



WEDDING MUSIC GUIDELINES

Your Day

Your wedding day is your day; but it is not yours exclusively. At your wedding you make a solemn, life-long promise, a covenant with each other and with God, witnessed by God's people, your friends and relatives.

Just as the rest of the day is planned jointly with family and friends, so also the wedding ceremony should be carefully planned to be a memorable and joyful religious experience for all.

A Special Occasion

Remember that the church and the community do not witness your solemn promise in just any place, but in a special, holy place - your parish church. The clothes you choose to wear give honor to the occasion; you decorate your home and parish church in a festive manner; you choose a special community to gather as your witnesses; everything takes place at a special time, at a unique moment in your lives.

Realizing that the place of your wedding, the clothes you wear, and the decor of the occasion are all very carefully chosen, you would expect then to be just as careful and particular in the choice of special texts and music used within your wedding liturgy. You would also welcome the assistance of the church - your parish priest and musicians - to share in the selection of appropriate readings and songs.

A Community Occasion

Just as you would not expect to pronounce your wedding vows in street language, so you would not expect to hear everyday love songs within a ceremony celebrating Christian married love. Certainly this sort of music may help celebrate another part of your wedding day, but during the wedding ceremony you hope to rise above everyday concern to celebrate more than worldly love. Your concern is spiritual love: the love of God for you, your love for God; the love of the community for you, your love for them. These support and confirm your love for each other.

The Church loves you also; and, out of this love, asks that you have a high regard for this one moment in "your day" and consider choices of text and music in the light of guidelines the Church proposes. By following these guidelines, you will help express your faith and enhance your wedding liturgy as an act of worship.

Songs

In the Marriage Rite, the Liturgy of the Word comes to life if, between the first and second readings, a soloist sings the psalm verses, and all sing the response. All should join in singing the gospel acclamation. In many parishes, the people are accustomed to singing the Lord's Prayer. The joy of the occasion can be further heightened if the people participate in song at the opening and closing of the service. As the nuptial Mass is celebrated, the people should not be denied the opportunity to sing where they normally would at other Masses. This means the music at these places in the Mass - the Holy, Holy, Holy; the Mystery of Faith; the Great Amen - should be selected with their singing in mind.

The processional song during communion helps especially to develop a sense of community. The people might also take part in singing at the Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts, the Breaking of the Bread, and after Communion.

Music for solo voice, for choir alone, or for instruments alone can embellish the celebration before or after the liturgy, as well as after the Communion Song of the congregation.

Christian Love

The words, gestures and music for your wedding ceremony should show all present what is happening within you; an encounter with Christ through the Sacrament of Matrimony. Therefore, whatever songs are sung during the celebration should demonstrate for all present your love for one another in Christ and community.

Instrumental music, too, may express to everyone present the festive nature of this occasion of Christian witness.

You should avoid any music that has strong associations either for you or your guests with situations and activities contradicting Christian values.

More Than You Know

Although you may not be aware of it, there is much beautiful and exciting music speaking of God and Christ in your lives; of the holiness, joy, and beauty of marriage; of the special Christian significance of "your day." Before choosing music for your wedding, know all the possibilities. Your parish Music Coordinator will help you in making those selections. It is important that this consultation take place well before the wedding. **That is the reason why you need to contact the Music Coordinator at least six months before the date of the wedding to schedule a chance to meet with her and the organist.** All other details and questions regarding wedding musicians, fees, will be discussed at that meeting.

Extending best wishes to you as you plan to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage at St. Francis de Sales Church. God Bless!

Fr. Brian P. Quinn
Pastor

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