



Office of Divine Worship

Archdiocese of Newark

June 18, 2020

Music at Mass During Phase 3

The full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else, for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 26.

Below are some considerations for music during Phase 3 of parish re-openings. Although some accommodations during the pandemic may be necessary, the principles of celebrating good liturgy and encouraging the active participation of the assembly are paramount. These considerations are not mandates and should be adapted accordingly.

Despite the requirements of social distancing and the use of masks, the assembly continues to fully participate in the liturgy, including singing. [How Exactly Do You Catch Covid-19](#)

- I. **Musical Selection** - the first priority for sung music are the acclamations of the Eucharistic Prayer; i.e. Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen. Ideally, the responsorial psalm should also be sung, and the *Alleluia* is omitted if not sung. Consider choosing simple, singable settings which could be sung without a participation aid. Additional musical selections should correspond to their placement in the liturgy and not simply be used as occasions for performance. Pre-recorded music, even to support congregational singing, should not be used in the liturgy (*Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, 93).
- II. **Worship Aids/Projection Screens** - Hymnals/Missals are to be stored away for the duration of phase 3. A one-time-use worship aid, to be tossed (by the person using it) in a recycling bin at the exit may be used. Projection of whatever is needed for participation is also a viable possibility. In either case, keep in mind that all copyright laws remain in full force. If parishes livestream music under copyright, and additional 'layer' of permission is both required and available through [Onelicense.net](#). Short familiar refrains for the congregation may be most suitable.
- III. **Music During the Order of Mass**
 - Introductory Rites
 - Entrance Hymn -- try an easily-singable refrain
 - Glory to God -- consider a short, singable refrain, without overembellishment. A sung-through Gloria is another option.
 - Liturgy of the Word
 - Responsorial Psalm – every effort should be made to lead the singing of the psalm from the ambo. Adjustments could be made, such as not singing the antiphon after every

psalm verse (ie. perhaps after every two). Sensitivity to the physical space (social distancing) as well as to the Psalmist should be considered.

- Acclamation before the Gospel – omit the alleluia if it is not sung (cf. GIRM, 62).

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Preparation of the Gifts – since there is no procession with gifts during phase 3, instrumental music might be the best option.
- Acclamations of the Eucharistic Prayer – select the setting that the assembly sings best, with little or no participation aid.
- Breaking of the Bread – consider a setting where the assembly only sings ‘have mercy on us’ and ‘grant us peace’ phrases (cantor sings the remainder).
- Communion Procession – easily-singable refrains (consider appropriate texts).

Concluding Rite

- Recessional – the rubrics of the liturgy do not call for a closing hymn. Perhaps during Phase 3, instrumental music would be best. The directives require the entire church to be vacated for the purpose of sanitizing. Bear in mind the assembly will take longer to exit, be sure to have enough music prepared to accompany the total departure.

IV. **Music Ministry Protocol**

Cantor – as required by the directives, all liturgical ministers including the Cantor must wear a mask/shield at all times, even while singing. [Wearing Face Shields](#). If there is a concern with the cantor standing too close to the assembly, consider limiting seating directly in front of the cantor, or fasten a plexiglass shield to a music stand between the cantor and the assembly.

Organist/Keyboardist – following the directives for all liturgical ministers, the organist/keyboardist should also wear a mask. An exception may be if they are in isolation, e.g. playing from a gallery. Note that the keys should be wiped down before and after the liturgy, or in between different keyboardists using the instrument.

Full Choirs – are discouraged during Phase 3, but if a choir is used, it should be a small group which can sing while wearing masks (or shields) and maintaining social distancing. The number of singers would vary according to space limitations. The same guideline also applies to rehearsals.

Instrumentalists – first consideration during Phase 3 would be to use keyboard instruments (organ, piano), stringed instruments (guitar, harp, violin), or electronic and percussive instruments. Avoid woodwind and brass instruments during Phase 3. There is no issue with using the organ.

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