



Saint Patrick Music Guidelines for Weddings

The selection of music for your wedding ceremony is important, and many couples don't know where to begin. Here is information to help you start thinking about music for the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony at St. Patrick.

Liturgical Music

The celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony is not a private family function, a social affair or a personal expression of your love for each other — your wedding is celebrated in community with the entire church. The wedding liturgy is also not a show or performance to be observed passively by your guests. Everyone present should be able to hear, see, speak, sing and pray- to actively and fully participate.

Planning the Music for the Wedding liturgy

Music for the wedding should be jointly planned by the couple utilizing the resources on our web page in consultation with the pastor and pastoral musicians. The pastor and team will only work with the couple, (not with parents, friends, wedding planners or coordinators.) Remember that the Sacrament is a liturgical celebration. One of the basic principles that should underlie your selection of music is whether the music is indeed liturgical music. Popular songs and secular music, no matter how meaningful they may be to you, have no place in the church. Enjoy these selections at your wedding reception!

For the wedding liturgy you will want to ensure the emphasis is on sacred music, which comes from scriptural and liturgical sources, and by its very nature enhances your union within the liturgical rites celebrated. The music

should fit the church space, which has over a few seconds of reverberation. This means that there are pieces which may be sacred in nature yet may not be suitable for the St. Patrick space. **Selections for the liturgy must be approved by the pastor, Father Troy Richmond, a minimum of one month before the day of your wedding.**

Accompanists and Musicians

Due to musical and liturgical requirements, only experienced musicians may play or sing for weddings at St. Patrick. Your accompanist should be experienced with accompanying Roman Catholic Mass. This helps avoid disappointment to you and your families, ensuring that the liturgy goes smoothly on your wedding day. The musicians that are approved must know that they are entrusted with the responsibility of determining the suitability of musical selections within the context of the Roman Catholic wedding liturgy, and working with the acoustics and sound system of the worship space. The St. Patrick team office can provide contact information for our St. Patrick pastoral music team, and assist you in locating musicians, but ultimately it is your responsibility to schedule musicians for your ceremony. **Fr. Troy must approve all music and musicians (vocal and instrumental) selected a minimum of one month before the date.**

Cantor

The cantor leads the liturgical music at the wedding. Throughout the centuries when Christians gathered for prayer, music, especially singing, has played an integral role. St. Paul exhorts the Ephesians “Be filled with the spirit, addressing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs singing and playing to the Lord in all your hearts.” Remember that you’ve chosen to celebrate your wedding within the context of the Catholic liturgy, where singing is the norm. The cantor will help lead the singing by those present.

The role of the cantor is unique and involves different skills than singing as a soloist, although often the cantor also will be the soloist at a wedding.

Cantors are thoroughly familiar with the musical requirements of the wedding

liturgy, and comfortable with working with church acoustics and sound systems. A cantor is required for every wedding.

Instrumentalists and Vocalists

You may also elect to hire additional vocalists and/or instrumental musicians. Instrumentalists can add to the festivity of the wedding liturgy. If your budget allows, and you would like an instrumentalist, you may get the most “bang for your buck” by hiring a trumpet player. There is a substantial body of excellent music for trumpet, and trumpet can be a great addition to the prelude, entrance procession, and recessional. There may also be possibilities to play within the liturgy if a trumpet part is available.

Violin, cello, flute or harp can also be lovely.

Ensembles

You may be interested in hiring an established instrumental ensemble for your wedding, such as a trio or quartet. You will need to contract with the ensemble directly. There are many talented ensembles available in the Iowa City area, however they get booked far in advance, so plan ahead!

Fees and terms of payment are set by the accompanist, cantor, instrumentalist(s) and/or soloist (s) and it is your responsibility to meet the terms of payment.

