

## **A Step-by-Step Guide (and Guidelines) for Painlessly Planning Your Wedding at Divine Mercy AFC Parishes**

Planning your wedding can be a daunting experience, and planning music for the ceremony that satisfies the requirements of the Church's liturgy can be overwhelming. Hopefully this step-by-step guide will save you a headache or two and help make the experience of planning the music for your wedding a joyful, even prayerful experience.

If you need any help at all with any phase of the process, the Director of Music, Rebecca Visser, is at your service! Reach her by E-mail ([mrs.visser@sesmschool.com](mailto:mrs.visser@sesmschool.com)) or cell phone: (651) – 338 – 4297.

### **STEP ONE – HIRE YOUR MUSICIANS**

You will need at least an accompanist and a cantor for your wedding Mass. Weddings are normally played by the Director of Music or another of the parish's accompanists. Divine Mercy AFC has a number of keyboardists and singers available. You will have to make your own arrangements with the singers and keyboardist; the parish cannot guarantee that specific singers or accompanists will be available for your wedding. If you need help contacting any of the musicians, contact the Director of Music, and she can help you get in touch. The parish accompanists and cantors are listed below for your convenience (keyboardists who can sing while playing are marked with a "+"):

#### Organists

Rebecca Visser  
Becky Sellner  
Aaron Hirsch+\*  
Sarah Jirak+  
Lisa Portner

#### Pianists

Sharon Carr  
Becky Sellner  
Sarah Jirak+  
Jan Kral  
Lisa Portner

\*very limited availability, contact well in advance

#### Singers

Kevin Currans  
Tom Hirsch  
Mary Kissner  
Bob Krambeer

Michael Krambeer  
Dr. Tom Larson  
Sheila Schmid  
Myra Schroepfer

If you are planning on using an accompanist, singer, or instrumentalist from outside the parish, you will need to speak with the Director of Music, Rebecca Visser, *before* you finalize that arrangement.

Accompanists, regardless of whether the ceremony is a Mass or celebration of matrimony outside of Mass, should be paid a minimum of \$150. Cantors should be paid at least \$75.

Beyond the simple cantor/accompanist arrangement, a number of other options are available. Several high school students are available to play strings, and brass players from within the parish are also available.

Additionally, the parish choirs, or members of them, may be available to sing for your ceremony. The Caecilian Choir, the High School *Schola*, or the Latin Mass Choir, under the direction of the Director of Music, can be hired for a reasonable fee, which will vary based on number of singers and rehearsals. For choral weddings, selections from each choir's repertoire may be sung in place of congregational hymns during the liturgy. To hire a choir, contact the Director of Music.

## **STEP TWO – SELECT YOUR READINGS**

Before you meet with the Director of Music to discuss and approve your music list, it is a good idea to select the readings, Responsorial Psalm, and Gospel Acclamation Verse from the planning guide you were given during your marriage preparation meetings. This will provide another lens through which to view and discuss your musical selections, as there are a number of hymns that harmonize with the various possible readings.

## **STEP THREE – SELECT MUSIC FOR THE PARTS OF THE SERVICE**

All music during a Catholic wedding is liturgical music and must conform to the general guidelines that the Church sets forth for sacred music. Each piece of music in Catholic worship serves the liturgy and fulfills a specific purpose; the liturgy does not serve the music, and it would not be appropriate to view the liturgy as a concert venue. For 2,000 years some of the finest musicians who ever lived have been inspired to craft music at the service of Christian liturgical worship, and the Church is filled to overflowing with a priceless treasury of sacred music of stunning beauty. You should not feel the need to look any further than these riches for music to make your ceremony as special as it possibly can be, and in a way that truly underlines the grace of God at work in your relationship.

Below are listed the liturgical moments at the Wedding Mass that require a musical input from the couple, and the particular guidelines for making each selection. **For Weddings Outside of Mass, select (1), (2), (4), (8) [if desired], and (9):**

- 1) Prelude Music:** The prelude music should be instrumental selections of a genuinely classical or sacred character. Pop songs and secular vocal or instrumental music are not appropriate music for Christian worship, and the purpose of the prelude is to help create an atmosphere of prayer and introspection as you and the assembly prepare for such a great sacrament. Usually, most of the prelude music is left to the discretion of the accompanist and does not need to be selected individually by the couple.

One or two particular classical, instrumental pieces may be specifically requested to immediately precede the service. It is also permitted for a soloist to sing the *Ave Maria* or a selection from the Breaking Bread Music Issue (the parish hymnal) in honor of Our Lady before the service. For choral weddings, the choir may sing several prelude pieces.

