

# *A Guide for*

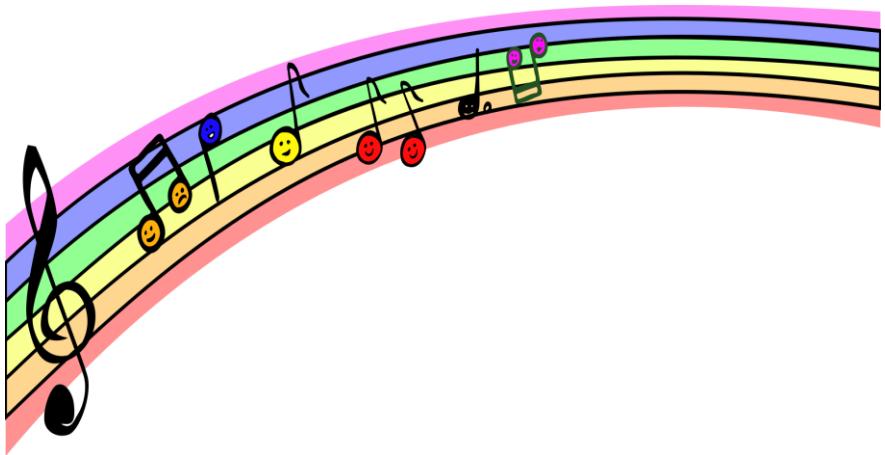


## *Music Ministers*

**Diocese of Prince Albert  
Liturgy Office**



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## **Table of Contents**

<b>Music in Liturgy</b>	p. 3
<b>Criteria for Choosing Liturgical Music</b>	p. 4-6
<b>Another look at the Church Year</b>	p. 7-9
<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	p. 10-11
<b>Prayer</b>	p. 12



## Music in Liturgy

The liturgy recalls and makes present God's saving work made visible in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Liturgy is the action of the Body of Christ. The once and for all work of Christ Jesus is made available to us in and through the liturgy, especially the Eucharist.

The liturgy is also our work. In the liturgy our "work" is to offer praise and thanks to God for this great gift to us. This is our greatest work. It requires our full attention and participation. The whole community of faith is involved in this work. There are no spectators in the liturgy.

Music ministers are members of the assembly. Their role is to support and enhance the song of the assembly. It is the assembly that is the primary music maker. Pastoral musicians allow the assembly to find its voice and take the role proper to it. Choirs should avoid any semblance of performing for the assembly. Choir leaders / song leaders should give direction to the assembly as well as the choir.

Taken from "Praise God in Song! From the Diocese of Prince George

You will inspire people not just when you sing and play, but also by your demeanor throughout the Mass. When you are attentive, they will be too. When you observe silence, so will they. If you are in view of others at Mass, it is important that you be a good model of worship from start to finish. Have the music handy so you do not create a distraction when you set it up. Do not change music during readings or prayers...Avoid giving directions to the choir during Mass if these can be given before.

You are there not just as a musician, but first as a member of the assembly.

Taken from "Guide for Cantors: The Liturgical Ministry Series"  
by Jennifer Kerr Breedlove & Paul Turner

## Criteria for Choosing Liturgical Music

(There are three criteria for selecting music they are highlighted in the document *Music in Catholic Worship #26-49*).

### **A. Musical judgement:**

Various styles of music are suitable for the liturgy, for example, those that are best suited to guitars or other folk instruments, and those best suited to keyboard. Within these styles music ministers must be able to judge whether or not the selection is good music. Although there is some degree of subjectivity to determining whether or not a selection of music is technically, aesthetically and expressively good, music ministers must be able to judge its suitability for the liturgy.

Some questions to ask include:

- Is it singable? If it is too high can it be transposed into a lower key?
- Is the music able to express the given text or the mood for which it has been composed?
- Is the music pleasing? Engaging? Does it have the capability to move the assembly to enter more deeply into the celebration?



### **B. Liturgical judgement:**

“The nature of the liturgy itself will help to determine what kind of music is called for, what parts are to be preferred for singing and who is to sing them” (MCW #30)

Within the liturgy there are choices to be made in selecting music. Some of the principles that guide these choices include the following:

*What is primary? What is secondary? Some parts of the liturgy receive greater prominence. Music ministers should know what receives primary focus, what is secondary and what is optional. The liturgy of the word, for example, should receive greater prominence than the introductory rites. In a practical example, this means that if the Lord Have Mercy or Gloria are sung while the psalm or gospel acclamation are just recited the proper emphasis has not been given to the more important parts of the Mass.*

**Progressive solemnity:** Different liturgies are marked by different degrees of solemnity. The Sunday Eucharist, for example, has greater solemnity than a mass celebrated during the week. Feast days have greater solemnity than Sundays in Ordinary Time. This has bearing on what is sung. The Gloria, for example is not sung during the seasons of Advent or Lent, but it is sung with great joy during Christmas and Easter. The greater the solemnity, the more elaborate and extensive the music selections can be, keeping in mind the ability of the assembly. The high point of the liturgical year is the Easter Triduum and the Easter season. This celebration should clearly be the crown of the community's life of faith and should be reflected in the care and attention given the liturgies in this period. Christmas is also a time of great solemnity, but it does not surpass the season of Easter in the Church's calendar. The liturgies should reflect this.

