the Church to celebrate its faith, music is of preeminent importance. As sacred song is united to words it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy. Yet the function of music is ministerial; it must serve and never dominate. Music should assist the assembled believers to express and share the gift of faith that is within them and to nourish and strengthen their interior commitment of faith. It should heighten the text so that they speak more fully and more effectively. The quality of joy and enthusiasm which music adds to community worship cannot be gained in any other way. It imparts a sense of unity to the assembly and sets the appropriate tone for a particular celebration. (Music in Catholic Worship, # 23)

Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken and destroy faith. (MCW #6) Music done well helps to promote good liturgical celebrations and can nourish faith. Music in worship is not an end in itself, but a dimension of liturgical celebration. If the music does not contribute to the prayerful atmosphere of the congregation, then it has failed. Music is meant to unite the worshipping community; it must also unite the prayerful celebration of God's presence among all people.

The Liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all the Church's power flows. (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy #10) The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be lead to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebration called for by the very nature of the liturgy. (CS #14)

A minister of music, sometimes called a pastoral musician, is the person who is to encourage and lead the faithful in their sung prayer. They are to foster and encourage this full, conscious and active participation of the assembly. To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons and songs as well as by actions and gestures. (CS #30)

If people of faith are called to express their faith in worship, then congregational music is important. Members of the choir, instrumentalists and cantors also exercise a genuine liturgical function in the liturgical celebration. Music in worship is not an end in itself, but contributes to the prayerful atmosphere of the congregation.

Ministers of music need to have competence not only in music, but in liturgy. They need to be able to work as a team player with all those involved in worship. The responsibility

for effective pastoral celebrations in a parish community falls upon all those who exercise major roles in the liturgy. (MCW, #10)

A minister of music should have the following qualities:

- Musical ability to accompany the congregation in their given instrument
- Appropriate training and experience in church music
- Degree in music
- Knowledge of liturgy, current music and principles for selection of music
- Ability to lead and encourage assembly participation in song and prayer
- Prayerful approach to music and liturgy

The chief duties of the parish music director may include:

- Serving as principal organist/keyboard/guitar player, soloist, and accompanist, paying special attention to preparing, teaching, guiding the performance of all the liturgical music in the parish.
- Conduct the parish choirs.
- Preparing the weekly music program and introducing new music to the parish when needed.
- By virtue of his/her role in the parish, the music director should be involved in public relations, both civic and ecumenical.

To determine the value of a given musical element in a liturgical celebration a three fold judgment must be made: musical, liturgical and pastoral. (MCW #25)

The Musical Judgment

Is the music technically, aesthetically and expressively good? This judgment is basic and primary and should be made by competent musicians. Only artistically sound music will be effective in the long run. To admit the cheap, the trite, the musical cliché often found in popular songs for the purpose of “instant liturgy” is to cheapen the liturgy, to expose it to ridicule and to invite failure. (MCW, #26)

Musicians must search for music of quality for worship. They must also do the research needed to find new uses for the best of the old music. They must find practical means of preserving and using our rich heritage of Latin chants and motets. (MCW, # 27) Singing and playing the music of the past is a way for Catholics to stay in touch with and preserve their rich heritage.

The Liturgical Judgment

Is this music suitable for the liturgy? Does the music interpret the text well and make it more meaningful? The nature of the liturgy itself will help to determine what kind of music is called for, what parts are to be sing and who is to sing them. (MCW, #30) Is it to be done by the presider, assembly, cantor, choir, organist or instrumentalists? Music for the congregation must be within its members’ performance capability. The

congregation must be comfortable and secure with what they are doing in order to celebrate well. (MCW, #34)

The Pastoral Judgment

Is the music effective for this congregation? Does music in the celebration enable these people to express their faith, in this place, in this age, in this culture? (MCW, #39) The pastoral judgment can be aided by sensitivity to the age, culture, gender, social characteristics and education of the people who make up the congregation. These factors influence the effectiveness of the liturgical signs, including music. (MCW, #41)

THE PARISH MUSIC PROGRAM

An overall parish music program is vital to the development of the faith community and therefore should be every bit as fundamental to parish life as other ministries.

