

MUSIC GUIDELINES

For Christian Marriage

St. Joseph Parish-Grafton, Wisconsin

“Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am in their midst.” Matthew 18

These words from scripture remind us of the sacred nature of all Christian prayer. Whenever we gather together as people of faith in worship, Jesus Christ is present with us, offering our prayers to God. As the Church teaches us: *all Christian worship is the action of Christ our Lord and of the Church which he founded.*

All the Sacraments (Christian Marriage included) are the public prayer of the Church. They take place and are celebrated with sacred and time honored prayers and rituals adapted by the Church for our use throughout the centuries. The music used in the celebrations is first and foremost **sung prayer**, and, as such, is an essential part of our Sacramental worship. Therefore, the choices that are made must always be reflective of that purpose and, as such, are subject to guidelines:

The Prelude Music – Musical preludes are intended to serve as “mood setters”, preparing and forming the people who are present into a community of faith and inviting them to enter fully into this celebration. The prelude says, *“Welcome to this holy place and to this holy occasion.”* Thus, the choice of prelude music at the celebration of Christian Marriage is an invitation from the bride and groom that the invited guests join them in praising God for the gift of their married love.

Processional Music – The Sacramental celebration of Marriage begins with the liturgical procession – the entrance of all the liturgical ministers, including the bride and groom. It symbolizes the entrance of all present into this act of worship and our unity with one another and with Christ in this celebration. Because of this, the procession is not a time of public display calling attention to any individual persons – even the bride and/or groom. The music chosen, which is traditionally instrumental but may be sung, is intended to foster our unity with one another and in Christ. Therefore, only one musical selection is used as the processional.

Ritual Music – There is some ritual music which is used at all Liturgical celebrations: i.e. the **Responsorial Psalm** and the **Gospel Acclamation** during the Liturgy of the Word. If your Wedding is set within Mass, the **Holy, Memorial Acclamation and Great Amen** are used during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. These are, of their nature, congregational song and are always sung. A familiar setting from the Hymnal will be used so that all in attendance may participate.

Other Music – Various other parts of the Wedding Liturgy are enhanced by music. Couples are asked to share their Scripture readings chosen for the day with the parish musician so that song texts may be chosen to echo the Scripture of the day. Other instrumental music should be classical or sacred in nature. All music used in Celebrations of Christian Marriage at Saint Joseph must be reviewed and approved by our Director of Liturgy and Music.

Musicians – Our Director of Liturgy and Music serves as the primary accompanist (organ, piano, and keyboard). Cantors that serve the parish are also available for your Wedding. Cantors/soloists from outside the parish, if approved, may be used. However, they should be active in practicing their faith (*since their role is a ministry*) and serve musically at their parish. Guest instrumentalists, pianists and organists are also welcome to minister at your Wedding, however they will need to meet with the parish music director to discuss musical selections and be well versed in the Catholic Liturgy.