**Liturgical actions:** Music that is meant to accompany a liturgical action should encompass the whole of the action. The music for the preparation of gifts, for example, accompanies the procession of the gifts to the altar, continues through the (inaudible) prayers by the priest over the gifts and ends when the priest washes his hands. If incense is used the music also continues through this part of the ritual action. The music selected should fit into the action. If it is too brief or is started too soon, the music will "run out" before the action is completed, leaving a dead space.

**Scripture Readings / Liturgical Texts:** The scriptural and liturgical texts (e.g. antiphons, presidential prayers, preface, Eucharistic prayer) for the day provide the main focus for the selection of music. Music ministers should pray and study these texts before making their selections.

### **C. Pastoral judgement:**

“Does the music in the celebration enable these people to express their faith, in this place, in this age, in this culture” (MCW #39)

*Several questions may be asked here:*

- Are the hymns familiar enough that the assembly can sing them well?
- Is there a common repertoire of acclamations for all the Masses to help tie the seasons together?
- Do both traditional and contemporary music find a place in the parishes musical repertoire?
- Is the language inclusive?
- Is the music inclusive? ie. allowing room for all cultures and ages?
- Is new music introduced in such a way that the community can learn it well?

#### **Liturgical Music is:**

Liturgical music helps the assembly participate actively in a full and conscious manner.

Liturgical music is a special form of prayer, by which members of the assembly communicate with God and with each other.

Liturgical music requires careful preparation, rehearsal, and execution.

Liturgical music has a variety of functions (call to unity, response to a reading, acclamation) during Mass.

Taken from “The Musician’s book of the Mass”  
by John Hajda & Diana M. Kaulback

## Another look at the Church Year

**Advent:** is the beginning of the church year. It starts on the Sunday closest to November 30. It is a time during which we prepare for Christmas and for the Second coming of Christ. There are always four Sundays during the Advent Season.

Advent is a season of hope and joyful expectation. It has a two-fold nature: it looks forward to the second coming of Christ in glory (first Sunday until December 16<sup>th</sup>) and it prepares us for Christmas (December 17<sup>th</sup> on), when we recall Christ's first coming among us.

The Gloria is not sung or recited in order to prepare the assembly to sing it anew during the Christmas season. Advent hymns are used.



**Christmas:** lasts for more than one day. It extends from the Christmas Eve Masses to the Sunday after January 6. During Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Christ, his youth, and his life up until his baptism by John.

The Christmas season celebrates the mystery of the incarnation and the manifestation of Jesus Christ to the world (past, present and future).

The Gloria is sung. Music is festive. The Christmas spirit is maintained throughout the season. Christmas carols may be used throughout, including the Baptism of the Lord. The Christmas carol chosen should support the liturgical action.



**Lent:** begins on Ash Wednesday and continues until the beginning of the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. Lent prepares us for Easter; it is also the final period of preparation for those who will be initiated at the Easter Vigil. Although it is a time for more intense prayer, fasting, and other sacrifices, Lent is not supposed to be gloomy or depressing. It is penitential, meaning we examine our lives and look for the ways in which we as individuals and as a church community do not live up to the vows of our baptism. Lent does not, however, have the exuberance of Easter or Christmas.

During lent a sung Kyrie or Lord Have Mercy is appropriate. The Gloria is not sung or recited. "Alleluia" is not used in either the gospel acclamation or hymns in order to prepare to the great "Alleluias!" of Easter.

Musical instruments are used only to give necessary support to singing, not for solo playing (General Instruction of the Roman Missal #313)



**Easter Triduum:** is the most holy time of the entire church year. From the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday to the Good Friday service to the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday through Sunday Evening Prayer, Christians celebrate the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. The high point of the Triduum is the Easter Vigil, when we celebrate our salvation and incorporate new members into the church. It is one festival of three days duration.

The Gloria is sung on Holy Thursday and the first Alleluia is sung during the gospel acclamation at the Easter Vigil. The people should be very familiar with most of the music chosen.

