



LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS

National Liturgy Conference
WOLLONGONG / 15-18 JANUARY 2014



Paul Mason

Principles and Resources for Selecting Music for the Mass



Purpose of this workshop

- Review underlying principles
- Briefly review available resources

For selecting music for Mass



Relevant Church Documents

- Constitution on Sacred Liturgy
- *Musicam Sacram*
- General Instruction on the Roman Missal
- Introduction to the Lectionary
- Directory for Masses with Children
- Chirograph on Sacred Music
- Catechism of the Catholic Church



The Questions

- How much singing?
- What are the priorities? Why?
- What music suits which parts of the liturgy?
- What are the performance issues to be considered?



Journey

- Centrality of Liturgy and Eucharist
- Function of Music in Liturgy
- Role of Music Ministry
- Liturgical Song Forms in Mass
- Criteria for Choosing Music for Mass
- Analysis of Music Examples
- Resources to Help



Centrality of Liturgy

- Participation of the People of God in the Work of God
- Summit and Source - SC
- Source and Summit - LG



Function of Music in Liturgy

- “When song and music are signs of the Holy Spirit’s presence and action, they encourage, in a certain way, communion with the Trinity”
 - John Paul II, Address to the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, 3; Chirograph on Sacred Music, 3.



The Role of Music Ministry

- *Ekklesia - Choros*
- The assembly is the choir



Liturgical Song Forms in Mass

- Acclamation
- Cantillation
- Dialogue
- Hymn
- Litany
- Processional Song
- Responsorial Psalm



Criteria for Music in Mass

- Liturgical
- Musical
- Pastoral
- Holy
- Beautiful
- Universal



Analysis of Examples



Resources

- Living Liturgy
 - (sale.catholic.org.au/liturgy/living-liturgy.html)
- Liturgy Notes (liturgy.dow.org.au)
- LiturgyHelp (LiturgyHelp.com)
- Celebration (celebrationpublications.org)





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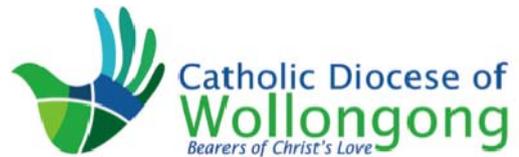
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Guidelines: Music Within the Mass

By Paul Mason, Coordinator of Liturgy, Diocese of Wollongong

Introduction

This newly published guideline for Music within the Mass is intended to provide continuity with previous guidance, updated to include changes in resources in the past five years.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide support to parish and school music leaders and groups in their day-to-day ministry of music within the Mass.

The document

- recalls the centrality of the Eucharist to our Catholic way of life,
- helps in understanding the purpose and importance of music within the Mass,
- identifies the assembly as the primary music minister,
- details the important role of specialist music ministers in preparation and coordination of the assembly's music ministry,
- identifies the different forms of liturgical song within the Mass,
- helps guide the selection of the parts of Mass to be sung,
- explains the options and helps guide the selection of music for the various parts of the Mass,
- identifies other key concerns for parish and school music ministry as well as strategies and resources to address them.

These guidelines should be read within the context of the "Model of Music Ministry" outlined in the PSALMIST program, announced in May 2012 and published in the June 2012 edition of the Diocese's *Faith and Life* e-newsletter. These guidelines are used in the preparation of the "Music Recommendations for Sundays", published in the Diocese's *Faith and Life* e-newsletter each month.

It is hoped that these guidelines will assist you in your music ministry and help make our celebration of the Mass "an uplifting experience of the community at prayer and worship" (Goal B, Diocesan Pastoral Plan 2011-2015).

Acknowledgments and References

Some of the material has been previously published in the following media: (1) various pages on the *Liturgical Song* website initially published in 2007 (www.liturgicalsong.com); and (2) Diocese of Broken Bay Liturgy Commission, *Music Within the Mass*, 2008, now out-of-print.

For further discussion on the pastoral implications of John Paul II's Chirograph on Sacred Music see: Paul Mason, "The Pastoral Implications of John Paul II's Chirograph for the Centenary of the *Motu Proprio* 'Tra Le Sollecitudini' on Sacred Music." *Worship* 82:5 (September 2008), 386-413.

The Centrality of Liturgy and the Eucharist

As Catholics, we know that celebrating the liturgy of the Church is at the heart of the way we give glory to God. The term 'liturgy' has its origins in the Greek word *λειτουργία*, meaning 'public work' or a 'service in the name of / on behalf of the people.' This word appears throughout the New Testament, and is understood to mean the participation of the People of God in the work of the Triune God (cf. Lk 1:23; Acts 13:2; Rom 15:16, 27; 2 Cor 9:12; Phil 2:14-17, 25, 30; Heb 8:2, 6).