**2) Processional Music:** The number of pieces for your procession will vary depending on whom you choose to seat formally. If the mothers are to be seated before the ceremony, a song may be appropriate for this moment (perhaps an *Ave Maria*). If the servers, cross, candles, and priest will enter from the back to begin the procession (a beautiful and in many ways the most appropriate option), consider having the Entrance Antiphon for the nuptial Mass sung as they enter (“God is in His holy dwelling-place, the God who causes us to dwell together, one at heart, in His house...”). This is often a very tranquil and prayerful way to begin the ceremony.

Most commonly, the procession consists of two pieces of instrumental music, one during the procession of the bridesmaids/wedding party, and the other as the bride (or the bride and groom together) makes her (their) way up the aisle. The procession at a Catholic wedding is a liturgical procession, and these pieces should be of a sacred or genuinely classical character appropriate for divine worship. At choral weddings, a procession sung by the choir is possible.

**3) The Gloria:** The Gloria is normally sung by the entire congregation (at choral weddings it could be sung by the choir alone). The Gloria must be from one of the Mass settings in use at St. Mary’s (the Mass of Wisdom, the Heritage Mass, the ICEL Chant Mass).

**4) The Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation:** You will have chosen the text for these songs along with the readings for Mass. When you inform the Director of Music of your choice, she will provide the accompanist and cantor with a digital copy of the chosen texts and music as they are found in the *Respond & Acclaim* books in use by the parish, adapted to the wedding texts. These settings must be used.

**5) Offertory Music:** Music during the offertory procession and preparation of the gifts may be either a hymn sung by the whole congregation or a sacred instrumental solo (at choral weddings, the choir may sing a piece). Any hymn selected must be taken from the *Breaking Bread* books in use by the parish. Instrumental solos must be of a sacred, genuinely classical character, without secular connotations.

**6) Sanctus/Memorial Acclamation/Great Amen/Agnus Dei:** The Eucharistic Acclamations must be sung from settings in use at the Divine Mercy AFC (Mass of Wisdom, Heritage Mass, ICEL Chant Mass, Danish Amen Mass, or Latin Chant Mass).

**7) Communion Music:** The Communion Antiphon for the Wedding Mass may be sung as the priest and couple take Communion, or this may be done in silence. During the Communion of the Faithful, a congregational hymn or hymns may be sung, or a sacred instrumental solo may be offered (at choral weddings, the choir may sing at this point). Congregational hymns must be selected from the *Breaking Bread* books.

- 8) **Marian Devotion:** It is optional, but customary, that the bride and groom offer a bouquet to Our Lady after the Communion Rite. During this point, a Marian instrumental solo may be played, or an *Ave Maria* sung.
- 9) **Recessional/Postlude:** The recessional is typically an instrumental solo played as the couple leaves the church (a closing hymn, especially at a choral Mass, is also a possibility). If desired, it may be followed by a second piece, the postlude, which will be played as the congregation disperses. Both of these pieces must be of a genuinely classical or sacred character.

## STEP FOUR – MEET WITH THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

After you have selected the music for your service (or before, if you would like more guidance), you will need to contact the Director of Music, Rebecca Visser, either by cell phone (651 – 338 – 4297) or by E-mail ([mrs.visser@sesmschool.com](mailto:mrs.visser@sesmschool.com)), to set up a time for a face-to-face meeting.

The Director of Music is the pastor's representative and is there to ensure that the music and musicians selected conform to the expectations for liturgical worship at Divine Mercy AFC, as well as to ensure that the musical burdens placed on the musicians are reasonable and can be done in a way that is worthy of the worship of God. In addition, the Director can help you compile a final list of music, and format your program helpfully & accurately to ensure it follows the service.

If you are interested in a choral wedding, plan on meeting with the Director of Music during the music planning phase of the process.

## APPENDIX – MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

If you are having difficulty coming up with ideas, the following list may be helpful:

### Offertory/Recessional Hymns

Hear Us Now, Our God and Father  
O Father All Creating (perfect at weddings!)  
May God Bless You With His Love  
God Is Love (2 by that title)  
When Love Is Found  
Where Love Is Found  
Where There Is Love (1 Cor 13)  
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee  
Wherever You Go (Song of Ruth)  
For The Fruits of This Creation  
I Have Loved You  
No Greater Love  
Christians, Let Us Love One Another  
Where Charity and Love Prevail  
We Have Been Told  
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling  
The King of Love My Shepherd Is

Eye Has Not Seen  
They'll Know We Are Christians  
Sing a New Song Unto the Lord  
Glory and Praise To Our God  
Lord of All Hopefulness  
Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow  
Now Thank We All Our God  
Christ Before Us  
Praise To the Lord, the Almighty  
O God Beyond All Praising  
Jesu, Joy of Our Desiring  
Humbly Lord We Worship You  
Holy God We Praise Thy Name  
O Bless The Lord My Soul  
I Will Choose Christ  
Be Thou My Vision  
The Spirit Sends Us Forth