

Wedding Music Policy

St. Joseph Parish Community
Lincoln, Nebraska



Weddings are a wonderful experience here at St. Joseph. It gives us a chance to share in the celebration of your marriage to each other. In order to assist you, we have put together some guidelines to help with your planning.

WEDDING MUSIC

First, it is important to note that Christian marriage is a faith event. The goal is to help all who gather to celebrate well and with dignity. *Among the many signs and symbols used by the church to celebrate its faith, music is of preeminent importance. As sacred song united to words it forms a necessary and integral part of the solemn liturgy. Music chosen with care can serve as a bridge to faith as well as an expression of it.* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #112)

Music will add much joy to the occasion of your wedding. Its primary purpose will be to *help the people to pray*. Congregational singing, therefore, is to be preferred, even though a vocal soloist or choir may be very appropriate at certain times before and during the liturgy.

MUSICIANS

The music ministry at St. Joseph offers a wonderful program of organists, cantors, vocalists, choirs and instrumentalists that are qualified musicians and are familiar with and follow the guidelines of the Catholic Church for weddings. We require that you choose from this list of musicians for your wedding. (Occasionally a vocalist or instrumentalist not on this list will be asked to provide music for a wedding. These requests are granted in rare circumstances only, and must be approved in advance by the parish music director, and may require an audition.)

Parish pianists/organists for your wedding:

Gretchen Foley402-484-0434
Rhonda Horner-Bohaty402-310-0467
Mike Zeleny.....402-488-1845

Parish cantor/vocalists for your wedding:

Lisa Dilley.....402-795-2111
Kerry Dornbos402-489-0188
Kevin Hanrahan.....402-472-8594
Kim Tomjack402-484-5021
Kathy Krinke (substitute).....402-327-2629

Instrumentalists for your wedding:

Tom Kelly, Trumpeter and/or Plymouth Brass.....(402) 421-2452
Summit String Quartet.....(402) 421-2481

Other questions? If you have music-related questions about your upcoming wedding (e.g., you wish to hire a choir to sing for your wedding, a parish musician is not available for the date of your wedding, you're not sure whether a particular song is appropriate for the ceremony, etc.), please contact Mike Zeleny, director of music, at (402) 488-1845 or mzeleny1@unl.edu.

MUSICIANS' FEES

The fee for parish pianists/organists is \$150, which includes a brief consultation with the couple, twenty minutes of pre-nuptial music, music during the ceremony, and up to ten minutes of post-nuptial music.

The fee for parish cantor/vocalists is \$150, which includes vocal solos, hymns and/or sung parts of the Mass.

Please note that additional fees may be charged for the purchase of special music, extra rehearsals, choirs, coordinating the services of other instrumentalists, etc.

MUSIC AT YOUR CEREMONY

INTRODUCTORY MUSIC

While the guests are assembling, instrumentalists, the choir or vocal soloists may perform appropriate music. The purpose of this pre-nuptial music is to gather up and unite the thoughts of all present and to prepare them for the celebration of the marriage.

The purpose of the entrance music is to escort the liturgical ministers and the wedding party with honor to the sanctuary, and to gather the congregation into a worshiping community. A congregational hymn may be sung during the procession or instrumental music played.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Responsorial Psalm should be sung by the cantor, alternating with the assembly, which sings a simple response.

The Gospel Acclamation or Alleluia is also to be sung by a cantor and the assembly.

After the exchange of vows, a brief song (hymn or choral/vocal solo) which focuses on God's presence to individual love may be used, but is optional.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

When the Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated, it is recommended that instrumental music accompany the preparation of the gifts of bread and wine (some-times called "the offertory"). This rite is a brief part of the liturgy and should not be over-emphasized. A *short* hymn or choral/vocal solo may be used which brings out the message of the readings.

The Eucharistic Acclamations [Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen, and Lamb of God] may be sung in familiar musical settings known by the community. The cantor or choir may lead the people in these sung acclamations. If using musical settings would keep the majority of people from participating in the acclamations, it would be better not to sing them but to recite them together, as these acclamations, as well as the Lord's Prayer, belong to all of the people and, as such, *should properly be prayed by them*.

The Song of Communion accompanies the communion procession and expresses our unity in the Body of Christ; therefore, this song should speak of a wider community love than do those sung during the wedding ceremony itself. Congregational singing, by its very nature, reflects the meaning of communion.

The assembly, choir or soloist may sing a hymn of praise and thanksgiving after Communion. Instrumental music is also appropriate at this time for lending a mood of silence, prayer and reflection.

CONCLUDING RITE

The dismissal is followed immediately by strong, joyous recessional music which may be a hymn sung by the assembly or choir, or an instrumental selection.

MUSIC STANDARDS

The *Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy* of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stresses three standards to be used in choosing music for any celebration of liturgy:

1. THE MUSICAL STANDARD: Music used in liturgy must be technically correct and of good quality. That which is merely cheap, trite musical cliché should not even be considered. When you consult with the parish musician to plan the music for your wedding, you will avoid many mistakes and possibly embarrassing situations; this person has probably been involved in hundreds of weddings and can be most helpful to you. This consultation should be done well in advance of the wedding.

2. THE LITURGICAL STANDARD: The sacrament of matrimony is a public act, a sacred sign, an encounter with Christ. The music at weddings should serve to emphasize the sacred event, not distract from it. Music should assist all who are present to share the gift of faith and to join with the Church in prayer for the couple. For this reason, if you wish to use songs at your wedding, you should be aware that, while they ought to be as musically attractive as possible, it is the text [the words] which should be considered most important: each text sung at your wedding ought to be readily identifiable as *prayer*. If it cannot, then it is out of place in a liturgical context. While it is clearly possible that musical selections designed for purposes other than liturgical worship (such as popular show tunes, love songs and secular ballads) may also express some dimension of Christian faith and may, in some cases, help people pray, the practical fact remains that, in the vast majority of cases, compositions which are the most successful in fulfilling the purpose for which they were created will usually be only minimally successful when they are re-directed toward a much different end. For this reason, it is recommended that music of this type is best left to the family reception, where another dimension of the celebration prevails.

3. THE PASTORAL STANDARD: Each wedding is unique; the music at a particular wedding must be judged on how well it will enable *this particular group of people* present at *this particular wedding* to express their faith. If it is meaningful for this type of experience, then it is appropriate.

We trust that these guidelines will prove helpful to you in planning the music for this, the most important event of your lives. If you have other concerns or questions regarding the music for your wedding, we advise you to check with the parish music director or a Parish Priest.