

GUIDELINES FOR FUNERAL MUSIC

Diocese of San Diego

"We are indeed buried with Christ through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life." Romans 6:4

INTRODUCTION

At the time of death, people often find themselves at a loss for words. Music can unveil a dimension of meaning and feeling that words alone cannot yield. (MCW, 24) Since music plays a significant part in the life of peoples of every culture, it is natural that the Church ritualizes with music the important event of passing into eternal life. These guidelines for funeral music are offered to assist pastors and staffs, especially music ministers, in planning with the family of the deceased for the selection of music for the funeral rites. (*Note: general guidelines for planning are found in the Diocese of San Diego Guidelines for Catholic Funeral Rites.*)

MUSIC SELECTION

The *Order of Christian Funerals* (OCF) does not specifically list music repertoire, but gives instead broad directives. Through music and song Christians are able to name the reality of their grief, longing, and trust and hope grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Since music can evoke strong feelings, music for these celebrations should be chosen with great care. (OCF, 31) Songs should express the paschal mystery and be related to the readings from Scripture chosen for the day. (OCF, 30)

All ritual music is sacred, but not all sacred music is ritual music. Sacred music is generic and can be used in a variety of settings, while ritual music, *i.e.*, music chosen for the rites of the church, must form a necessary and integral part of the liturgy. Its function is ministerial. It serves worship, supports, consoles and uplifts participants and help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ's victory over death. (OCF, 31)

Because music is integral to liturgy, the authors of *Music in Catholic Worship* suggest three criteria for planning so that the assembled faithful might participate fully, consciously and actively in the rites.

Musical Judgment

Ritual music must be good music, able to carry the weight of the text or the emotion that it seeks to evoke. There should be an identifiable music structure and form in which the melody, harmony and text complement each other.

Liturgical Judgment

The nature of the liturgy itself will help to determine what kind of music is called for, what parts are to be preferred for singing and who is to sing them. (MCW, 30) In choosing music, the general classification of the liturgical texts must be kept in mind: acclamations, psalms, antiphons, litanies, hymns, and prayer. Each has a specific function and form served by the music chosen. The texts of the music must be theologically sound, expressing the faith of the Church. Special care should be taken for funeral liturgies to choose texts that express a belief in resurrection and the Church's ministry of consolation and hope.

Pastoral Judgment

Every choice made by the planning team is made in particular circumstances. Choices of music should enable the assembly to express its faith in this place, time and culture. Songs need to be within the capabilities of this assembly to sing and these musicians to play. The circumstances of the death of the parishioner also need to be considered: Was it sudden or a long-term illness? Is the deceased a child, adult, or elder? Are the mourners Roman Catholic or are they of various faith traditions? Music that reflects a sensitive, restrained yet faith-filled hope may be more in keeping with pastoral circumstances than the exuberance of Easter exaltation.

MUSIC WITHIN THE FUNERAL RITES

Music should be provided for the vigil, funeral liturgy and, whenever possible, for the funeral processions and the rite of committal. Many musical settings used by the parish community during the liturgical year may be suitable for use at funerals. (OCF, 32) An organist/instrumentalist, a cantor, and, whenever possible, a choir should assist the assembly's full participation in singing the songs, responses, and acclamations of the rites. (OCF, 33) Liturgical Music Today, #60, states that *liturgy is a complexus of signs expressed by living human beings. Music, being preeminent among those signs, ought to be "live."* Consequently, recorded music (i.e. tapes, CDs) should not be used within the liturgy, particularly if it would replace the congregation, the choir, the organist, or other instrumentalists. Music in the liturgy is far more than 'atmosphere,' and our prayer and praise of God during the liturgy are expressions that are not pre-recorded. A worship aid/program may assist the assembly to fulfill its role, and assist those not of the Catholic faith in their prayer. All music printed in the program must have copyright permissions purchased and duly acknowledged.

MUSIC ELEMENTS IN THE FUNERAL RITES

VIGIL

The vigil for the deceased may take the form either of a liturgy of the word or of some part of the office for the dead. If the vigil takes place at the church, the reception of the body may begin the liturgy. Guidelines for choosing music are consistent with norms for music selection in liturgies of the word and the divine office in general. The life-death-resurrection motif should be apparent. (*Note: Music guidelines for the Office of the Dead are found at the end of this section.*)

Liturgy of the Word

Introductory Rites (greeting, opening song, invitation to prayer, silent prayer, collect)

Preference should be given to the singing of the **opening song**. It should be a profound expression of belief in eternal life and the resurrection of the dead. (OCF, 58) This hymn needs to include the full voice of the assembly, and therefore, is best chosen from the usual repertoire of the parish community.

Liturgy of the Word (first reading, responsorial psalm, gospel reading, homily)

The **responsorial psalm** should be sung whenever possible. It should be taken from the psalter and be responsorial in form. Because the psalm is a proclamation of scripture, it is recommended that, if the vigil takes place at the church, the cantor/psalmist render the psalm from the ambo.