The program should incorporate musical, social and liturgical aspects including:

1. Detailed and comprehensive budget
2. Specific job descriptions
3. Overview of all musical groups
4. Parish repertoire plans
5. Music for sacraments and instruction
6. Musical events and workshops

It is recommended that part of the parish's annual budget be set aside for the music program to run effectively. Good liturgical music requires time, planning, and practice; therefore, those who serve as parish music ministers should be professionals who are justly compensated.

The parish should support the music program and encourage participation. Opportunities for continuing education, both locally and nationally should be recognized and supported. The best parish music program will be achieved only when liturgical, musical and pastoral efforts are combined to lead the worshipping community in a vibrant and prayerful direction.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

A controversial issue in liturgy and liturgical music today is that of inclusive language, not only in hymnody, but also in all liturgical texts. A number of Christians are distressed by the use of masculine nouns and pronouns to designate women as well as men, language which refers to God only in male images, and the use of female terms to characterize entities such as nature and the Church. Pastoral musicians should be sensitive to this issue when choosing music for worship. Any changes should be introduced with great care to avoid distortion of the message contained in the original liturgical text and its poetic style.

DIVERSITY OF MUSICAL STYLES: CULTURAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY

The United States of America is composed of multicultural and multilingual groups. Such assemblies may provide opportunity to employ the rich diversity of cultural and linguistic expression into one common act of worship. The cultural and ethnic diversity of those assembled for Eucharistic celebrations should be reflected throughout the celebration in the choice of musical texts and styles as well as in the determination of languages which will be used to proclaim the scripture readings and prayers of the Mass.

Members of multilingual assemblies can join in the singing of short texts even if the language is foreign to them (e.g., "Lord, have mercy," "Hosanna in the highest," psalm antiphons, etc.). Repetitious styles of music will also allow for the texts to become familiar and easy to sing for everybody. (CCMB Newsletter Vol. 22 June-July 86 pp. 25-27.)

CONTEMPORARY IDIOM

Flexibility is recognized today as an important value in liturgy. Musicians must be able to combine the many options into an effective whole. They should be able to enhance the liturgy with the newer music as well as the time-honored treasury of liturgical music which can still serve today's liturgy. (MCW, #76) Care must be taken to tap only that which is of the highest quality. Choices must be theologically sound, liturgically appropriate, and musically correct.

Contemporary music is popular today. Many groups have grown from solo guitarists to stylized ensembles which incorporate a wide variety of instruments, such as woodwind, brass, percussion, and strings. Praise bands (drums, bass, guitars, keyboard) are also found in parishes today and enhance the liturgy through new sounds.

Another reflection of the American cultural and stylistic diversity is Life Teen. Musicians involved in the Life Teen programs include music that has lively rhythms, appealing melodies and inclusion of variety of instruments.

Catholic music publishers have released collections of music written specifically for praise bands and youth oriented liturgies. Care must be taken to review the texts of the music borrowed from other communions for their theological soundness as well as their liturgical placement during a Mass.

Another aspect of the contemporary band is the set up and use of a sound system. The director needs to have at least a fundamental knowledge of microphone usage, monitors, speakers, amplifiers, mixers, equalizers, and soundboards. The ideal is to have a knowledgeable person run the sound equipment for the group.

For some of today's youth this music can bring out the true meaning of God's word for them today. As all music used in worship, contemporary music should be conducive to the sense of the liturgy and bring the congregation to a greater faith and communal response to God.

WORSHIP AIDS

Some parishes instead of using hymnals, print weekly worship aids for their assembly. The advantage of the weekly worship aids is the ability to use new music that is not published in the hymnal. If they are used frequently the music director should select music appealing to the people, and repeat the music often enough to become part of the parish repertoire.

