

Music for the Sacrament of Marriage

St. Mary Catholic Church, Grand Rapids

It is important to approach the issue of music for a wedding liturgy thoughtfully, because music is an integral part of Catholic worship. Singing is one of the primary ways that the assembly participates actively in a liturgy. **The goal of preparing a wedding liturgy is to encourage the full and active participation of all who will gather to celebrate your marriage.** It's that straightforward! For those who will be at your wedding, participating in the musical moments of the liturgy is a vital part of their role.

Our parish director of music ministries will guide you in making decisions about music and musicians for your wedding liturgy. They will also coordinate "making it happen" as smoothly as possible.

Choosing Music A wedding liturgy, even when without Mass, is modeled on our Sunday worship: The standard is music that the entire assembly participates in. Since music has the power to encourage (or stifle) participation, choose carefully so that the people at your wedding understand they are actively taking part in prayer rather than feeling like spectators at a show.

Outline of the Order of Celebrating Matrimony

The primary musical moments are sung by the assembly (not a solo or instrumental).
In the following outlines of the wedding liturgy, these parts appear in capital lettering:

Weddings within Mass

Entrance Procession

OPENING SONG

Greeting & Address to the Assembly

GLORY TO GOD

Collect Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

Scripture Reading

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Scripture Reading

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION/ALLELUIA

Gospel Reading

Homily

Rite of Marriage

Address to the Couple

Questions Before Consent

Consent

ACCLAMATION (optional)

Blessing and Giving of Rings

SONG OF PRAISE (optional)

Universal Prayers

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts

Preface and Eucharistic Prayer (including
the HOLY, MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION,
and AMEN)

Lord's Prayer

Nuptial Blessing

Sign of Peace

LAMB OF GOD LITANY

RECEPTION OF COMMUNION

Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rites

Blessings and Dismissal

Concluding Song or Recessional Music

Wedding liturgy without Mass

Entrance Procession

OPENING SONG

Greeting & Address to the Assembly

Collect Prayer

Liturgy of the Word

Scripture Reading

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Scripture Reading

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION/ALLELUIA

Gospel Reading

Homily

Rite of Marriage

Address to the Couple

Questions Before Consent

Consent

ACCLAMATION (optional)

Blessing and Giving of Rings

SONG OF PRAISE (optional)

Universal Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

Nuptial Blessing

Concluding Rites

Blessings and Dismissal

Concluding Song or Recessional Music

The music of a wedding liturgy needs to be appropriate and express the faith of the Church. The liturgy places ritual demands on music, which must serve the action of the liturgy. It also places spiritual demands on music, requiring that it add greater depth to prayer, unity to the assembly and dignity to the ritual.

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Our director of music ministries will assist you in choosing specific selections for the musical elements of the liturgy. Both contemporary and traditional music are a part of our prayer life at St. Mary's. Consider songs you have heard at our liturgies here or in other churches.

You are welcome to browse through our hymnal and look for songs you think will fit the celebration. Keep in mind that familiar music is best so the congregation can participate as much as possible. Song suggestions for weddings are also available on our parish web site, stmarygr.org/MusicSuggestions

Secular music that is not supportive of worship—no matter how beautiful it may be otherwise—should be saved for the reception. This principle leads us away from certain sentimental secular favorites; for example, we don't use the "Wedding March" from Mendelssohn's music for Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; or "Here Comes the Bride," (a.k.a. "Bridal Chorus" from Wagner's opera *Lohengrin*). Both are secular theater pieces that have a lot of irreligious significance.

An abundance of suitable music is available, making less-than-appropriate selections unnecessary. Good musical choices will allow you to preserve the sacredness of the event and engage the members of the assembly.



Musicians Because our director of music ministries is connected to the prayer life of the parish community where the wedding will be celebrated, it is expected that they will be involved in the liturgy.

To best facilitate the sung prayer of the assembly, at least one **cantor** and one **accompanist** (piano or organ) will be needed. A parish cantor and accompanist are included in the donation paid to St. Mary's for your wedding preparations and liturgy. You may involve more musicians if arrangements are made with the parish. Stipends for additional musicians are paid separately.

The Cantor: The cantor's role is very specific. A quality cantor has specialized training in Catholic liturgy and the role of music in our worship. They have distinct skills, many of which are non-verbal!

A cantor is a leader of prayer and a person of hospitality. They share in proclaiming the word of God as the psalmist. They might be appointed to proclaim the universal prayer in the absence of a deacon. When appropriate, the cantor may lead some moments of worship through solo singing (for example, commonly, singing the verses of the responsorial psalm).

Vocal soloists may have a special place in some liturgies, but the cantor's ministry is distinct and necessary. A guest vocalist does not take the place of a trained cantor.

Guest Musicians If you request the services of guest musicians, our director of music ministries will contact them and work collaboratively with them. Input by visiting musicians about music for the wedding is appropriate and welcome, but the normal procedure for selecting wedding music—that the couple chooses the music guided through the process by our parish staff—still applies. Regardless of who serves as musicians at a wedding liturgy, our staff will review music selections and placement to assure responsible attention to liturgical standards and parish expectations.

Please include our staff in any discussions with guest musicians about the wedding liturgy. It will help avoid miscommunication and unpleasant surprises.

May God the eternal Father keep you of one heart in love for one another, that the peace of Christ may dwell in you and abide always in your home. Amen!

—Concluding blessing from the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*

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