

General Instruction of the Roman Missal

FOR AUSTRALIA 2012

SELECTED QUOTES PERTAINING TO LITURGICAL MUSIC

(Emphasis Added)

The Other Formulas in the Celebration

34. Since the celebration of Mass by its nature has a “communitarian” character, both the dialogues between the priest and the faithful gathered together, and the acclamations are of great significance; in fact, they are not simply outward signs of communal celebration but foster and bring about communion between priest and people.

35. The acclamations and the responses of the faithful to the priest’s greetings and prayers constitute that level of active participation that the gathered faithful are to contribute in every form of the Mass, so that the action of the entire community may be clearly expressed and fostered.

36. Other parts, very useful for expressing and fostering the faithful’s active participation, that are assigned to the whole assembly that is called together include especially the Act of Penitence, the Profession of Faith, the Prayer of the Faithful, and the Lord’s Prayer.

37. Finally, concerning the other formulas:

- a. Some constitute an independent rite or act, such as the *Gloria*, the responsorial Psalm, the *Alleluia* and verse before the Gospel, the *Sanctus*, the Memorial Acclamation, and the *cantus post communionem* (song after communion);
- b. Others accompany another rite, such as the chants at the Entrance, at the Offertory, at the fraction (*Agnus Dei*), and at Communion.

The Importance of Singing

39. The Christian faithful who gather together as one to await the Lord’s coming are instructed by the Apostle Paul to sing together psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (cf. Col 3:16). Singing is the sign of the heart’s joy (cf. Acts 2:46). Thus St. Augustine says rightly, “Singing is for one who loves.” There is also the ancient proverb: “One who sings well prays twice.”

40. Great importance should therefore be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass, with due consideration for the culture of the people and abilities of each liturgical assembly. ... every care should be taken that singing by the ministers and the people is not absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and on holy days of obligation.

In the choosing of the parts actually to be sung, however, preference should be given to those that are of greater importance and especially to those to be sung by the priest or the deacon or the lector, with the people responding, or by the priest and people together.

41. All other things being equal, Gregorian chant holds pride of place because it is proper to the Roman Liturgy. Other types of sacred music, in particular polyphony, are in no way excluded, provided that they correspond to the spirit of the liturgical action and that they foster the participation of all the faithful.

Since faithful from different countries come together ever more frequently, it is fitting that they know how to sing together at least some parts of the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin, especially the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, set to the simpler melodies.

45. **Sacred silence also, as part of the celebration, is to be observed at the designated times.** Its nature, however, depends on the moment when it occurs in the different parts of the celebration. For in the Penitential Act and again after the invitation to pray, individuals recollect themselves; whereas after a reading or after the Homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise God in their hearts and pray to him.

The Entrance

47. **After the people have gathered, the Entrance chant begins** as the priest enters with the deacon and ministers. **The purpose of this chant is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity, and accompany the procession of the priest and ministers.**

48. This chant is sung alternately by the choir and the people or similarly by a cantor and the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone. It is possible to use the antiphon with its Psalm from the *Graduale Romanum* or the *Graduale Simplex*, or another chant that is suited to the sacred action, the day, or the time of year, and whose text has been approved by the Conference of Bishops.

The Kyrie Eleison

52. After the Act of Penitence, the *Kyrie* is always begun, unless it has already been included as part of the Act of Penitence. **Since it is a chant by which the faithful acclaim the Lord and implore his mercy, it is ordinarily done by all, that is, by the people and the choir or cantor having a part in it.**

As a rule, each acclamation is sung or said twice, though it may be repeated several times, by reason of the character of the various languages, as well as of the artistry of the music or of other circumstances. When the *Kyrie* is sung as a part of the Act of Penitence, a trope may precede each acclamation.

The Gloria

53. **The Gloria is a very ancient and venerable hymn in which the Church, gathered together in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb. The text of this hymn may not be replaced by any other text.** The *Gloria* is intoned by the priest or, if appropriate, by a cantor or by the choir; but **it is sung either by everyone together**, or by the people alternately with the choir, or by the choir alone. If not sung, it is to be recited either by all together or by two parts of the congregation responding one to the other.

It is sung or said on Sundays outside the Seasons of Advent and Lent, on solemnities and feasts, and at special celebrations of a more solemn character.

B. The Liturgy of the Word

Silence

56. The Liturgy of the Word is to be celebrated in such a way as to promote meditation, and so any sort of haste that hinders recollection must clearly be avoided. **During the Liturgy of the Word, it is also appropriate to include brief periods of silence**, accommodated to the gathered assembly, in which, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the word of God may be grasped by the heart and a response through prayer may be prepared. **It may be appropriate to observe such periods of silence, for example, before the Liturgy of the Word itself begins, after the first and second reading, and lastly at the conclusion of the homily.**

The Responsorial Psalm

61. After the first reading comes the responsorial Psalm, which is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word and holds great liturgical and pastoral importance, because it fosters meditation on the word of God... It is preferable that the responsorial Psalm be sung, at least as far as the people's response is concerned ...