Through liturgy, Christ continues the work of our redemption in, with and through his Church. The liturgy is our way of participating publicly in the ongoing work of Christ – in worship, proclamation of the Gospel and active charity – to the glory of God (Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), 1069-70). No wonder the Second Vatican Council described liturgy as the summit and source of the Church's activity (Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10), and Eucharist (the Mass) as the source and summit of Christian life (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 11).

The Function and Importance of Music in Liturgy

Our model for music in the liturgy is Jesus himself, who sang psalms with the apostles at the Last Supper (Mt 26:30; Mk 14:26). Music is an integral part of our participation in liturgy – an integral part of our participation in the work of God. For "when song and music are signs of the Holy Spirit's presence and action, they encourage, in a certain way, communion with the Trinity" (John Paul II, Address to the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, 3; Chirograph on Sacred Music, 3).

The Second Vatican Council's Constitution on Sacred Liturgy (CSL) made particular mention of the role of music in fulfilling the purpose of liturgy, which is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful (CSL 112). The Second Vatican Council's Instruction on Music in the Liturgy, *Musicae Sacram* (MS), mentions five specific ministerial functions of music in the liturgy. Through music in the liturgy:

1. prayer is given a more graceful expression,
2. the mystery of the liturgy, with its hierarchical and community nature, is more openly shown,
3. the unity of hearts is more profoundly achieved by the union of voices,
4. minds are more easily raised to heavenly things by the beauty of the liturgy, and
5. the whole celebration more clearly prefigures the heavenly liturgy (cf. MS 4-5).

"One cannot find anything more religious and more joyful in sacred celebrations than a whole congregation expressing its faith and devotion in song" (MS 16).

"Great importance should therefore be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass, with due consideration for the culture of peoples and abilities of each liturgical assembly. Although it is not always necessary (e.g., in weekday Masses) to sing all the texts that are in principle meant to be sung, every care should be taken that singing by the ministers and the people is not absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and on holy days of obligation" (General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), 40).

Our preparation and leadership of music within the Mass greatly assists the People of God, the community as the body of Christ, to experience "new life in the Spirit, involvement in the mission of the Church, and service to her unity" (CCC 1072).

The Role of the Music Ministry

The primary music minister in the liturgy is the assembly. At certain times the priest, the deacon, the choir, the musicians, the psalmist and the cantor have specific roles of their own. But there is no place in the liturgy for performances of art for art's sake.

Of special importance are the roles of music director, choir director and music coordinator, who are responsible for preparing, rehearsing and conducting the musical aspects of liturgical celebrations. They have a vital role in choosing the music and helping the assembly take an active part in the singing (cf. CSL 28, 30, 114, 118, and 121). The role of voice trainers is critical in preparing psalmists to sing the responsorial psalm. "From the smooth coordination of all – the priest celebrant and the deacon, the acolytes, the altar servers, the readers, the psalmist, the *schola cantorum* (choir), the musicians, the cantor and the assembly – flows the proper spiritual atmosphere which makes the liturgical moment truly intense, shared in and fruitful" (Chirograph, 8).

Liturgical Song Forms

Liturgical song is music wed to prayer text. The liturgy comprises a variety of different forms of prayer, each requiring a different song form for musical expression. Each part of the Mass takes one of the following seven forms:

A – An **acclamation** is a spontaneous joyful vocalisation sung by all, accompanied or unaccompanied.

C – a **cantillation** is a kind of spoken singing, usually unaccompanied, where the melody and rhythm is close to that of speech. It is used when prayers, readings and proclamations are sung instead of recited. Cantillations are sung by the priest celebrant or other minister and conclude with an acclamation of assent sung by all.

D – A **dialogue** between priest and people is used at the start of the Mass, and to introduce each major part – the Gospel, the Eucharistic Prayer, the Communion, and the dismissal. Dialogues are sung unaccompanied.

H – A **hymn** is a song of praise with no other accompanying liturgical action. There are only two hymns in the Mass, and they are not always sung. Singing of the "Glory to God" is by the choir or cantor alternating with the people, or entirely by the people or entirely by the choir alone (GIRM 53). If there is a song of praise after communion, singing is by the entire assembly (GIRM 88).

L – A **litany** is a prayer with a series of invocations or intercessions sung by a cantor or other minister, with a repeated response sung by all.

P – A **processional song** is one that accompanies another liturgical action. Songs with refrains and a variable number of verses are most appropriate. The beginning and ending should match the liturgical action. Singing is by the choir or cantor alternating with the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone; alternatively, an instrumental solo may be played instead of singing a song (GIRM 48, 74, 87, 313; MS, 36, 66-67).

