

Music for your wedding

(Source: Dublin Diocesan Liturgical Resource Centre .<http://litmus.dublindiocese.ie/category/marriage/>)

Choosing music for your Wedding

SELECT MUSIC FOR THE CHURCH CEREMONY

The celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is a wonderful occasion for a couple, their families, friends and the wider Christian community who gather to witness this public declaration of love and commitment. One way of getting everybody involved in the Church ceremony is to choose a programme that combines pieces that people can join in easily with instrumentals or reflective songs that bring out the meaning of the Christian celebration of Marriage.

This sacrament is usually celebrated in the context of the Eucharist and therefore the usual principles for making music choices apply.

- Look for a setting of the Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations (Holy, Holy.... When we this bread and Amen) that everybody can sing
- Choose a Responsorial Psalm setting that is accessible to most people
- Greet the Gospel with song (Alleluia, except in Lent) and a procession of children carrying streamers flowing from the Book of the Gospels
- In addition to an Instrumental Processional select a Gathering Song that will bring people together and set the tone for the celebration
- A Communion Song, after all have settled back into their seats, can help bring the community together in a spirit of thanksgiving
- If you are not going to sing the Glory to God (Gloria) you may omit it
- Taking time for music around the wedding ceremony itself will help everyone to appreciate the richness of what is being celebrated
- The Recessional can be either Instrumental or Vocal
- Ask the singer or someone with experience of leading people to rehearse some of the music beforehand – it might be a good ice-breaker and will help participation from the start

If the church celebration takes place as a Service (Liturgy of the Word) you can apply the same principles leaving out music that occurs only in the context of the celebration of a Mass (Eucharistic Prayer Acclamation and Communion Song).

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

An instrumental piece such as the Irish traditional *Tabhair dom do Lámh* (1) from the 17th c. is just one example of music that could be used to accompany the procession of the wedding party through the church. This piece could also be extended to include the ceremony of the lighting of the candles which is so popular today.

It is recommended then that all would be invited to join in the Opening Song and here you will find two examples *We Praise You O Lord* (2) in the folk tradition of the 1970s and *Christ Be Near At Either Hand* (3), set for four voices, is in a more traditional hymn style.

GLORY TO GOD

This hymn of praise is more effective when brought alive through song. This setting of *Gloria* (4) from Lourdes allows for the participation of all in the refrain.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Responsorial Psalm after the first reading from scripture should be sung where possible. Here are four examples in different styles that are inclusive of the congregation.

5. Throughout All Time (David Haas)

Eagle's Wings (Michael Joncas)

Let Us Rejoice (Marty Haugen)

Seinn Alleluia – Psalm 150 (Ronan McDonagh)

The refrain of *Seinn Alleluia* is also a suitable setting for the Gospel Acclamation which precedes the proclamation of the Gospel. Unless this acclamation is sung it may be omitted

MARRIAGE CEREMONY

It is good to allow time for reflection after the homily and before the Marriage Ceremony itself. Do not be afraid of silence at this time. Taking time for music around the wedding ceremony itself will help everyone to appreciate the richness of what is being celebrated. Four musical suggestions are given which are very appropriate at this time. The *Ephesians Prayer* (9) and the *Blessing* (10) are very effective after the conclusion of the ceremony. *Lumen Christi* (Light of Christ) (11) could accompany the second stage of the Candle Ceremony. *Wherever You Go* (12) based on the Song of Ruth from the Old Testament is also a fitting conclusion to this part of the celebration.

PREPARATION OF GIFTS

The music as the gifts of bread and wine are brought forward and prepared for the celebration can be either instrumental or lyrical. The setting of the Ave Maria (13) combines the plainchant music with a new musical composition. There is a popular tradition of using a setting of this prayer and it is best suited to this part of the ceremony. It does not belong during Communion when the emphasis is on thanking God for the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. The instrumental Inis Oirr (14) in an Irish style is a good accompaniment to the Procession of Gifts and gives a break from the many words used in the ceremony and the readings. Sing of a Lady (15) is another song that honours Mary, the Mother of God with a newly composed text and tune. Today (16) is in the folk tradition and the words capture the spirit of the wedding ceremony and this part of the celebration of the Eucharist.

Ave Maria (Daniel Kantor_

Inis Oirr (Thomas Walshe)

Sing of a Lady (Liam Lawton)

Today (Maria O'Reilly)

Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer is the central prayer of the Mass that is prayed by the priest on behalf of all present. The Prayer has three important acclamations that can be sung by everybody. This simple setting based on a traditional Donegal laoi is linked melodically for all three acclamations making it very easy to sing. Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations

COMMUNION SONGS

Songs at this time can accompany the communion procession and if they are to be sung by all they need to have simple refrains or be very well known. In the six suggested pieces here nos. 2, 3 and 6 have very singable refrains that will be picked up if people are also given the words in the booklet and encouraged to participate. The other three pieces will serve as songs of thanksgiving and reflection.

Song of Ruth (Donald Reagan)

Set Your Hearts (Steve Warner)

I Have Loved You (Michael Joncas)

I Love You Lord (Celebrant Singers)

Gathered As One (Owen Lynch)

Love is Patient (Gerry Keegan)

RECESSIONAL

24. May the Road Rise To Meet You (Lori True)