



DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

GUIDELINES FOR MUSIC DURING LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

(The following guidelines have been developed by the members of the Diocesan Music Consulters)

Updated as of September 24, 2020

WHAT SHOULD WE BE SINGING?

The Diocese still asks that singing be done in moderation during the COVID pandemic. Therefore, the question becomes “what should we be singing?” According to the USCCB document, “Sing to the Lord” paragraph 110-118 describes for us a hierarchy of liturgical music. “Singing by the gathered assembly and ministers is important to all celebrations. Not every part that can be sung should necessarily be sung at every celebration; rather, preference is given to those parts that are of greater importance.”

- 1) **Dialogues and Acclamations** – Among the parts to be sung, preference should be given to the dialogues and acclamations of the Eucharistic liturgy. It is our assent to God’s Word and actions. These are: Gospel Acclamation, Holy Holy, Mystery of Faith, and Great Amen.
- 2) **Psalms** - The Responsorial Psalm in the Liturgy of the Word of the Mass, “has great liturgical and pastoral importance since it fosters the meditation of the Word of God.” Singing of Psalms is deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition and early Christianity. Jesus sang psalms, our Jewish brothers and sisters sing psalms. *(In light of the COVID pandemic, you DO NOT have to proclaim the psalm from the ambo. It may be sung from a different location.)*
- 3) **Refrains and repeated responses** – These include the Kyrie and Lamb of God, at the Mass
- 4) **Hymns** – At Mass, in addition to the Gloria, hymns that have been judged appropriate may be added to the Liturgy. There is no mention of a Preparation of the Gifts song or a Recessional Hymn in the Roman Missal; thus, their use is optional.

INSTRUMENTALISTS

At this time, other instrumentalists may now be reintroduced into our music ministry programs as long as the standard safety protocols are followed including wearing of masks, distancing and minimal rehearsal time together with other musicians. String instruments, guitars, handbells, and percussion appear to pose minimal risk (please consult <https://handbellmusicians.org> for guidelines for safely returning to ringing). Some concern still exists regarding the use of woodwind and brass instruments and the potential spread of aerosol droplets that could be produced by these instruments. We would caution against the use of these instruments at this time; larger musical organizations (such as symphonies, etc...) are looking into covers and other measures to mitigate the challenges posed by woodwind and brass instruments. As we learn more from these developments, we will revisit the usage of woodwinds and brass instruments.

VOCAL CHOIRS

At this time, concern still exists regarding vocal choirs/ensembles and their potential to spread aerosols and other droplets into the air. Moreover, many members of our choirs fall into the higher risk category because of age and other underlying health issues. Thus, full vocal choirs may still not be utilized at this time; however, consideration may be given to a small schola of no more than four members to allow SATB music. Like all musicians, these schola members are to wear masks at all times (even while singing regardless of where they are located in the church) and are to be in an area that allows at least six feet of space between each of the singers. We also recommend that each schola member have his/her own microphone to prevent cross-contamination and to allow their voice to be clearly heard and understood while singing with the mask. Moreover, a reminder that the schola should always encourage and support the singing of the assembly; as well, it is suggested for moderation in the number of musical selections the schola will actually sing before and/or during the Mass or service. As more studies do further investigation into larger group singing and its impact on spreading the virus, additional updates may be made to this aspect of music ministry. Further information on singing and related protocols may be found at the American Choral Directors Association (www.acda.org).

“BROADCASTING” AND/OR REPRODUCING MUSIC/LYRICS IN PRINT OR VIA PROJECTION

Please know that separate and specific licenses must be obtained if your parish/community broadcasts any liturgical service involving copyrighted music that is played and/or sung during the broadcast. The term “broadcast” includes podcasts, Facebook live, YouTube, and any other method where the liturgical service is recorded and then shared. As well, a separate license must be obtained if your parish/community reprints the lyrics and/or the music of songs in a worship aid, bulletin or any other printed material; this same license would also allow for the projection of lyrics and music. Much of the music that most parishes utilize falls under the licensing of OneLicense.net. However, if you use music outside of the coverage of OneLicense.com, you would need to secure additional licensing (ex. Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) covers many contemporary songs which some parishes may choose as part of their repertoire). In addition to obtaining the license, each song, either projected or printed, must include the composer’s name and the copyright notice with the publisher’s name (this includes both the reproduction of lyrics with the melody line and/or simply the reproducing of the song’s text); moreover, music used each week must be reported to the respective licensing company. The Office of Worship and Sacraments can provide assistance in answering questions related to appropriate licensing. Worship aids are only for single-time usage and must be disposed after each Mass.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Recordings of choirs or liturgical instrumental recordings are not to be used during the celebration of the Eucharist and are not to be used in place of music that would normally be sung or played live during Mass.

Please remember that all musicians (vocalists and instrumentalists) should wear masks at all times during the Mass(es) and during any rehearsals; as well, regular sanitizing, appropriate distancing and good air ventilation must also be practiced. Regarding rehearsals, it is recommended not to share any instruments or printed materials and to keep rehearsals to a minimum with the length of the rehearsal not to exceed 30-50 minutes. Music ministers, as leaders, must always practice and exhibit proper adherence to the protocols and safety guidelines; since there remain greater concerns with singing and the potential to spread the virus, music ministers must demonstrate greater awareness and take additional precautions for the safety of all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark E. Brennan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and 'B'.

Bishop Mark E. Brennan