In order, however, that the people may be able to sing the Psalm response more readily, texts of some responses and Psalms have been chosen for the various seasons of the year or for the various categories of Saints. These may be used in place of the text corresponding to the reading whenever the Psalm is sung.

The Acclamation Before the Gospel

62. After the reading that immediately precedes the Gospel, the *Alleluia* or another chant indicated by the rubrics is sung, as required by the liturgical season. An acclamation of this kind constitutes a rite or act in itself, by which the assembly of the faithful welcomes and greets the Lord who is about to speak to it in the Gospel and professes its faith by means of the chant. **It is sung by all while standing and is led by the choir or a cantor, being repeated if this is appropriate. The verse, however, is sung either by the choir or by the cantor.**

63. When there is only one reading before the Gospel,

- a. During a season when the *Alleluia* is to be said, either the *Alleluia* Psalm or the responsorial Psalm followed by the *Alleluia* with its verse may be used;
- b. During the season when the *Alleluia* is not to be said, either the psalm and the verse before the Gospel or the psalm alone may be used;
- c. The *Alleluia* or verse before the Gospel may be omitted if they are not sung.

64. The Sequence, which is optional except on Easter Sunday and on Pentecost Day, is sung before the *Alleluia*.

C. The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Preparation of the Gifts

74. The procession bringing the gifts is accompanied by the Offertory chant, which continues at least until the gifts have been placed on the altar ...

Singing may always accompany the rite at the offertory, even when there is no procession with the gifts.

The Eucharistic Prayer

79. The chief elements making up the Eucharistic Prayer

b. **Acclamation:** In which the whole congregation, joining with the heavenly powers, sings the *Sanctus*. This acclamation, which is part of the Eucharistic Prayer itself, is sung or said by all the people with the priest.

h. **Final doxology:** By which the glorification of God is expressed and which is confirmed and concluded by the people's acclamation, Amen.

The Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer

81. The invitation, the Prayer itself, the embolism, and the doxology by which the people conclude these things are sung or said aloud.

The Fraction

83. The supplication *Agnus Dei*, is, as a rule, sung by the choir or cantor with the congregation responding ... This invocation accompanies the fraction and, for this reason, may be repeated as many times as necessary until the rite has reached its conclusion, the last time ending with the words *dona nobis pacem (grant us peace)*.

Communion

86. While the priest is receiving the Sacrament, the Communion chant is begun. Its purpose is to express the communicants' union in spirit by means of the unity of their voices, to show joy of heart, and to highlight more clearly the "communitarian" nature of the procession to receive Communion. The singing is continued for as long as the Sacrament is being administered to the faithful ... Care should be taken that singers, too, can receive Communion with ease.

88. When the distribution of Communion is finished, as circumstances suggest, the priest and faithful spend some time praying privately. If desired, a psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may also be sung by the entire congregation.

III. PARTICULAR MINISTRIES

102. The psalmist's role is to sing the Psalm or other biblical canticle that comes between the readings. To fulfill this function correctly, it is necessary that the psalmist have the ability for singing and a facility in correct pronunciation and diction.

103. Among the faithful, the *schola cantorum* or choir exercises its own liturgical function, ensuring that the parts proper to it, in keeping with the different types of chants, are properly carried out and fostering the active participation of the faithful through the singing. What is said about the choir also applies, in accordance with the relevant norms, to other musicians, especially the organist.

104. It is fitting that there be a cantor or a choir director to lead and sustain the people's singing. When in fact there is no choir, it is up to the cantor to lead the different chants, with the people taking part.

III. THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE CHURCH

The Place for the Choir and the Musical Instruments

312. The choir should be positioned with respect to the design of each church so as to make clearly evident its character as a part of the gathered community of the faithful fulfilling a specific function. The location should also assist the choir to exercise its function more easily and conveniently allow each choir member full, sacramental participation in the Mass.

313. The organ and other lawfully approved musical instruments are to be placed in an appropriate place so that they can sustain the singing of both the choir and the congregation and be heard with ease by all if they are played alone. It is appropriate that, before being put into liturgical use, the organ be blessed according to the rite described in the Roman Ritual.

In Advent the organ and other musical instruments should be used with a moderation that is consistent with the season's character and does not anticipate the full joy of the Nativity of the Lord. In Lent the playing of the organ and musical instruments is allowed only to support the singing. Exceptions are Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent), solemnities, and feasts.

II. THE CHOICE OF MASS TEXTS

The Chants

366. It is not permitted to substitute other chants for those found in the Order of Mass, such as at the *Agnus Dei*.

367. The norms laid down in their proper places are to be observed for the choice of the chants between the readings, as well as of the chants at the entrance, at the offertory, and at Communion (cf. nos. 40-41, 47-48, 61-64, 74, 86-88).