THE ORDER OF MASS

The music director is responsible for planning the music for Eucharistic celebrations. They should also work together with the priest, liturgist and liturgy committee. They should know the nature of the parts of the liturgy, what is of primary importance, and the relationship of each part to the rhythm and flow of the liturgical action. (MCW #42)

The Mass is made up of the Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist. These two parts are so closely connected as to form one act of worship. The mass also has introductory and concluding rites, which are secondary. (MCW, #43) The full liturgical structure of the mass is in MCW, # 42-49. A few things to be reminded are discussed below.

The Introductory Rites precede the Liturgy of the Word. It consists of the entrance, greeting, penitential rite, Kyrie, Gloria and Opening Prayer or Collect. The entrance song and opening prayer are primary, all else is secondary. (MCW, #41)

Entrance Procession should create an atmosphere of celebration and place the assembly in the proper frame of mind for listening to the Word of God. It is preferable that during Easter, Lent, Christmas, and Advent that the songs used for gathering are seasonal in nature. (MCW, #61)

The adaptations included in the new GIRM concerning the choice of the entrance song is as follows: In the diocese of the United States there are four options for the entrance.

- (1) The antiphon from the *Roman Missal* or the Psalm from the *Roman Gradual* as set to music there or in another musical setting;
- (2) The seasonal antiphon and Psalm of the *Simple Gradual*;
- (3) Psalms arranged in responsorial or metrical forms;
- (4) A suitable liturgical song sung by the choir alone or by the choir or cantor with the people.” (GIRM, # 87)

Penitential Rite: The “Lord have Mercy” is sung or said. This litany should be brief and simple. During the Easter season or other Sunday’s of the year the Rite of Sprinkling may be used. During the sprinkling a song or instrumental music can be used.

Gloria: The celebrant, cantor, or choir may introduce the Gloria. The choir may sing it alone on festive occasions. If it is not sung, it is to be recited.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The scripture readings are the heart of the liturgy of the word. The homily, responsorial psalms, profession of faith, and the general intercessions complete it. It is of primary importance that the people hear God’s message of love, digest it with the aid of the psalms,

silence, and the homily, and respond, involving themselves in the great covenant of love and redemption. All else is secondary. (MCW, #45)

Responsorial Psalm: Ideally the psalm should be sung, not recited. The Liturgy of the Word comes more fully to life if between the first two readings a cantor sings the psalm verses and all sing the response. (MCW, #63) It should ideally be sung at the ambo.

(Sequence) The sequence is a non-biblical hymn that is sung or said during the liturgy of the word on a few major feasts. Only two, those for Easter and Pentecost Sunday's are mandatory. It is said or sung before the Gospel Acclamation.

Gospel Acclamation:

The acclamation is customarily sung by the cantor first and then repeated by the congregation with a single proper verse sung by the cantor and the acclamation repeated again. If not sung it should be omitted. (MCW, #55)

Profession of Faith: Whether the Creed is sung or recited it should involve all present. If sung it is begun by the priest, cantor or choir. It may be sung straight through together or may be sung in alternation between people and choir. (GIRM #68)

Prayers of the Faithful: These prayers are a response to the word of God. They may be proclaimed by the deacon, reader or cantor. Providing a sung response for the assembly can help to express the importance of the intercession as the priestly prayer of the whole community.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The second part is the Liturgy of the Eucharist. It has three parts: The preparation of gifts, Eucharistic Prayer and Communion.

The Preparation of the Gifts: The song does not need to speak of bread and wine or offering. The text can be a song of praise or of rejoicing in keeping with the season. It is not always necessary to have a song instrumental music is also fitting. (MCW, #71) A congregational seasonal hymn, a choral anthem or an instrumental selection is also appropriate.

The Eucharistic Prayer: Has three acclamations of faith: the Sanctus, the Memorial Acclamation and the Great Amen. The acclamations need to be strong, melodically appealing and affirmative. The people should know them by heart, but there should also be some variety.