Prayer of Intercession (litany, Lord's Prayer, concluding prayer)

The **litany** may be chanted or recited with an appropriate sung or spoken response (for example: "Lord, hear our prayer.") Also, the **Lord's Prayer** may be either sung or spoken by all.

Concluding Rite (blessing, closing song and/or instrumental music)

After the blessing there may be a **closing song** or instrumental music. A song at this time, as with the opening song, should reflect a profound expression of belief in eternal life

Funeral Liturgy

This is the central liturgical celebration of the Christian community for the deceased. The Church encourages the celebration to take place within the context of Eucharist whenever possible. (OCF, 128) The general guidelines for music in Eucharistic celebrations apply equally to the funeral liturgy. The full and active participation of the assembly affirms the value of praying for the dead, gives strength and support to the bereaved, and is a sure sign of faith and hope in the paschal mystery. (OCF, 150) Ministers should involve the family in planning whenever possible. Preference should be given to the singing of the acclamations, responsorial psalm, entrance and communion songs, and especially the song of farewell at the final commendation. (OCF, 157)

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE FUNERAL LITURGY (Also see *Order of Christian Funerals*)

Reception at the Church

The reception of the body takes place at the entrance of the Church at the beginning of Mass unless it has already taken place at the vigil. The **procession** follows the sprinkling rite and the laying of the funeral pall. Whenever possible, the procession should be accompanied by the song of the assembly, expressing its belief in the resurrection. (OCF, 135) If the rite of reception was held previously, the Mass begins with the entrance song.

Liturgy of the Word

Following the first reading, the **responsorial psalm** is sung. The style of the psalm is responsorial; a cantor/choir sings the verses with the assembly joining in the refrain. If it is not possible to sing the psalm, it should be recited responsorially in a manner that respects the poetic and musical nature of the prayer. The **Gospel acclamation** (Alleluia or the Lenten acclamation) is always sung. If it is not sung, it is omitted. Following the homily, the **intercessions** are prayed. Although usually recited, a cantor may chant them. The

assembly answers with a simple refrain which may be sung even if the intercessions are recited.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

A song may accompany the **procession of gifts** and/or the **preparation of the gifts and altar**, in which case the musical text should reflect the Church's belief in the resurrection, or pray for the Spirit's blessing on the gifts. Instrumental music and silence are options also. Singing by the assembly of the Eucharistic Acclamations (**Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation and Amen**), is highly encouraged. During the communion rite, the assembly may sing the **Lord's Prayer**, its **doxology**, the **Lamb of God** and a song for the **communion procession**. Since this is a time to reinforce and express more fully the unity of the community, solo singing is not recommended.

Final Commendation and Farewell

The sprinkling and incensing of the body follows the presider's words and a time of silence, and is accompanied by the song of farewell. The **song of farewell** affirms hope and trust in the paschal mystery and is the climax of the final commendation. Since it is the community's farewell, the melody should be simple enough for all to sing. If the song of farewell is not sung, the assembly may recite the invocations provided in the rite. (OCF, 147)

Procession to the Place of Committal

A version of *In Paradisum (May the angels lead you into paradise)* may accompany the funeral procession out of the church. Another suitable closing hymn or instrumental music may be used for the recessional if the burial does not follow immediately.

Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass

For a funeral liturgy outside Mass, preference should be given to the singing of the opening song, responsorial psalm, gospel acclamation, and especially the song of farewell. (OCF, 181) (*See the OCF for an outline of the rite.*) The same guidelines apply for the musical elements in this rite as in the funeral liturgy within Mass.

Rite of Committal

The rite of committal concludes the funeral rites. (*See the OCF for outlines of the two forms.*) The use of well-chosen music at the committal can help mourners face the reality of separation. If the rite with final commendation is used, the song of farewell should be sung whenever possible. The Lord's Prayer, if used, may be sung or recited by all. In either form of the rite, a concluding song that affirms hope in God's mercy and in the resurrection of the dead is desirable. (OCF, 214)

The Funeral Rites for Children

The *Order of Christian Funerals* provides rites to be used in the funeral of infants and young children. They include the Vigil for the Deceased Child, the Funeral Liturgy, and the Rite of

Committal. Special care is involved in planning these funeral rites. The age of the child, circumstances of death, the grief of the family and the needs and customs of those assembled should be kept in mind.

Office for the Dead

The celebration of the **Liturgy of the Hours (Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer)** requires careful preparation since most assemblies are not familiar with its format. A sung celebration is in keeping with the nature of the prayer and is to be encouraged. (OCF, 372) An organist/instrumentalist and a cantor may assist the assembly in singing. A participation aid for texts and music belonging to the people (with appropriate copyright permissions noted), and directions for posture and gesture are valuable in helping the assembly to pray well.

The Liturgy of the Hours may be used as the format of the vigil service. Depending on the time of day, Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer is celebrated. In Morning Prayer, themes of resurrection and light remind the community of Christ's victory over death. In Evening Prayer themes are of thanksgiving for the gift of life, and invoke Christ, the evening star and unconquerable light. (OCF, 350 and 351)

Structure and Content of Morning and Evening Prayer
(introduction [or reception of the body], hymn, psalmody, reading, response to the word of God, gospel canticle, intercession, concluding prayer, dismissal)

Preference should be given to the singing of the hymn, psalmody, and gospel canticle. The introductory verse, responsory, intercessions, Lord's Prayer and dismissal may also be sung.