Prelude and Gathering

Prior to the beginning of the liturgy, there is usually prelude music for 10-30 minutes of music as guests arrive and are seated. Music during this time is at the discretion of the musicians and may mirror the festive nature of the occasion as well as the quiet dignity of prayerful reflection. The Prelude is often comprised entire of solo organ or piano repertoire, but other music (instrumental, vocal) is possible as well.

Seating of the Parents

If the parents are not participating in the entrance procession, the seating of the parents takes place just prior to the procession. Couples often wish to have the seating of their parents highlighted and accompanied by a special piece of music.

Processional

Please discuss with the presiding priest/deacon the options for the entrance procession. The bride and groom may each process in with their parents, the bride and groom may come in with each other, or the couple may opt for the bride to come in escorted by a parent or parents preceded by members of the wedding party. The procession may be a hymn sung by everyone present. The processional may be an instrumental piece played by the organ or piano alone, or with other instruments. Please choose one piece of music for the entire procession. The wedding rite does not specify a change in music for the entrance of the bride. Keep in mind that the main aisle is relatively short.

The Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word is a celebration of God speaking to our hearts and souls. The Liturgy of the Word consists of: First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, and Gospel. You will choose the readings with help of the priest or deacon presiding at your wedding.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalms by their very nature are songs with sung responses. The psalm is usually led by the cantor

Gospel Acclamation

Before the Gospel reading, an Alleluia is sung (except during Lent.) The Alleluia is led by the cantor and is taken from the standard liturgical repertoire. During Lent, the Lenten gospel acclamation is sung, led by the cantor.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist- for those celebrating a Mass

If you are having your wedding within a Mass (with communion,) this section applies to you. The Liturgy of the Word focuses on the Word of the Lord. The Liturgy of the Eucharist centers upon the altar and the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Offertory

There is music during the offertory and preparation of the altar. This usually takes very little time, so a short organ/piano or instrumental selection is most effective.

Eucharistic Acclamations

During Mass, the Eucharistic Prayer follows next. The cantor will lead the congregation in singing during the prayer. These include the Sanctus (Holy, Holy,) the Memorial Acclamation, and the Great Amen, and are taken from the standard liturgical repertoire.

Lord's Prayer

Sometimes couples ask to have the Lord's prayer sung. Keep in mind that your wedding guests will likely come from several different churches and faiths. This is the one common prayer among all Christian denominations, and it is important that everyone be able to join in praying it together. The Lord's Prayer is therefore usually spoken at a wedding. Please discuss with the priest or deacon presiding at your wedding.

Sign of Peace

The sign of peace involves speaking and movement on the part of the congregation. There is no vocal music at this point.

Agnus Dei

The Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) is sung immediately following the Sign of Peace. As with other acclamations, the musical setting is taken from the standard liturgical repertoire.

Communion Procession

In selecting music for Communion, keep in mind the nature of the Eucharistic rite as a sign of unity of all who are gathered. If your guests like to sing, a congregational hymn would be very appropriate here. A vocal solo or instrumental music works well also. One piece of music is usually sufficient for communion at a wedding.

Recessional

The wedding recessional is usually festive and joyous. It is most often instrumental, organ or piano alone or with other instruments. There are many possibilities from which to choose.

Postlude

The accompanist and/or instrumentalists may continue to play as your guests exit the church. Please discuss with your musicians.

Optional: Meditation to the Blessed Mother Mary

If you have a devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mother Mary and would like to express this by presenting flowers to Mary's devotional area in the church, please discuss this with the priest or deacon presiding at your wedding. The Meditation to the Blessed Mother takes place prior to the recessional. Music may be played or sung, usually a setting "Ave Maria" or another hymn devoted to Mary.

Music Confirmation

Father Troy Richmond must approve all music and musicians selected a minimum of one month before the date.

Program

You may wish to produce a program/worship aid for your guests. This will help your guests feel welcomed and comfortable with participating in the wedding liturgy. **If you are printing a program, please allow an additional 2 full weeks before your printing deadline for Fr. Troy Richmond's approval (6 weeks before your wedding date.)**

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