R – The **responsorial psalm** is sung scripture with no other accompanying liturgical action. All sing the psalm response at the beginning and after each verse; the cantor of the psalm sings the intervening verses. The texts are prescribed, with options to use the given psalm of the day or one of the common seasonal psalms or antiphons in the lectionary, or a chant from the *Graduale Romanum* or the *Graduale Simplex* (GIRM 61).

Choosing Music for Mass

Music fulfills its role in liturgy when: (1) the amount of singing aptly corresponds to the solemnity of the occasion, (2) the selected music provides for the unanimous participation of the assembly at the designated moments, and (3) the beauty of the compositions and their performance is expressive of prayer (cf. CCC 1157).

The amount of singing should correspond to the degree of festivity and solemnity of the particular celebration of the day, feast or season (MS 7). For example, weekdays are more subdued than Sundays; the major Sunday community Mass is more festive than other Sunday Masses; major feasts such as Trinity Sunday or Pentecost are more festive than other Sundays; the seasons of Lent and Advent are more subdued; the seasons of Christmas and Easter are more festive.

“In the choosing of the parts actually to be sung, however, preference should be given to those that are of greater importance and especially to those to be sung by the presider or the deacon or the lector, with the people responding, or by the presider and people together” (GIRM 39-40; cf. MS 6, 7, 16, 28-36). See table on page 6 for priority ratings of parts.

When choosing music and songs, “the criterion that must inspire every composition and performance of songs and sacred music is the beauty that invites prayer” (John Paul II, Address to the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, 3; cf. Chirograph, 3).

Music preparation involves the liturgy team, the musicians, the presider and the assembly. All need to work in collaboration, respecting the particular expertise each one brings to the process (cf. MS 5).

To help in this process, the Diocese of Wollongong provides a broad range of music suggestions from a common core repertoire in its monthly *Faith and Life* e-Newsletter.

The Liturgical – Musical – Pastoral Criterion

There are three long-held principles that help us to choose the most appropriate music (cf. Pope John Paul II’s Chirograph on Sacred Music, 4-6; *Musicam Sacram*, 5; and Pope Pius X’s *Tra Le Sollecitudini*, 2, 7-9, 22-23):

1. Liturgically, it must be holy

To be holy, the music must serve the spirit and norms of the liturgy and the faith it expresses.

Is it closely connected with the liturgical action?

Not all music is suitable. Even some so-called Sacred Music “cannot be part of the celebration without violating the spirit and norms of the liturgy itself” (Chirograph, 4). To be closely connected to the liturgical action, “the meaning and the proper nature of each part and of each song” must be carefully observed (MS 6). These norms are detailed in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) and *Musicam Sacram* (MS). The relevant paragraphs are summarised in the table on page 6.

Does it express the Church’s faith and teaching?

The text should be based on appropriate scriptural or liturgical texts. It should refer to God in the persons of the Trinity. It should express the nature of the Church as the People of God and the Body of Christ. It must not conflict with the catechetical teaching and tradition of the Church.

2. Musically, it must be beautiful

Much of the beauty of liturgical music is in its apt suitability to liturgical prayer.

Does it possess sound form?

The melodic range and contour, the harmony, rhythm and tempo must be aptly suited to singing by the intended music ministers – priest, cantor, *schola* (choir) and assembly. The form of song must be aptly suited to the particular part of the liturgy – cantillation (for prayers, readings and proclamations), dialogue, acclamation, litany, responsorial psalm, processional antiphon or song with repeating refrain, or hymn (see page 3).

Is it true art?

It must have enduring appeal, able to bear the weight of repeated singing over time.

Does it fully adhere to the text it presents?

It must suitably embody the text of the liturgy. Prescribed texts must be used without variation. Where texts are not prescribed, “they must be in keeping with the parts of the Mass, the feast or the liturgical season” (MS 36).

Does it synchronise with the intended time and moment in the liturgy?

The music should be synchronised to begin and end at the times specified by the rite. “The various moments in the Liturgy require a musical expression of their own. From time to time this must fittingly bring out the nature proper to a specific rite, now proclaiming God’s marvels, now expressing praise, supplication or even sorrow” (Chirograph, 5).

Does it reflect the gestures of the rite?

It must be aptly suited to any gestures, actions or processions it accompanies (e.g. the breaking of the bread, the procession and presentation of the gifts).

3. Pastorally, it must be universal

The music must be suited to the particular assembly while respecting the need for universal appeal.

Does it comply with the legitimate demands for adaptation and inculturation?

The music should be in a language that is comprehensible to the majority (Chirograph, 6). There are many local cultural adaptations as well as special provisions for Masses with children and other special groups that must be considered. Your parish priest is best placed to discern what adaptations are applicable for a given situation.

Does it involve the entire assembly in the celebration?

The music must invite prayerful participation in each and every person, young and old. The Diocese of Wollongong is developing a common repertoire for parishes and schools in the Diocese to meet this important pastoral need.