The **hymn** sets the tone of the prayer and choices of texts should mirror the themes stated above, or generally express belief in the paschal mystery. **Psalms** are sung whenever possible. The manner of singing may be antiphonal, responsorial, or sung through. (OCF, 356) Usual texts for Morning Prayer include Psalms 51, 146, 150, a canticle from Isaiah or Daniel. Texts for Evening Prayer may include Psalm 121, 130, 141, and a New Testament canticle from the epistles.

Following the reading, a short responsory or a **responsorial song** may be sung or recited. The Gospel canticle is then sung: the **Canticle of Zechariah (Benedictus)** in Morning Prayer and the **Canticle of Mary (Magnificat)** in Evening Prayer. The **intercessions** and **Lord's Prayer** may be sung. A concluding prayer completes the Hour.

Musical Text Choices for Funerals of Adults

Responsorial Psalm	Psalms 23, 25, 27, 42, 43 63, 103, 116, 122, 130, 143
Alleluia Verse/Verse before the Gospel	Mt. 11:25; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 6:39; Jn. 3:40; Jn. 6:51a; Jn. 11:25-26 Phil. 3:20; 2 Tm. 2:11b-12a; Rev. 1:5a, 6b; Rev. 14:13

Musical Text Choices especially appropriate for funerals of infants or children

Responsorial Psalm	Psalm 25
Alleluia Verse/Verse before the Gospel	2 Cor. 1:3b-4a; Rev. 1:5a, 6b

Mass settings

Use a Mass setting that is familiar to the majority of the assembly, such as:

A Community Mass, Richard Proulx, 1970, GIA Publications, Inc.

Mass of Creation, Marty Haugen, 1984, GIA Publications, Inc.

Misa del Pueblo Imigrantes, Bob Hurd, OCP

Songs of Farewell

Come to His/Her Aid, text by Dennis C. Smolarski, 1981

I Know That My Redeemer Lives, text: ICEL, 1970, tune: Howard Hughes, SM, 1977, ICEL.

Song of Farewell/Canto de Despedida, 1985, ICEL; Spanish, Jaime Cortez, 2001, OCP

Saints of God, Steven Janco, 1990, GIA Publications, Inc.

Song of Farewell, Michael Joncas, 1988, GIA Publications, Inc.

Songs for the Procession to Place of Committal

In Paradisum, Chant, Mode VII

May Flights of Angels Lead You, text *In Paradisum*, 1969, James Quinn, SJ; Geoffrey Chapman, a division of Cassell, Ltd) London.

May Saints and Angels Lead You On, text *In Paradisum*, 1985, ICEL

May Songs of the Angels, Bob Dufford, SJ

Que Los Angeles Te Lleven, *In Paradisum*, adapt. By Eleazar Cortez, 2001, World Library Publications.

Committal

Short refrains from any of the hymns listed below or any similar short hymn may be used.

Hymns

Any hymns with Easter themes of resurrection and hope may be appropriate. Themes of comfort and compassion, *etc.*, may also be used (see the topical index of a hymnal).

Be Not Afraid/No Temas Más, Bob Dufford, 1975, New Dawn Music

Blest Are They, David Haas, 1985, GIA Publications, Inc.

Center of My Life, Paul Inwood, 1985, OCP

Eye Has Not Seen, Marty Haugen, 1982, GIA Publications, Inc.

For All the Saints, SINE NOMINE, Ralph Vaughan Williams

Holy Darkness, Dan Schutte, 1988, 1989, 1992, OCP

I Am the Bread of Life/Yo Soy El Pan de Vida, Suzanne Toolan, 1966, 1970, GIA Publications, Inc.

Jesus, Remember Me, Jacques Berthier, 1981, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

Keep In Mind/Acuérdate de Jesucristo, Lucien Deiss, CSSp, 1965, World Library Publications;
Spanish, 1966, WLP.

Nada Te Turbe/Nothing Can Trouble, Jacques Berthier, 1986, 1991, Les Presses de Taizé,
GIA Publications, Inc., agent

On Eagle's Wings/En Sus Alas, Michael Joncas, 1979, 2003, OCP

Prayer of St. Francis/Oración de San Francisco, Sebastian Temple, 1967, 2003, OCP

Resucitó, Kiko Argüello, 1972, OCP agent.

Shelter Me, O God, Bob Hurd, 1984, OCP

Shepherd Me, O God, Marty Haugen, 1986, GIA Publications, Inc.

The Hand of God Shall Hold You, Marty Haugen, 1987, GIA Publications, Inc.

We Shall Rise Again, Jeremy Young, 1987, GIA Publications, Inc.

We Will Rise Again, David Haas, 1985, OCP

You Are Near/Estás Junto a Mí, Bob Dufford, SJ, 1975, 1978, 2003; Spanish, Juan J. Sosa