

LITURGICAL RENEWAL – PHASE 1

UPDATED 8/7/2026

LITURGICAL MUSIC MINISTRY

MUSIC MINISTRY OVERVIEW

- Participation in the Sacred liturgy by all the people gathered is to be considered, above all else (STTL 13)
- The quality of our participation as members of the assembly comes less from our vocal ability than from the desire of our hearts to sing together for the love of God
- When we sing or accompany liturgy, we are instruments in God's hands
- In addition to helping the assembly express their faith, music ministers facilitate the unique capacity of music to nourish and strengthen the interior participation of the faithful
- Hospitality is an integral part of music ministry.
- Music ministry can be welcoming and attentive when
 - Ministers prepare for the liturgy by becoming familiar with the liturgical text as well as with the music with which it is proclaimed
 - Ministers make an effort to enunciate clearly so that the liturgical text can be understood while it is sung
 - The gestures and postures of the ministers invite the assembly to be united in song

LITURGICAL MUSIC – OVERVIEW

"Sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites." (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 112)

- Music unites the assembly: it is not "in or for the liturgy", it is liturgy
- Music ministry varies in every parish, adapting to the cultural and physical needs of the community it serves
- Liturgical music is not a series of hymns "plugged" into a part of the Mass – Liturgical music is divine worship and is integral to the rituals

THREE JUDGEMENTS OF GOOD LITURGICAL MUSIC

1. LITURGICAL JUDGEMENT

1. Does it fit within the order of the liturgy?
2. If it is a musical setting of the Order of the Mass, then all of the words of the text need to be included.
3. Are the rubrics that apply to music ministry being followed?

2. PASTORAL JUDGEMENT

1. Are you taking into consideration the actual community that is gathered at that particular place at that particular time? Liturgical ministers must know the community they serve.
2. Are you considering the diversity of the assembly, in cultural background, in language, age and other factors?
3. "Knowing the community we serve and minister to – not just in general, but at each celebration- is essential." (STTL, 133)

3. ARTISTIC OR MUSICAL JUDGEMENT

1. Does each composition have the necessary aesthetic qualities that can bear the weight of the mysteries celebrated in the liturgy? (STTL 134)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MUSIC MINISTERS

- Wrap up practice and warm up at least 5 minutes before mass . Allow for quiet and prayerful reflection
- If teaching a new hymn or psalm response to the congregation, do so immediately before Mass begins

GIRM CITATIONS TO BE FOLLOWED

- Mass should be understood as worshipping in community and not as our personal time with Jesus. Catechesis should address the Assembly's role in the liturgy. (GIRM 42)
- Great importance should be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass, with consideration for the culture of peoples and abilities of each liturgical assembly. Presiders should work collaboratively with music ministers to help them understand how music supports the liturgy as a ministry, not as a performance. (GIRM 40)
- Presiders, Liturgy Committee members, Music Ministers, Liturgical Ministers, and Hospitality Ministers should collaborate as they prepare liturgies, especially during Advent and Lent when the Mass introduction and the Penitential Rite can creatively engage and involve the Assembly. (GIRM 46)
- GIRM 48 citations:
 - The entrance song/hymn is prayer that gathers and unifies the Members of the Assembly into a worshipping community.
 - Members of the Assembly can only participate in songs and hymns if the music is familiar to them.
 - Liturgical music selection needs to consider the specific Mass community, what repertoire they know, and which songs and hymns appropriately support the liturgy and liturgical season.
 - Planning for when and how to introduce new songs and hymns is important so as to fully engage the Assembly.
 - Either a Commentator or a Music leader welcomes the Assembly and engagingly extends an invitation for them to participate in singing.
 - Music ministers should conclude the entrance song or hymn shortly after the Presider reaches the Presider's Chair.
 - In the absence of music ministers, the Presider can intone a well-known gathering song which the Assembly can sing during the entrance procession.
 - Alternatively, the Presider can prepare the Entrance Antiphon and invite the entire community to join in reciting it.
- There are three forms of the Penitential Rite in the Roman Missal. It is up to the Presider as to which form will be used. (GIRM 51)
- The Presider should determine whether the Kyrie is to be sung/chanted or recited. (GIRM 51)
- The Sprinkling Rite must not take place during the Gloria (GIRM 51)