

# MUSIC FOR MASS

## A BRIEF SUMMARY

### What is the nature & purpose of music for the different parts of the Mass?

#### What are we trying to do?

- **Opening Song:** *open the celebration; foster the unity of the assembly; introduce the assembly's thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity; accompany the procession*
- **Communion Song:** *express the communicants' union in spirit by means of the unity of their voices; show joy of heart; highlight more clearly the 'communitarian' nature of the procession to receive the Eucharist*
- **Holy:** *an acclamation in which the assembly joins with the choirs of heaven*
- **Memorial Acclamation:** *in keeping with Christ's command, the assembly recalls the paschal mystery*
- **Amen:** *an acclamation of the assembly confirming and concluding the final doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer*
- **Gospel Acclamation/Alleluia:** *the assembly welcomes and greets the Lord who is about to speak to them in the Gospel; an acclamation of faith*
- **Psalm/Canticle** in the Liturgy of the Word: *fosters meditation on the word of God*
- **Lamb of God litany:** *accompanies the fraction rite*
- **Kyrie (Lord Have Mercy) litany:** *the faithful acclaim the Lord and implore his mercy*  
OR **Sprinkling Rite:** *remind us of our baptism and lead us to express our gratitude to God*
- **Glory to God:** *an ancient hymn in which the Church glorifies God the Father and the Lamb*
- **Creed:** *respond to the word of God; call to mind and confess the great mysteries of the faith*
- **Prayer of the Faithful:** *respond to the Word of God; offer prayers to God for the salvation of all*
- **Preparation of the Gifts:** *accompany the bringing of the gifts to the altar and the preparation rites*
- **Lord's Prayer & doxology:** *a petition for daily food and for purification from sin in preparation for Communion*
- **Song after Holy Communion:** *an optional prayer of praise sung by the assembly*

### What music is most important in the Mass? What gets priority?

- *music that involves the participation of the entire assembly holds great importance overall*
  - *music of greater priority should be sung as a norm*
1. **music of key liturgical texts**
    - Dialogues between the presider and people
    - Acclamations (*Alleluia; Holy-Memorial Acclamation-Amen*)
  2. **Responsorial Psalm/Canticle in the Liturgy of the Word**
  3. **processional music**
    - Opening Song
    - Communion Song
  - *other music, of lesser priority, might be sung for seasons or feasts of greater solemnity*
  4. **other**
    - litanies: *Kyrie, Lamb of God*
    - Glory to God
    - preparation of the gifts
    - Lord's Prayer
    - Prayer of the Faithful/Petitions
    - Profession of Faith/Creed
    - song of praise by the people after Communion

### Why does knowing this matter?

- **choosing music:** it is vital to understand the needed function of music for each part of the Mass in order to select music that will serve the liturgy appropriately
- **leading music:** the ministerial ability of pastoral musicians is tied to their understanding of their ministry
- **participating in the music:** when the assembly understands the reason they are being asked to sing, their participation increases

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