The Lord's Prayer: Sung or said

Lamb of God: This is the litany that accompanies the breaking of the Eucharistic bread. This may be sung by the choir but the people should generally make the response.

Communion Rite: As the priest is receiving communion a congregational hymn begins. (GIRM, #86) The singing is continued for as long as the sacrament is being administered to the faithful. The communion song should foster a sense of unity. It should be simple and give expression to the joy of the unity in the body of Christ and the fulfillment of the mystery being celebrated. Benediction hymns are not suitable. It is preferable that communion songs are seasonal in nature during the most important seasons of the Church year. (MCW, #62) Care should be taken that singers are able to receive communion with ease. (GIRM # 86)

A song with an easy repeated familiar refrain works best, so the people do not have to process to communion with hymnbooks or a worship aid. If the communion hymn is finished a choir meditation hymn can be sung. Note that any devotional hymns to the Blessed Mother are not to be used at Communion or as a Communion Meditation. They can be used at the Preparation of the gifts. Some traditional Eucharistic hymns that were composed for Benediction and concentrate on adoration rather than on the action of Communion may not be appropriate as communion songs.

Meditation hymn: The singing of a psalm or hymn after the distribution of communion is optional.

Dismissal of the people The Priest processes to the back of the church. Although the recessional hymn has never been an official part of the rite, musicians are free to plan music that provides an appropriate closing to the liturgy. (MCW, # 73) Musically it can be a hymn, a choir song, instrumental music, or silence.

THE ROLE OF THE CLERGY

No other single factor affects the liturgy as much as the attitude, style and bearing of the celebrant. (MCW #21) The celebrant should be open to improve celebration and bring to the preparation of liturgy understanding and a willingness to share with others the responsibility of fostering a strong liturgical life in the parish. The celebrant should encourage the participation of the congregation in singing. This can be done by the presider's own participation, as well as by occasional homilies or instructions on the role of music in prayer.

Music should increase the effectiveness of a good celebrant. His role is enhanced when he is capable of rendering some of his parts in song. And he should be encouraged to do so. What he cannot sing well and effectively he ought to recite. If capable of singing, he ought, for the sake of the people, rehearse carefully the sung parts that contribute to their celebration. (MCW, # 22)

The presider should be open to learning to sing the melodies of the penitential rite, alleluias, prefaces and acclamations as well as the greetings and orations that belong to him. In this way he contributes to the musical celebration of the liturgy.

THE PLACEMENT OF THE CHOIR AND ORGAN

Every church is different. When building a new church, music and acoustics is an important factor to consider in order to have full, active, conscious participation by the assembly. The location of the music area makes a difference in participation.

The proper placing of the organ and choir according to the arrangement and acoustics of the church will facilitate celebration. Practically speaking, the choir must be near the director and the organ (both console and sound). The choir ought to be able to perform without too much distraction; the acoustics ought to give a lively presence of sound in the choir area and allow both tone and word to reach the congregation with clarity. Visually it is desirable that the choir appear to be part of the worshiping community, yet a part which serves in a unique

way. Locating the organ console too far from the congregation causes a time lag that tends to make the singing drag unless the organist is trained to cope with it. A location near the front pews will facilitate congregational singing. (MCW, #38)

THE ORGANIST

The parish organist serves the parish by providing musical accompaniment for congregational singing, cantors, choirs and instrumentalists. The function of the organist is often combined with that of choir director however, it is very beneficial for the music program in any church if those two functions can be kept separate. It is especially true in large parishes.

Ideally, every church organist should have successfully completed a course of organ study. Those church musicians whose educational background is not in organ playing, e.g. pianists, and who are required to play the organ, should at least seek private study and try to obtain a service playing certificate offered by the AGO or NPM.

HYMN ACCOMPANIMENT

Hymn accompaniment is the most important role of the church organist. Providing an accompaniment that will support and encourage the congregation to sing well is crucial. It involves a few aspects:

ORGAN REGISTRATION

Choosing the right registration is not always easy. Practically every organ is different and even two similar instruments will sound differently in two different rooms depending on acoustics, exact location of the organ, voicing of pipes or size and type of speakers in the case of an electronic instrument.