Is it deserving of universal esteem, offending nobody?

Personal tastes in music vary greatly in a parish assembly. While not everything chosen will be everyone’s favourite, all the music must be deserving of everyone’s esteem. Music that offends anyone’s prayerful sensibilities should be avoided.

In selecting music for a particular celebration, we should undertake an analysis of the liturgical, musical and pastoral characteristics of the music, and then ask the question: **“Does this particular piece of music possess the universal beauty that invites the involvement of the entire assembly in this particular prayer?”**

	Ritual Element	Priority	Form	Summary of Purpose & Timing (cf. GIRM paragraph)
Introductory Rites	Entrance Song	★★★★	P	Foster unity; reflect on the day, feast or season. Start before ministers begin procession; end when ministers are in place and any incensing is finished. (47-49)
	Sign of Cross & Greeting (Kyrie / Penitential Rite)	★★ ★★☆	D L	Symbolise unity of priest and assembly with Christ. (50) Pray, acknowledging God's grace in Christ. Allow a time of silence before sung invocations. (51-52)
	(Sprinkling Rite)	★★★★	P	(Option for Sundays, especially in Easter season.) Recall the grace of baptism. Start when priest begins sprinkling; end when priest returns to sanctuary. (51)
	(Glory to God)	★★★★☆	H	(Sundays and major feasts, except in Advent and Lent.) In union with the Spirit, praise the Father and Son. Agree with presider a time and signal to begin. (53)
	Opening Prayer	★★	C	Pray, reflecting on the day, feast or season. (54)
Liturgy of the Word	1 st Reading	★	C	Proclaim / reflect on the Word in the Old Covenant. (59)
	Responsorial Psalm	★★★★	R	Reflect on Christ in the songs of the Old Covenant. Allow silent period after reading before beginning. (61)
	(2 nd Reading)	★	C	Proclaim / listen to the teaching of the Apostles. (59)
	Gospel Acclamation	★★★★★	A/P	Acclaim the arrival of Jesus Christ. Start when minister stands; allow time for procession of book of Gospels; end when minister reaches lectern. (62-64)
	Gospel Greeting	★★	D	Rouse the assembly to listen to the Gospel. (60)
	Gospel	★	C	Proclaim / listen to the life and teaching of Jesus. (60)
	Homily			Break open the Word. (65-66)
	(Creed)	☆	C	(Sundays and Solemnities) Proclaim our faith. (67-68)
	Prayer of the Faithful	★★☆	L	Pray for the church, the world, the needy & us. (69-71)
Liturgy of the Eucharist	(Offertory Song)	★★★★	P	Reflect on the people and their gifts, the day, feast or season. Start immediately after the Prayer of the Faithful; end no earlier than the placing of the gifts on the altar and no later than the washing of hands. (74-76)
	Prayer over the Gifts	★★	C	Pray, reflecting on our gifts & Christ's offering. (77)
	Preface Dialogue	★★	D	Rouse the assembly to praise & thanksgiving. (78-79)
	Preface	★★	C	Thanksgiving for all God has done for us. (78-79)
	Holy Holy	★★★★★	A	Praise God in union with the praise of heaven. (78-79)
	Eucharistic Prayer	★★	C	In union with Christ, confess the great works of God, and offer sacrifice. Recall the mystery of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. (2) Invoke the Holy Spirit to transform the gifts, that they may become the body and blood of Christ, and that we in turn may become one body in Christ. Pray for the Church and the reign of God in the world. Give glory to the Father, through the Son with the Holy Spirit. (78-79)
	Eucharistic Acclamations	★★★★★	A	Acclaim Christ's death, resurrection and return. (78-79)
	Great Amen	★★★★★	A	Give assent to the whole Eucharistic prayer. (78-79)
	The Lord's Prayer	★★★★	C	Pray to the Father in the words of Jesus. (81)
	Sign of Peace	★★	D	Rouse the assembly to peace and communion. (82)
	Lamb of God	★★★★☆	L	Pray, acknowledging God's grace in the Lamb. Begin when the presider begins breaking the bread. (83)
	Communion Song	★★★★	P	Express our joy and unity; reflect on the day, feast or season. Start when the priest receives the sacrament; end when the last of the faithful receive the sacrament, usually the choir and the musicians! (86-87)
	(Song of Praise)	★★★	H	(This is optional, after a time of silent prayer.) In union with the Spirit, praise the Father and the Son. (88)
Prayer after Communion	★★	C	Pray for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated. (89)	
Conclusion	Blessing & Dismissal	★★	D	Rouse the assembly to Christ's mission. (90)
	(Recessional Song)	★★★	P	Express our mission to the world; reflect on the day, feast or season. Start immediately after the dismissal; end when the ministers have left the church. (MS 36)

The table opposite shows each Mass part, its priority for singing, its song form (see page 3), a summary of its purpose in the liturgy, and the GIRM paragraph numbers that detail the norms for the part. (Parts in parentheses are optional, depending on the day, feast or season). Those parts with more stars should be included for singing before those with fewer stars. As a rough guide, 5 stars for all Masses, 4 and 3 stars for Sundays, 2 stars for major feasts and celebrations, 1 star for the most festive and solemn celebrations.

