

Liturgical Music and Liturgical Formation

Music in the Rites of the OCIA

Selected Documentation

Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2007

5. Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations can foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken it. Good music “makes the liturgical prayers of the Christian community more alive and fervent so that everyone can praise and beseech the Triune God more powerfully, more intently and more effectively” (quoting *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina*, 1955, n. 31).

6. ... In Liturgy, we use words, gestures, signs, and symbols to proclaim Christ’s presence and to reply with our worship and praise.

9. Charity, justice and evangelization are thus the normal consequences of liturgical celebration. Particularly inspired by sung participation, the body of the Word Incarnate goes forth to spread the Gospel with full force and compassion.

11. Within the gathered assembly, the role of the congregation is especially important. “The full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered above all else, for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit” (quoting *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 14).

26. *Singing is one of the primary ways that the assembly of the faithful participates actively in the liturgy. The people are encouraged “to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons [and] hymns” (quoting SC, n. 30).*

27. So that the holy people may sing with one voice, *the music must be within its members’ capability... Familiarity with a stable repertoire of liturgical songs rich in theological content can deepen the faith of the community through repetition and memorization.*

124. *Music does what words alone cannot do. It is capable of expressing a dimension of meaning and feeling that words alone cannot convey. While this dimension of an individual musical composition is often difficult to describe, its affective power should be carefully considered along with its textual component.*

115.a. The acclamations of the Eucharistic Liturgy and other rites arise from the whole gathered assembly as assents to God’s Word and action.

Chirograph on Sacred Music

St. John Paul II, 2003

5. Liturgical music must meet the specific prerequisites of the Liturgy: full adherence to the text it presents, synchronization with the time and moment in the liturgy for which it is intended, appropriately reflecting the gestures proposed by the rite.

The various moments in the liturgy require a musical expression of their own. From time to time this must fittingly bring out the nature proper to a specific rite, now proclaiming God's marvels, now expressing praise, supplication or even sorry for the experience of human suffering...

6. The music and song requested by the liturgical reform—it is right to stress this point—must comply with the legitimate demands of adaptation and inculturation.

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B. MUSIC AND THE OTHER SACRAMENTS

200. The liturgical books for the various rites offer suggested texts for many of the instances in which a song is suggested. *While not mandatory, these suggested texts offer compositional opportunities for composers and, at the very least, indicate the nature of texts appropriate for specific moments in the rite.*

The Initiation of Adults

202. The [Order] of Christian Initiation of Adults includes several major ritual celebrations that presuppose the presence and participation of the local community, given that “the initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptized.” *Since singing is one of the most important forms of active participation in the Liturgy, it is important to choose sung responses, acclamations, antiphons, psalms, and other songs that will enable the whole community to participate at the appropriate times.*

Directory for Catechesis

Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, 2020

74.b *Catechesis, liturgy and the sacraments*: Catechesis is oriented to the liturgical celebration. It is necessary that there be both a catechesis that prepares for the sacraments and a mystagogical catechesis that fosters an understanding and a deeper experience of the liturgy.

Sacramentum Caritatis

Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission
Pope Benedict XVI, 2007

17. If the Eucharist is truly the source and summit of the Church's life and mission, it follows that *the process of Christian initiation must constantly be directed to the reception of this sacrament. ... It must never be forgotten that our reception of Baptism and Confirmation is ordered to the Eucharist.*

It is our participation in the Eucharistic sacrifice which perfects within us the gifts given to us at Baptism. The gifts of the Spirit are given for the building up of Christ's Body (1 Cor 12) and for ever greater witness to the Gospel in the world. The Holy Eucharist, then brings Christian initiation to completion and represents the centre and goal of all sacramental life.

42. As an element of the liturgy, *song should be well integrated into the overall celebration (128). Consequently everything – texts, music, execution – ought to correspond to the meaning of the mystery being celebrated, the structure of the rite and the liturgical seasons.*

64. In particular, given the close relationship between the *ars celebrandi* and an *actuosa participatio*, it must first be said that *"the best catechesis on the Eucharist is the Eucharist itself, celebrated well."* By its nature, the liturgy can be pedagogically effective in helping the faithful to enter more deeply into the mystery being celebrated. That is why, in the Church's most ancient tradition, the process of Christian formation always had an experiential character.