Trying different stop combinations before using them during liturgy is always a good idea for obtaining the optimal effect. For congregational accompaniment choosing the right registration means that:

- The sound volume matches the size of congregation
- The sound color is clear and well-balanced

PLAYING AN INTRODUCTION

An introduction to a hymn serves a few purposes:

- Helps the people remember the tune
- Gives time for the people to pick up hymnals or worship aids
- Gives the tempo and character of the hymn
- Gives the tonality

In many cases playing the first and last phrases will be sufficient and appropriate. In case of a less familiar or a very short hymn it might be a good idea to play it once through as an introduction. Other options include a short improvisation based on the hymn. In any case the introduction should be played in exactly the same tempo and character as we expect people to sing. Adding to the introduction an extra measure, less a "breath beat" will also help to cue the congregation. Choosing the right tempo and proper phrasing will encourage the congregation to sing better.

CHOOSING RIGHT TEMPOS, PHRASING

Choosing the right tempo is often a matter of taste. It is important however to know the character of the hymn before playing it. Singing it through will also help to see if certain tempo is comfortable for breathing. After choosing the tempo you should remain constant and avoid ritarding until the end of last verse. Appropriate phrasing will involve accents and rhythmic stress by creating periods of silence and sound thus making it more comfortable to follow and breathe between phrases.

ACCOMPANYING CHOIRS, CANTORS AND SOLOISTS

When accompanying a choir while a choral director is conducting, he or she will be giving cues, tempo and dynamics to everybody. The organist must be sure that the choir members can hear the accompaniment well without being overwhelmed by it. That will help them hear their pitches and make their singing more secure. If the organ is located far from the choir and cannot be heard well, it might be a good idea to consider choosing the piano (if available) or an electronic keyboard instead.

The same applies to cantors and soloists. Additionally, having eye contact can be very helpful here by allowing much more freedom with tempos or whenever a split-second decision needs to be made (e.g. doing an extra refrain or cutting the song short).

IMPORTANCE OF THE CANTOR

Even an outstanding singer will not necessarily make a good cantor. Every person who is privileged to be a cantor should know that their role is not to make an appearance and become the center of the congregation's attention, but rather to lead in a song and to encourage even those, who don't normally sing much. Without a doubt, a pleasing voice is the first quality a cantor must possess. If possible, cantors would take advantage of available workshops or voice lessons. Regular participation in cantor rehearsals is crucial to ensure familiarity with the music to be sung at masses and also to work on the vocal technique.

Cantors need to have a positive attitude –this means flexibility and knowing that together with other musicians they serve all people. Cantors need to be aware that their visual appearance is important. All gestures they make should be easily read as welcoming and

inviting. If they are not wearing a robe, their outfit should not be a distraction from the real focus of the Holy Mass.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Instrumental music can serve a genuine function in liturgy, not only in the role of accompaniment, but also in the performance of strictly instrumental compositions. Although the organ has traditionally been the most important instrument in liturgy because of its ability to call forth the congregational song, there is no one instrument that is, by definition, more “holy” or appropriate for liturgy than another. It is, rather, the manner in which instruments are employed which makes them either appropriate or inappropriate for liturgy.

In addition to the embellishment of congregational song by use of the organ or special instrumental parts, instrumental music can be used to assist the assembly in preparing for worship (as a prelude or a meditation). In this way instrumental music can be understood as more than a mere decoration, since it is truly functioning ministerially. It is important to remember the proper place of silence in the liturgy. (Liturgical music Today, #56-59)

With regard to the instruments that may be used in the liturgy, the only limitation is that the musician should be technically able to play the instrument reasonably well and that the musician has some understanding of the nature of the liturgy. Woodwind, brass, percussion, and string instruments are used in liturgies. Piano and electronic keyboards are found in many parishes. All music for the liturgy should be live. (LMT, #60-62)

HANDBELLS

The history of the modern handbells in the Roman Catholic Church, as played by choirs, ensembles or solo ringers, is lengthy and can be traced back to the early Christians. In fact, handbells were found in the catacombs, suggesting their use before 313 A.D. The importance and use of bells has remained a part of our history during liturgy, or in a prayer-form such as the ringing of the *angelus* as well as calling Catholics to liturgy, such as a tolling steeple bell before Mass.