An Example of Liturgical – Musical – Pastoral Analysis

The use of “Lord the Light of your Love” (a.k.a. “Shine Jesus Shine”), by Graham Kendrick, as a recessional song for the Second Sunday of Lent, Year A, by an assembly comprising youth and older people.

We ask ourselves, is it:

- *Liturgically holy, well suited as a recessional song?*
The song’s energy and prophetic refrain are well suited to the ritual act of being sent forth. It is a strong expression of the Church’s faith and teaching about Christ the King, the Light of the World, the nature of the Trinity, salvation through the blood of Christ, transformation through meditation on Christ, and the mission of the mystical body of Christ in the world today.
- *Musically beautiful, inviting participation?*
The song possesses sound form: rhythm and tempo are aptly suited to a procession song; the melodic range is manageable with accompaniment in the key of D. The harmony is sound and the melody is a strong artistic expression of prayerful joy. The song has enduring appeal. There is no prescribed text; the lyrics are very expressive of the Gospel of the day, which is about the Transfiguration of Jesus, and the dismissal option 4 – “to go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.”
- *Pastorally universal, involving the entire assembly?*
The song has universal appeal; no one would be offended by it. It is particularly suited to youth, but is also suitable for older age groups. It has the capability to involve the entire assembly in the act of sending forth. It lends itself to adaptation to contemporary music ensembles.

Conclusion: Yes. “Lord the Light of Your Love” possesses the universal beauty that invites the involvement of the entire assembly in the recessional song for the Second Sunday of Lent, Year A.

Music Languages and Styles

For the sake of the assembly, we should step out of our own comfort zone to embrace a variety of music styles. For example, in the same liturgical celebration we might sing songs accompanied by organ, piano, guitar and other instruments. We might just have an instrumental for the Procession of Gifts and we might have some unaccompanied singing (e.g. the Our Father). A typically folk or contemporary style band should try some of the popular traditional hymns, Taize and other chants. A more traditional, classical group should try doing some more contemporary popular songs and the new English-language chant Mass setting arranged for the assembly’s participation. The Catholic Church has a rich and diverse treasury of sacred music.

Accessibility of Lyrics for the Assembly

It is important we make sure everyone in the assembly can at least read the words of songs from a hymnal, a PowerPoint overhead or a pew sheet. We greatly assist the assembly’s participation if we provide both lyrics and melody.

Watch Your Language!

Some older songs have caused concern in many communities in the language they used. Most lyricists have addressed these issues and recent editions of songs have been updated. Check the websites of publishers and composers for text updates.

Copyright

There is a moral responsibility to copyright owners when copying lyrics and music. Music ministers should read "Guidelines: Copyright in Parish and School Liturgy" published in the Liturgy Notes section of the *Faith and Life* e-newsletter vol 1 no 7 (September).

Other Resources

Primary Church Documents

See Vatican website (www.vatican.va)

Vatican II, **Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy**, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963)
 Vatican II, **Instruction on Music in the Liturgy**, *Musicam Sacram* (1967)
 Congregation for Divine Worship, **Instruction on Masses with Special Groups** (1969)
Directory for Masses with Children (1973)
Lectionary for Mass, Introduction, 2nd Ed (1981)
 John Paul II, **Chirograph on Sacred Music** (2003)
 Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, **General Instruction of the Roman Missal**, 3rd typical edition (2010)

Planning Resources for Music Within the Mass

Faith and Life e-Newsletter (<http://dow.org.au>)
LabOra (Liturgy, Brisbane; <http://www.liturgybrisbane.net.au>)
LiturgyHelp.com (<http://www.liturgyhelp.com>)
Liturgy News (Liturgy, Brisbane)
Ordo (Liturgy, Brisbane)
Pastoral Liturgy (Notre Dame, Fremantle)
The Summit (Office for Worship, Melbourne)
Pastoral Musicians (US: <http://www.npm.org>; Aust: <http://www.apmn.org.au>)

Helpful Books for Music Within the Mass

Lucien Diess, *Visions of Liturgy and Music for a New Century* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgy Training Publications, 1996)
 Joseph Gelineau, *Liturgical Assembly, Liturgical Song* (Portland, OR: Pastoral Press, 2002)
 Gerard Moore, *Why the Mass Matters: A Guide to Praying the Mass* (Sydney: St Pauls, 2004)