64.b) A mystagogical catechesis must also be concerned with *presenting the meaning of the signs* contained in the rites. This is particularly important in a highly technological age like our own, which risks losing the ability to appreciate signs and symbols. More than simply conveying information, *a mystagogical catechesis should be capable of making the faithful more sensitive to the language of signs and gestures which, together with the word, make up the rite.*

79. The Eucharist, as a mystery to be "lived", meets each of us as we are, and makes our concrete existence the place where we experience daily the radical newness of the Christian life. *The eucharistic sacrifice nourishes and increases within us all that we have already received at Baptism*, with its call to holiness, (218) and this must be clearly evident from the way individual Christians live their lives. Day by day we become "a worship pleasing to God" by living our lives as a vocation. Beginning with the liturgical assembly, the sacrament of the Eucharist itself commits us, in our daily lives, to doing everything for God's glory.

Desiderio Desideravi: Apostolic Letter on the Liturgical Formation of the People of God *Pope Francis, 2022*

45. So, the question I want to pose *is how can we become once again capable of symbols?* How can we again know how to read them and be able to live them? *We know well that the celebration of the sacraments, by the grace of God, is efficacious in itself (ex opere operato), but this does not guarantee the full engagement of people without an adequate way of their placing themselves in relation to the language of the celebration. A symbolic "reading" is not a mental knowledge, not the acquisition of concepts, but rather a living experience.*

48. The *ars celebrandi* cannot be reduced to only a rubrical mechanism... *The rite is in itself a norm, and the norm is never an end in itself, but it is always at the service of a higher reality that it means to protect.*

49. As in any art, the *ars celebrandi* requires different kinds of knowledge. First of all, it requires *an understanding of the dynamism that unfolds through the Liturgy.* The action of the celebration is the place in which, by means of memorial, the Paschal Mystery is made present so that the baptized, through their participation, can experience it in their own lives. Without this understanding, the celebration easily falls into a preoccupation with the exterior (more or less refined) or into a concern only for rubrics (more or less rigid).

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2021, awaiting confirmation

7.4. The Initiation of catechumens takes place step-by-step in the midst of the community of the faithful, who together with the catechumens reflecting upon the value of the Paschal Mystery and renewing their own conversion, lead them by their own example to obey the Holy Spirit more generously.

9.2. [The community] should be willing to attend the celebrations of the catechumenate when possible and take an active part in the responses, prayers, songs, and acclamations.

9.4. During Lent... they should take care to be present at the Rites of the Scrutinies and of Handing On and give the catechumens the example of their own renewal in the spirit of penitence, faith, and charity. They should be eager to renew their own baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil.

75.1 Appropriate catechesis, given by Priests, Deacons or catechists and other lay people, divided into steps and fully presented, suited to the liturgical year and supported by Celebrations of the Word, leads them not only to a suitable knowledge of dogmas and precepts, but also to an intimate knowledge of the mystery of salvation, which they desire to make their own.

75.3 They are assisted on their journey by Mother Church with suitable liturgical rites and by them they are now gradually cleansed and sustained with divine blessing. ... indeed they themselves can already come to the Liturgy of the Word with the faithful to prepare themselves better for their future participation in the Eucharist. However, when they are present with the congregation of the faithful, they must normally be gently dismissed before the Eucharistic Celebration begins....

138. Lent renews the community of the faithful together with the elect and disposes them to recall the Paschal Mystery, which the Sacraments of Initiation apply to individuals, In this period, the elect together with the local community give themselves to spiritual recollection, so that they may prepare themselves for the Paschal Feasts and for initiation by the Sacraments.

145. The Scrutinies should be celebrated... so that the faithful may also benefit from the liturgy of the Scrutinies and intercede for the elect in the intercessions.

OCIA / Appendix II: Acclamations, Hymns, and Chants

595. Acclamations Taken from Sacred Scripture (twelve options)

2. God is light and in him there is no darkness at all (1 Jn 1:5)

3. God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God (1 Jn 4:16)

6. Blessed be God, who chose you in Christ (Cf. Eph 1:3-4)

7. You are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:10)

12. Be imitators of God and walk in love, as Christ has loved us. (Eph. 5:1-2)

596. Hymns in the Style of the New Testament (two options)

1. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who in his great mercy has given us a new birth into a living hope
through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
into an inheritance that will not perish,
preserved for us in heaven,
for the salvation to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:3-5)

597. Chants Selected from Antiquity and from the Liturgies (seven options)

1. We believe in you, O Christ:
pour your light into our hearts and make us children of light!
2. Rejoice, you newly baptized, chosen vessels of the Kingdom,
buried together with Christ in death,
born again of Christ by faith