

Music for the Funeral Mass at Our Mother of Consolation Parish

The dignity of a funeral requires music that is sacred and ritually appropriate. Many different forms of music and musical accompaniment can be worthy of this task. The parish employs several liturgical musicians & cantors; therefore, ordinarily, no outside musicians are permitted to play for funerals. Instrumentalists (trumpet, harp, violin, flute, etc.) are also available for hire through the Parish Director of Worship (215-247-0430).

The Church keeps no official list of “approved” music for a Funeral Mass, but it does offer three criteria for liturgical music that can be applied to your choice of music.

Is it prayerful? The purpose of a Funeral Mass is to offer worship, praise and thanksgiving to God for the gift of life, which has now been returned to God, the author of life and the hope of the just. The celebration of the Christian funeral also brings hope and consolation to the living. Music for the Funeral Mass should reflect this purpose; in other words, it should help the assembly to pray and to give thanks to God. The criterion of prayerfulness is one reason why popular music—including some of the “classics” taken from secular operas—is often not permitted.

Is it accessible? In other words, will the assembly be able to sing? In Catholic worship, the assembly (everyone attending the funeral) is not an audience, passively watching events unfold at the altar. Catholic liturgy calls on the assembly to actively participate in the prayer of the Church, including its sung prayer. Doing so is one of the most powerful ways your friends and family can express their love for the deceased.

Is it beautiful? Beauty is a window onto the divine (*Catechism* #32), so it is not surprising that the Church calls for the music used in its worship to be beautiful. This criterion is obviously somewhat subjective, depending on personal tastes and local culture. Whether your music is beautiful or not may depend less on the particular selection than on the skill of the musicians who sing or play it.

Below are a few suggestions for appropriate music for a Funeral Mass:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM - The responsorial psalm follows the First Reading:

- Ps. 23 – The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
- Ps. 25 – To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.
- Ps. 27 – I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.
- Ps. 27 – The Lord is my light and my salvation.
- Ps. 30 – I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.
- Ps. 42 – Like a deer that longs for running streams, my soul longs for you, my God.
- Ps. 51 – Create a clean heart in me, O God.
- Ps. 63 – My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, my God.
- Ps. 91 – Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.
- Ps. 103- The Lord is kind and merciful.
- Ps. 116- I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.
- Ps. 122- Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.
- Ps. 130- Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
- Ps. 130- With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.
- Ps. 131- In you, O Lord, I have found my peace.
- Ps. 138- In the sight of the angels, I will sing your praises, Lord.
- Ps. 143- O Lord, hear my prayer.

SACRED VOCAL ARIAS - Our cantor/soloists are all degreed, trained professional singers who command a vast array of sacred vocal music (e.g., an 'Ave Maria') which could be sung as prelude, at the offertory, or as a meditation after Communion. The singers also have pieces available in foreign languages (Italian, Spanish, French, German) and in various styles (e.g., spirituals, gospel hymns) if your family wants a special liturgical tribute for your heritage.

CONGREGATIONAL HYMNS - The following list is not intended as a complete list. If you have other hymns that are theologically and liturgically appropriate for Catholic liturgy, feel free to choose them. Also, general Communion/Eucharistic hymns may be chosen for Communion.

You may choose hymns for the following: Processional/entrance, Offertory, Communion, Meditation (if desired), and Recessional/closing. The parish hymnal has additional music and options.

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| Abide With Me | All Creatures of Our God and King |
| All I Ask of You | Alleluia, Sing To Jesus |
| Alleluia, The Strife Is O'er | Amazing Grace |
| As The Deer Longs | Be Not Afraid |
| Be Still, My Soul | Blest Are They |
| Center of My Life | City of God |
| Come To Me | Day Is Done |
| Eat This Bread | Eternal Father, Strong To Save (Navy hymn) |
| Eye Has Not Seen | Faith of Our Fathers |
| For All The Saints | Here I Am, Lord |
| Hosea (Come Back To Me) | How Firm A Foundation |
| How Great Thou Art (esp. vs. 4) | I Am The Bread of Life |
| I Have Loved You | I Heard The Voice of Jesus Say |
| I Know That My Redeemer Lives | I Received The Living God |
| Jerusalem My Happy Home | Jesus Remember Me |
| Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee | Just A Closer Walk With Thee |
| Keep In Mind | Let All Things Now Living |
| Let There Be Peace On Earth | Like A Shepherd |
| Lord of All Hopefulness | Lord You Have Come To The Seashore |
| Morning Has Broken | Now We Remain |
| O God Our Help In Ages Past | On Eagle's Wings |
| One Bread, One Body | Peace I Leave With You My Friends |
| Prayer of St. Francis | Precious Lord, Take My Hand |
| Shall We Gather At The River | Shelter Me, O God |
| Shepherd Me, O God | Shepherd of Souls |
| Sing A New Song | Sing To The Mountains |
| Sing With All The Saints In Glory | Soon and Very Soon |
| Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling | The Cry of The Poor |
| The King of Love My Shepherd Is | There Is A Balm In Gilead |
| There's A Wideness in God's Mercy | This Day God Gives Me |
| We Remember | We Walk By Faith |
| We Will Rise Again | Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones |
| Yes, I Shall Arise | You Are Mine |