Diocesan Mass Setting – The Glendalough Mass (Liam Lawton – Distributor Willow Publishing; <http://www.asonevoice.com.au>)

Australian Hymnals for Use in Mass

As One Voice I (Willow Publishing: Manly Vale)
As One Voice II (Willow Publishing: Manly Vale)
AOV for Kids (Willow Publishing: Manly Vale)
As One Voice: Next Generation (Willow Publishing: Manly Vale);
<http://www.asonevoice.com.au>
Gather Australia (out of print)
Catholic Worship Book (out of print)
New Living Parish Hymnal (out of print)
Together in Song (Australian Hymnal Company; <http://www.togetherinsong.org>)

Other Australian Music Resources for Mass

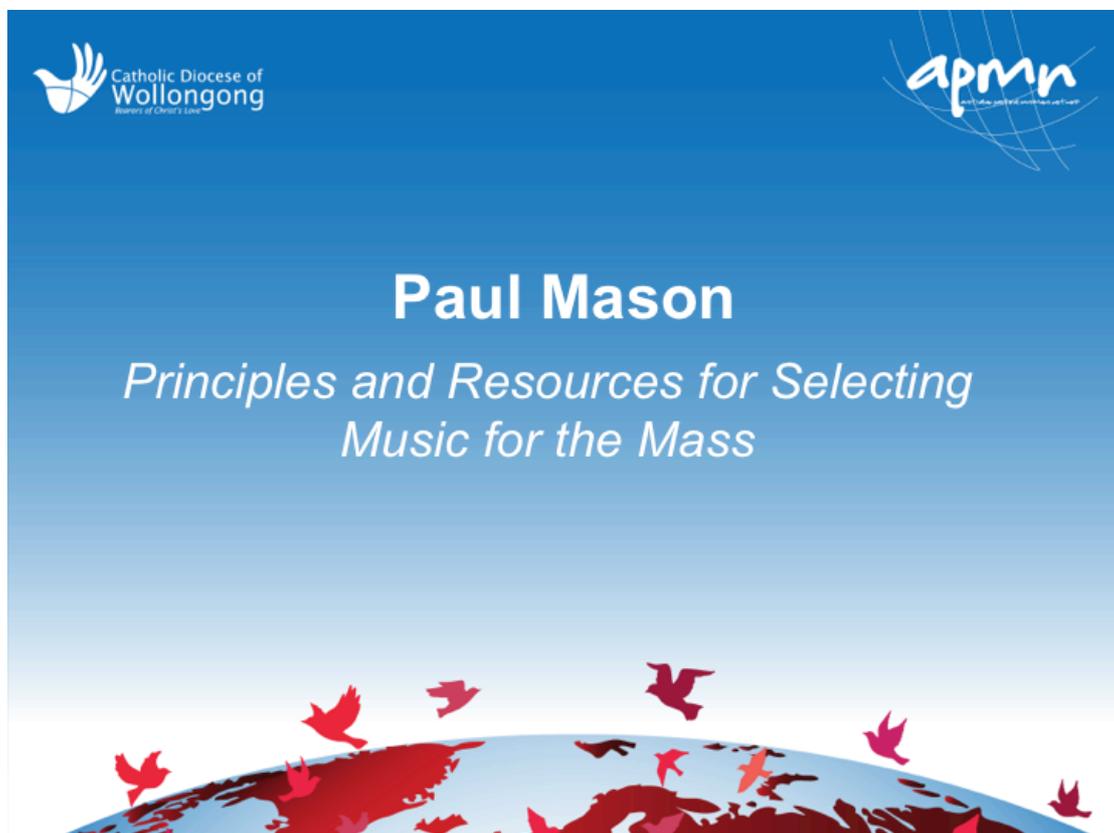
Mass of St Francis (Paul Taylor – Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation. This Mass can be downloaded from <http://www.cam.org.au>; Orders: Central Catholic Bookshop, Melbourne)
Mass of Our Lady, Help of Christians (Richard Connolly – Publisher: CanticaNova)
Missa Magis (Christopher Willcock – Publisher: Oregon Catholic Press, <http://www.ocp.org>)
Mass of Christ the Redeemer (Bernard Kirkpatrick – Publisher: Oregon Catholic Press)
Mass of Glory and Praise (Paul Mason – Publisher: Willow Publishing. Available from www.liturgicalsong.com)
Mass Shalom (C.Smith arr. Mason – Publisher: Willow Publishing. Available from www.liturgicalsong.com)
Missa Cantata (Chant Mass) (arr. Geoffrey Cox – Publisher Catholic Truth Society <http://www.stpauls.com.au>)
Psalms for All Time (Paul Mason – Publisher: Willow Publishing. Available from <http://www.liturgicalsong.com>)
Responsorial Psalms for the Year / ABC (Colin Smith – Publisher: Willow; <http://www.asonevoice.com.au>)
Psalms for Sundays of the Year / ABC (Jenny O'Brien)



