

THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

For the Christian community, the occasion of the marriage of two people is one of great joy, not just for the couple, their family and friends, but also for the parish and wider Christian community itself. Within this context of a believing community, Sacraments are never private or exclusively family events, but take place in, embrace, and are celebrated by the whole community. The most important part of this day, as a Christian, is the Wedding Ceremony. Here the couple celebrate God's love for each of them as for all people, a love they hope to reflect in their marriage.

As with any celebration, music heightens the sense of festivity and joy appropriate to the celebration.

*“Among the many signs and symbols used by the church
to celebrate it's faith,
music is of pre-eminent importance”
(Music in Catholic Worship 23)*

A singer / instrumentalist in using their time and talents, help to beautify and enrich the liturgy, but also have the responsibility of enabling others to enter more fully into the celebration of it.

SUGGESTED ACCLAMATIONS / PSALMS / HYMNS / BIBLICAL SONGS

Music and hymns have two particular dimensions that need to be considered when preparing the ceremony:

1. The active participation of all that gather; singing together helps bring people together. Many people may not have even met before today.
2. Music/song is meant to draw us into the mystery of God's love, something the couple hope to reflect in their marriage.

During the Wedding Ceremony, even if it takes place outside the context of a Mass, there are priorities in singing. These priorities are as at any liturgy – Acclamations, Psalm, and Hymns. The following is a basic, not an exhaustive list of suitable material proposed for the wedding liturgy and some liturgical pointers.

- Entrance Procession:

Instrumental Music at any liturgy contributes greatly to the creation of both a festive and reflective atmosphere. Its traditional use at the wedding liturgy is at the Bridal Entrance, and Recessional Procession of the wedding party. It can also be very effective at the Presentation of the Gifts, Signing of the Register, and before the ceremony as the community gather. As well as organ music, music from our own tradition works very well.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

- Opening Hymn:

*Its function is to open the liturgy. But it also has the dimension of bonding people as they sing together. Usually it takes place at end of Opening Procession.
...Cf, General List*

- Lord have Mercy:

- Gloria:

...if sung, a known setting, so that people may be able to sing.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

- Responsorial Psalm:

A psalm is primarily a song from scripture, and therefore needs to be sung. Substituting something other than a psalm at this point would be incorrect. The soloist leads and all should respond.

♪ ‘Sé an Tiarna m’ Aoire (Ps 22)	F. O’Carroll
♪ All the earth proclaim the Lord (Ps 99)	L. Deiss
♪ In you creation finds its joy (Ps 64)	R. McDonagh
Lord, show us your mercy and love (Ps 85)	J. Cotter
♪ May your love be upon us, O Lord (Ps 32)	M. Daly
♪ Mo grá thú a Thiarna (Ps 17)	L. Lawton
On eagles wings (Ps 90)	M. Joncas
♪ The Lord is kind and merciful (Ps 103)	J. Cotter
♪ The Lord is my shepherd (Ps 22)	T. Egan
♪ Throughout all time (Ps 89)	D. Haas

- Gospel Acclamation:

Generally Alleluia (except during Lent) is a ‘festal shout’. Again it calls to be sung. Just read, it makes little sense.

Chant Alleluia	Traditional chant
Celtic Alleluia	F. O’Carroll
Seinn Alleluia	Traditional Irish
Pilgrim Alleluia	L. Lawton
*Lenten Acclamation	<i>(replaces ‘alleluia’ during season of Lent)</i>

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- Presentation of the Gifts:
See general note at end.

- Eucharistic Acclamations:

Holy Holy / Memorial Acclamation / Amen

*Again the soloist leads the congregation. These are not the solo pieces of priest, singer, or choir. The soloist, choir, and priest **together** are best placed to encourage all to fully participate by joining in these short responses.*

- Our Father:

*As the great prayer of unity, it is **not a solo** piece, whether said or sung. If sung, it is sung by all. We would never recite it as a solo piece, therefore a sung solo version of the *Ár nAthair*, for example, contradicts what the prayer is all about.*

- Communion Hymn:

*If possible, people should sing together, reflecting the unity and the communal nature of the action taking place.
...Cf, General List*

- Suggested Hymns / Biblical Songs:

Opening Hymn / Lighting of Candle / Presentation of Gifts /
Concluding Hymn / Signing of Register

...text specific to marriage...

♪ Ag an bPósadh a bhí i gCana	Traditional
♪ Bridegroom and Bride	Slane / Iona
♪ Fíon agus Uisce	Máire Ní Dhuibhir
♪ Love never fails	D. Haas
Love one another	F. King
♪ Servant Song	R. Gillard
Song of Ruth	G. Norbert
♪ Today and tomorrow	L. True
♪ When love is found	Trad. / B. Wren
Where your treasure is	M. Haugen
♪ Wherever you go	D. Haas

...text specific to communion...

Eat this bread	Taizé
I am the bread of life	S. Toolan
I will be the vine	L. Lawton
Let us be bread blest by the Lord	T. Porter
One bread that is broken	F. King
Take and Eat	M. Joncas

...additional material...

A Íosa	M. Ni Dhuibhir
Ag Críost an síol	O’Riada
All I ask of you	G. Norbert
Be still for the presence of the Lord	Adams
Faith, Hope and Love	R. Mc Donagh
Increase our Faith	D. Haas
My song will be for you forever	D. Haas
O God you search me	B. Farrell
♪ Set your heart on the higher gifts	S. Warner
The hiding place	L. Lawton
This is my will	Traditional
You are mine	D. Haas

...Some General Notes

- A piece of music or a hymn just because it is nice or liked by the couple doesn’t always make it suitable for the liturgy. E.g., Pie Jesu (tr., Sweet Jesus, grant him eternal rest...) – whichever arrangement or composer and whatever language – is a text from the Funeral Liturgy. If the words and music at the marriage ceremony are to mean anything at all, this piece has no place in the Rite of Marriage. Other pieces may need similar reflection!
- The text of all hymns/songs needs to reflect the richness of the sacrament in which Christ is present. In this context, beautiful songs from the shows, musicals and pop charts don’t fully express the nature of the sacrament and do a disservice to the depth of what is being celebrated. Their beauty is best expressed at the reception.
- The Lighting of Candles - both times - is a short ritual. Music or song should be brief, if at all; there is hardly space for more than a verse of a hymn, otherwise it is intrusive. Incidental instrumental music works the best.
- Classical Repertoire (e.g., Ave Maria, Panis Angelicus, Laudate Dominum, etc.), since it does not find a natural home in the liturgy is best used as a reflective piece or at the signing of the register.
- Where people are expected to sing, it is good to have these words in the booklet should one be printed.

RESOURCES.....

Canaimís

Hymnal for the Diocese of Kerry

The Veritas Hymnal

Veritas Publications ©1973 / 2007

Alleluia Amen

Veritas Publications ©1978

In Caelo

Hymn book

Veritas Publications ©1999

Laudate

Hymnal

Decani Music ©1999 / 2002

A Day of Our Own *

Book & CD

Liam Lawton

Veritas Publications ©2004

*** denotes specific wedding collections**

All others are general collections

Most resources available from

Veritas shops nationwide

Music for your Wedding *

Book & CD

Edited by Margaret Daly

Veritas Publishers ©1991 / 2004

♪ *recorded on teaching CD*

The Wedding Album *

Book & CD

Dublin Diocesan Resource Centre ©2006

Like a Seal on your Heart *

Book & CD

North American Liturgical Resources ©1980