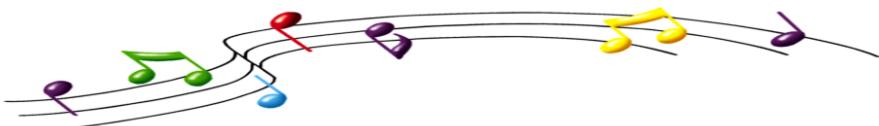
**Easter:** like Christmas, lasts for more than one day. The Easter season extends from Easter Sunday to Pentecost, fifty days later. During this time, we celebrate Christ's resurrection from the dead, his time spent among the disciples after his resurrection, his ascension into heaven, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The fifty days of Easter are an unbroken celebration of the victory of the risen Lord. They are celebrated as a single feast day, sometimes called the "Great Sunday" or Pentecost (\*meaning fifty). The entire feast is permeated with a spirit of unfettered joy.

The sprinkling rite is an option during this season. The two required sequences (Easter and Pentecost) are sung after the second reading.

**Ordinary Time:** Winter portion / fills in the space between Christmas and Lent. We call it "ordinary" because these are the times during which we count the weeks, all the way up to the 33<sup>rd</sup> or 34<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary time. These types of numbers are also known as "ordinal" numbers. Ordinary time is not a season but a way of making time between seasons. It does not have a specific focus, but rather celebrates the life and ministry of Christ and his followers. The majority of the church year is spent in Ordinary time.

**Ordinary Time:** Summer portion / begins the day after Pentecost. Ordinary time continues through the fall. The last Sundays of Ordinary Time focus on the Second Coming of Christ. Appropriately, the final Sunday of Ordinary Time – and the church year – is the Solemnity of Christ the King.



## Glossary

**Antiphon:** A brief refrain, with or without chanted psalm verses, sung at the Entrance, Offertory, or Communion of the Eucharistic Liturgy. Antiphons also precede and follow each of the psalms and canticles in the Liturgy of the Hours.

**Antiphonal Form:** From the Greek *antiphonon*, (“sounding against” or “singing opposite”), this style of singing usually involves a back-and forth singing of one group in alternation with another.

**Assembly:** All those who gather for liturgical worship make up the assembly, the Body of Christ, the Church. This includes the ordained and the lay faithful.

**Cantor:** The minister of the sung or chanted prayers for a worshipping community. In the Roman Catholic Church, the cantor performs three distinct functions: as song leader or animator, he or she proclaims the sung Responsorial Psalm as part of the Liturgy of the Word; and when there is no leadership necessary, he or she functions simply as a member of the assembly, modeling the participation to which all are invited.

**Chant (Or Plainchant):** Often incorrectly used synonymously with the term *Gregorian chant*, this more general term refers to any form of vocal music that is sung without specific rhythmic values assigned to individual notes; its rhythmic impetus is usually driven by the text. The term *chant*, as a translation of the Latin *cantus*, is also used throughout the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* to refer to most pieces of music throughout the liturgy.

**Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*):** The first constitution promulgated by the Second Vatican Council, this document forms the bases for all our corporate worship and includes sections on the participation of the assembly, liturgical inculcation, the Liturgy of the Hours, the liturgical year, and sacred music and art.

**Eucharistic Acclamations:** The moments during the Eucharistic Prayer which invite the assembly's response. These consist of the *Sanctus* (Holy, Holy, Holy), the Memorial Acclamation, and the Amen.

**General Instruction of the Roman Missal:** The document of the Roman Catholic Church regarding the celebration of Mass. It contains highly specific instructions regarding almost every area of the Eucharistic liturgy, including those parts of the liturgy that incorporate music. This is the primary reference document for discovering the hows and whys of almost any aspect of liturgical celebration.

**Hymn:** Musical form in which the melody for a verse is repeated several times with different text for each verse, or "strophe."

**Leader of Song:** The cantor acts as the leader of song, who is primarily responsible for fostering musical participation from the assembly through strong musical leadership, proper gesture, facial expression, and invitation.

**Litany:** A call-and-response petitionary prayer, such as the Prayer of the Faithful or Lord, have Mercy, wherein petitions sung or recited by a cantor or leader alternate with a brief fixed response by the assembly.

**Ritual Music/Sacred Music:** Any music that forms an integral part of the Roman Catholic liturgy. "The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art... Therefore sacred music will be more holy the more closely it is joined to the liturgical rite, whether by adding delight to prayer, fostering oneness of spirit, or investing the rites with greater solemnity."

\*This glossary section was taken from the book  
‘Guide for Music Ministers: Second Edition’  
by Breedlove & Turner

For more Glossary definitions please check out the book!

Thank you for your service at the Eucharist.



Here is a prayer you can say by yourself or together at rehearsal or just before Mass to help calm any nerves and focus your mind and heart to the purpose of your special role.

**God of song and silence,  
we thank you for bringing us  
together this day  
that we might praise you  
once again.**

**Send your Spirit upon us  
and breathe in us a word of life  
that we might be  
ministers of prayer  
for this assembly  
and messengers of your love  
to this world.  
We ask this through  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen**

Taken from “The Musician’s book of the Mass” by John Hajda & Diana M. Kaulback