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Priority for Singing in Mass

By Paul Mason

The amount of singing should correspond to the degree of solemnity of the occasion. The order of preference of parts for singing is based on four key principles outlined in *Musicam Sacram*. These key principles are, in order: intrinsic musicality (MS, 6), intrinsic importance (MS, 7), diversity of genres (MS, 16), and degree of participation of the assembly (MS, 28-36). The following table shows the priority of singing, in terms of a "star rating", based on these principles.

Intrinsic Musicality	By their nature, require to be sung			More naturally recited	
kind and form of music	song with accompaniment, or elaborate chant			simple chant, unaccompanied	
Intrinsic Importance	Greater	Lesser		Greater	Lesser
Degree of Participation	A	B	C	D	E
1st Degree of Participation: Acclamations, Dialogues and Prayers	★★★★★ <i>Alleluia</i> , Lenten acclamation, <i>Sanctus</i> , Eucharistic acclamations, (<i>Lumen Christi-Exsultet</i>)	★★★★★	★★★ <i>The Lord's Prayer</i>	★★ Sign of the cross, Greeting, prayers, Gospel Greeting, acclamation after the Gospel, Preface dialogue, Sign of peace, Dismissal	★
2nd Degree of Participation: Chants of the Ordinary and Litanies	★★★★☆ <i>Agnus Dei</i>	★★★★☆ <i>Gloria</i>	★★☆ <i>Kyrie</i> , Litany of the saints	☆☆ <i>Prayer of the faithful</i>	☆ <i>Credo</i>
Third Degree of Participation: Chants of the Proper (and Other Songs in keeping with the part of the Mass, the feast or the season), and Readings.	★★★★ <i>Entrance</i> , <i>Communion</i> , Responsorial psalm, <i>Alleluia Proper</i> , (<i>Procession of palms</i> , <i>Confirmation</i> , Washing of feet, Veneration of cross, <i>Pange Lingua</i>)	★★★ Offertory, (Sprinkling), Hymn of praise, Recessional, <i>Sequence</i>)	★★	★ On the most solemn occasions, cantillation of readings, and their acclamations	

Let's look at the detail behind the star ratings. Firstly, let's review the specifics of the four key principles:

- Intrinsic Musicality:**
"parts especially should be sung which by their very nature require to be sung, using the kind and form of music that is proper to their character" (MS, 6);
- Intrinsic Importance:**
"in selecting the parts which are to be sung, one should start with those that are by their nature

of greater importance and especially those which are to be sung by the priest or by the ministers, with the people replying, or those which are to be sung by the priest and people together" (MS, 7);

3. **Diversity of Genres:**

"first of all include acclamations, responses to the greetings of the priest and ministers and to the prayers of litany form, and also antiphons and psalms, refrains or repeated responses, hymns and canticles" (MS, 16);

4. **Degree of Participation:**

"for the sung Mass (*Missa cantata*), different degrees of participation are put forward here for reasons of pastoral usefulness, so that it may become easier to make the celebration of Mass more beautiful by singing, according to the capabilities of each congregation. These degrees are so arranged that the first may be used even by itself, but the second and third, wholly or partially, may never be used without the first" (MS, 28).

"It is desirable that the assembly of the faithful should participate in the songs of the Proper as much as possible, especially through simple responses and other suitable settings.

The song after the lessons, be it in the form of gradual or responsorial psalm, has a special importance among the songs of the Proper. By its very nature, it forms part of the Liturgy, of the Word. It should be performed with all seated and listening to it—and, what is more, participating in it as far as possible" (MS, 33).

"There is no reason why some of the Proper or Ordinary should not be sung in said Masses. Moreover, some other song can also, on occasions, be sung at the beginning, at the Offertory, at the Communion and at the end of Mass. It is not sufficient, however, that these songs be merely "Eucharistic"—they must be in keeping with the parts of the Mass, with the feast, or with the liturgical season" (MS, 36).

Now let's look at the story behind these principles. The first thing we notice is that there is some tension between these principles. It is important to remember that what is envisaged is not the traditional form of solemn sung Mass (*Missa cantata*), nor the said Mass. Rather: "For the celebration of the Eucharist with the people, especially on Sundays and feast days, a form of sung Mass (*Missa in cantu*) is to be preferred as much as possible, even several times on the same day" (MS, 27). Thus, while "the distinction between solemn, sung and read Mass, sanctioned by the Instruction of 1958 (n. 3), is retained" (MS, 27), a completely new form of sung Mass is now proposed. This form is an adaptation of the traditional said and sung Mass forms, aimed at encouraging the people's participation in all the genres of musicality of the Mass.