For us today, bells are appreciated perhaps more for their musical potential and for their role in ritual movement than for their use as signals or talismans. They make ceremony of the gathering of the assembly and of their return to the world. They celebrate weddings and toll for funerals. They add splendor to festive processions on Palm Sunday and mark the solemn procession of mourners into a churchyard. They make anew a familiar “Glory to God” on Easter Sunday. They accompany the thoughts and inspire the prayers of the faithful during moments of silence. They escort the “Book of the Gospels” to the ambo. They ring to the endless singing of the congregational psalms, hymns, anthems, spiritual songs and acclamations of all sorts by the assembled people of God.

Handbells can provide an opportunity to build community among children, youth, adults, seniors and any special populations within the parish. Handbell ringing allows numerous people to experience the art of making music. Handbell ringers may not be able to sing a note, lead a prayer, share a reflection or read publicly, but the ringing of handbells provides

these ringers a means of self-expression. Handbells afford music readers and non-music readers the opportunity to make music and to minister to themselves and others through that means of expression.

The use of bells, while following current liturgical guidelines and in the hands of a sensitive, humble and well-practiced musician, will reinforce the preaching, support the scripture readings, enliven the song of the assemble, and help to render the paschal mystery a present reality for all who will listen.

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PURCHASING MUSICAL KEYBOARDS

Although a traditional pipe organ for a parish is the ideal to strive for, because of expense, church size, climate or musical expertise of the organist it may inhibit the purchase of such an instrument. There is a lot to consider in investing in a instrument that will be part of worship for decades to come and lead the congregation to full, active and conscious participation in the liturgy.

There are several options available now in purchasing a church organ. There is the traditional pipe organ, hybrid organs, having both pipes and electronics and fully electronic organs imitating the pipe organ through the use of computer chips. There are also used organs from other churches. Each has its advantages and disadvantages.

To begin the process of buying a new organ, the parish should first contact the Office of Worship in the diocese for suggestions and help. If the church is being renovated at the same time, then acoustics, the placement of the musical instrument and choir needs also to be discussed with the building commission of the diocese also.

There are several steps that should be considered:

- The parish should set up a knowledgeable music committee that knows something about organs
- Have a fund raising plan
- Know how the organ will be used in worship, concerts and for other parish events.
- The type of organ being considered for the parish. Will it fulfill the needs of the parish?
- The life span of the organ
- Tuning of the organ and other budget needs for the future.
- The music committee must also speak with several organ salesmen, visit area churches where a similar organ is now in use, remember to include the current organist in the discussion.

In the area of finances a new pipe organ can be very expensive. They do require tuning, re-leathering and other maintenance needs, especially in the Florida climate. The pipe organ also needs to have enough ranks or stops to be loud and versatile enough to leading the congregation in worship.

Used pipe organs can be transplanted highly successfully, while some can not. Since the organ was built for a specific place it may not sound like it did after being moved because of acoustics and other factors in another church.

The Electronic/Pipe combination instruments known as hybrids feature a mixture of pipes and electronics. They may be cheaper than buying a pipe organ, but the overall tuning situation of hybrids can be rather complex to match with the electronic ranks and can be costly if it needs to be tuned several times a year.

Purchasing an electronic organ is another option. Electronic organs have improved greatly in technology of digital “copy” sounds and effects of real pipe organs. There are several good companies that sell both full electronic and hybrid organs. If a parish has no organ an electronic organ is a step in the right direction especially if the worship space will not accommodate a pipe organ because of size.