

Music in the Wedding Liturgy

Prelude

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy makes it clear that members of the gathered assembly are to dispose themselves to that which is about to be celebrated. Prelude music, therefore, should foster an atmosphere of prayer and reverential silence while members of the assembly are gathering and being seated. At Holy Trinity, the prelude lasts for 20 minutes. There can be **THREE** sung songs, anymore than that places the vocalist's voice at risk for the remainder of the liturgy.

Vocal Suggestions

Where There is Love	David Haas
Bridal Prayer	Roger Copeland
The Gift of Love	Hal Hopson
Walk With Them, Lord	Don Besig
By My Side	Thomas Porter
A Choral Benediction	Don Besig
How Beautiful	Twila Paris
The Wedding Song (There is Love)	Paul Stookey
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring	J.S. Bach
Wherever You Go	David Haas
May Love Be Ours/Not For Tongues	Michael Joncas
Faith, Hope, and Love	David Haas
Together	Bob Krogstad
Walk Hand in Hand	Johnny Cowell
Ave Maria	Franz Schubert or J.S. Bach/Charles Gounod

Procession

The procession for the bridal party and bride is usually instrumental. While one organ piece would suffice, for larger wedding parties (6 or more), it is common to have two contrasting pieces, one for the bridesmaids and one for the bride.

Procession Suggestions

(Bridesmaids)

Canon in D	Pachelbel
Aria	Handel
Air	J.S. Bach
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring	J.S. Bach

(Bride)

Trumpet Voluntary	Clarke
Rondeau	Mouret
Procesion Alegre	Cornell
Trumpet Tune	Purcell

Entrance Hymn

Music for the entrance song should focus the gathered assembly's attention on their role as active participants of the liturgy. The entrance song should be an appropriate hymn of praise or a hymn of petition, asking God's blessing on the couple to be married. It is strongly suggested that a familiar hymn be chosen, as it fosters inclusion of those not Catholic or not churched.

Entrance Hymn Suggestions

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
All Creatures of Our God and King
Here Us Now, Our God and Father ("Alleluia! Sing to Jesus" tune)
Love Divine, All Love's Excelling
Now Thank We All Our God
Praise to the Lord

Gloria

The Glory to God will be sung immediately following the Entrance Hymn as part of the Penitential Rite. The Missal number should be listed in the program, allowing the congregation to participate. During the seasons of Advent and Lent, the Gloria is omitted.

Responsorial Psalm

The Responsorial Psalm is taken from the "Together For Life" booklet. The musical setting must be responsorial, i.e. the cantor sings the verses and the assembly responds with the sung refrain. Songs based on psalms which paraphrase the text of the psalm are not to be used in the place of the Responsorial Psalm. Here at Holy Trinity we use the settings from our Sunday liturgies, as is written in the Oregon Catholic Press' Respond & Acclaim book.

(From Parish Resource "Respond & Acclaim")

Psalm 103	"The Lord is kind and merciful."
Psalm 145	"I will praise your name forever, my king and my God."
Psalm 112	"A light rises in the darkness; a light for the upright."
Psalm 34	"Taste and see the goodness of the Lord."
Psalm 33	"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord."
Psalm 128	"Blessed are those who fear the Lord."
Psalm 85	"Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation."
Psalm 148	"Let all praise the name of the Lord."

Gospel Acclamation

The Gospel acclamation is always sung. . . An appropriate setting of the "Alleluia" (or acclamation of praise during the season of Lent) is the "Celtic Alleluia." It is the most widely known.

Presentation/Preparation of the Gifts

Because in the context of a wedding this ritual action does not take a long time, it is important that music not interrupt the flow of the liturgy. Often solos will do that and place undue importance on this part of the liturgy. Instrumental music is best for the preparation of the gifts.

Eucharistic Acclamations

The Preface acclamations, Memorial Acclamation and concluding Doxology should be chosen from settings that are most familiar to practicing Catholics. As a matter of course, guests who make up the assembly often come from different parishes. Keeping in mind the active, full, and conscious participation of the assembly, the setting of these acclamations should be familiar and easy for the assembly to sing. Here at Holy Trinity, during wedding liturgies we normally sing the “Mass of St. Frances Cabrini” by Kevin Keil , a contemporary setting currently used at Holy Trinity and generally known to all Catholics.

Communion Procession

The communion procession song must be from our parish repertoire of communion hymns. It is congregational and should be Eucharistic in nature, i.e. expressing praise and thanksgiving and stressing our oneness in Christ. Ideally, a short, simple refrain to be sung by the assembly with the verses sung by a cantor should be selected.

Communion Hymn Suggestions

(from OCP Missal Issue)

One Love Released
Bread of Life
Gift of Finest Wheat
Behold the Lamb
The Supper of the Lord
Taste and See
I Am the Living Bread
Seed, Scattered, and Sown
Bread for the World
Eat This Bread
Our Blessing Cup
One Bread, One Body
I Received the Living God
This Bread That We Share
You Are Mine
Lord, Who at Thy First Eucharist

Concluding Recessional Music

The music at the Nuptial Recessional is traditionally instrumental and joyful in nature. The style may vary from traditional to the avant-garde or from stately to dance-like. The operative words here are “appropriate” and “dignified.”

Recessional Music Suggestions

The Wedding March	Mendelssohn
Alegre Procesion (Joyous Procession)	Cornell
Allegro Maestoso (Hornpipe)	Handel
Trumpet Tune	Purcell
Rondeau	Mouret

Other Music Issues

Recorded Music

In keeping with the General Principles on the Structure of the Liturgy, Liturgical Music Today (1982) offers the following guidelines on “recorded music.”

60. The liturgy is a complex use of signs expressed by living human beings. Music, being preeminent among those signs, ought to be “live.” Recorded music as a general norm, should never be used within the liturgy to replace the congregation, the choir, the organist, or other instrumentalists.

The Unity Candle

The lighting of the unity candle to symbolize the uniting of two individuals or two families is not part of the Catholic wedding liturgy. Candles lit during the liturgy represent the light of Christ, not an individual or family. The use of candles to symbolize something other than Christ weakens the value of the symbol. The union of the couple is ritualized in the wedding liturgy by the exchange of consent, vows, rings, nuptial blessing, and (for two Catholics) within the context of a mass, by the sharing of the Eucharist. It is advisable to light a secular candle “symbolizing unity” at the wedding reception.

Stating that, on the occasion that the couple strongly desires a unity candle, we at Holy Trinity limit the accompanying music to “The Unity Candle Song” by Raymond Haan. It was written specifically for the Catholic wedding liturgy and serves to distinguish between the light of Christ and a “testimony of this bright flame.”

Marian Devotion

It is hopeful and encouraged that a couple has a spiritual devotion to the Blessed Mother as part of their married life together. The practice of bringing flowers to the Marian shrine, however, is not part of the Catholic wedding liturgy. This practice stems from different cultures and ethnic traditions and has grown “popular” in recent times. Obviously, a Marian song would be appropriate here, specifically “Ave Maria” (Hail Mary) by either Franz Schubert or J.S. Bach/Charles Gounod. Private devotions interrupt the flow of the Marriage Rite. It is like taking time out from the community’s action for a private moment for the bride or couple. Such devotions should be done privately at another time; possibly at the rehearsal.