Some parts by their very nature are meant to be sung, though on occasion they may be recited (e.g. the Gloria). Their kind and form of music is generally a specially composed song with accompaniment or a more elaborate chant (melodic range of six or more notes with a variety of intervals). Other parts by their very nature are more naturally recited, though on occasion they may be chanted (e.g. the Greeting). Their kind and form of music is generally a simple unaccompanied cantillation. A few parts by their very nature can be either sung or recited (e.g. the Our Father, the Kyrie, the Litany of saints). Their kind and form of music includes options for specially composed songs, elaborate chants and simple unaccompanied cantillation.

Some parts by their very nature are more important. A good indicator of the importance of a part is whether it is always included in Mass, or only included on certain occasions. Another good indicator of the importance of a part is whether it is integral to a special rite (e.g. the Sanctus, the Responsorial Psalm, the *Lumen Christi* and *Exsultet*, the *Pange Lingua*; the antiphons and songs accompanying certain rituals such as the Washing of the Feet, the Veneration of the Cross, the Procession of Palms and the Anointing at Confirmation).

Some parts are less important. The Kyrie is less important, being omitted when other rites are included at the start of Mass (e.g. the Sprinkling rite, the Procession of Palms, the Reception for Baptism, etc.). The Sprinkling song is less important, being an optional alternative to the Penitential

Act on Sundays only "from time to time" (GIRM, 51). The Gloria is less important, only being sung on Sundays, Solemnities and Feasts, and omitted in Lent and Advent (GIRM, 53). The Sequence is less important, being optional except for the Solemnities of Easter and Pentecost (GIRM, 64). The Litany of Saints is less important, only occurring in special rites. The Offertory song is less important, having no specified text and being one of the opportunities for instrumental music only (MS, 65). The Hymn of Praise after communion is less important, being an optional extra depending on what is opportune for the particular situation (GIRM, 88). The Recessional is less important, having no specified text, and being one of the opportunities for instrumental music only (MS, 36; 65).

Most parts are sung by the priest or ministers with the people responding, or by the priest and people together. But some parts may be sung entirely by the choir alone, for example, some settings of the Gloria and some processional songs. Priority should be given to those parts sung by the priest or ministers with the people responding, or by the priest and people together (MS, 6; GIRM, 40).

Another key principle is the singing of the full diversity of genres (cf. MS, 16). It must be remembered that the apostle Paul does not exhort the Colossians to sing dialogues and acclamations! Rather he exhorts them "to sing together psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (GIRM, 39; cf. Col 3:16). While the first degree of participation is the acclamations and responses, the first priority is those parts having intrinsic musicality. It makes no sense to sing acclamations and responses that are more naturally recited ahead of singing psalms, hymns and other spiritual songs that are required to be sung.

The degrees of participation designated in *Musicam Sacram* for a sung Mass cover the full diversity of genres of song (MS, 16), intrinsic musicality (MS, 6) and intrinsic importance (MS, 7). A matrix of these principles can be constructed covering the three degrees. This results in the table of five columns and three rows shown above. In order to accommodate the priority for singing the full diversity of genres (all three degrees) in the first place (MS, 16), the star rating is so arranged that the first degree in column B is no greater than the third degree in column A, and so forth for each subsequent column.

Let's look at the detail of the "star rating" table. In column A, those parts in the first degree, which by their nature are of greater importance AND required to be sung, are rated five stars. Similarly, those in the second degree are rated four and a half stars, and those in the third degree are rated four stars. In column B, those parts in the first degree, which by their nature are of lesser importance AND required to be sung are rated four stars. Those parts in the second degree, which by their nature are of lesser importance AND required to be sung are rated three and a half stars. And so the pattern continues across the five columns. (Items in brackets in the table are not specified in MS; their degree is determined based on similarity of genre).

This relative importance ranking, based on the four principles outlined in *Musicam Sacram*, determines the priority for additional singing according to the degree of solemnity of the occasion. The simplest form of celebration has no singing. It is desirable that at least the 5-star items would be sung at most weekday Masses. On Sundays, additional parts would be sung according to the degree of solemnity of the celebration. For more information, refer to the details on [progressive solemnity and increased amount of singing](#).

A final note regarding the acclamations at the Gospel. *Musicam Sacram* ranked the people's acclamations at the Gospel in the first degree. But there are three acclamations. What is the priority for singing? The Alleluia acclamation is naturally required to be sung and has highest priority (5-stars), while the Gospel greeting and the acclamation after the Gospel are more naturally spoken (2-stars). With regard to the Alleluia verse Proper, it is also naturally required to be sung, but is ranked in the third degree (4-stars).