

**Guidelines for Liturgical Services  
according to the  
1962 *Missale Romanum***

**Music for High Mass**

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*Question:*

What Masses require the singing of a choir?

*Answer:*

The Masses that require the singing of a choir are the High Mass, which has the following variations:

High Mass (i.e. “Missa Cantata” or “Sung Mass”)  
Solemn High Mass (i.e. “Missa Solemnis”)  
Pontifical High Mass

*Question:*

What is a High Mass (“Missa Cantata”)

*Answer:*

A High Mass is a Mass sung by a priest without the assistance of a deacon and subdeacon.

*Question:*

What is a Solemn High Mass (“Missa Solemnis”)

*Answer:*

A Solemn Mass is a Mass sung by a priest with the assistance of a deacon and subdeacon.

*Question:*

What is a Pontifical High Mass?

*Answer:*

A Pontifical High Mass is sung by a Bishop, with the assistance of a deacon, subdeacon and the other required ministers and the choir.

*Question:*

Is the music which the choir expected to sing the same in these Masses?

*Answer:*

As far as it concerns the choir, the music that is prescribed to be chanted is the same, with a few distinctions. In a Pontifical Mass, excepting a Pontifical Requiem Mass, the Bishop chants the Pontifical Blessing, to which the choir must sing the responses.

*Question:*

What parts of the High Mass are to be sung by the choir? In what language is the choir expected to sing the parts of the High Mass?

*Answer:*

At a High Mass, the choir must sing the following:

Sprinkling Rite (*This is only sung on Sundays and only at the principal Mass.*)

Asperges me (*Outside of Paschal Time*) or Vidi Aquam (*Paschal Time*)

Ordinary

Kyrie  
Gloria (*when appointed by the rubrics*)  
Credo (*when appointed by the rubrics*)  
Sanctus  
Benedictus  
Agnus Dei

Proper

Introit  
Gradual  
Alleluia  
Tract  
Sequence  
Offertory  
Communion

The Ordinary and the Proper must be sung in their entirety and in Latin as required by the rubrics (*the sole exception is the "Kyrie" that is chanted in Greek*) (M.P. 111. 7, 8, 9; D. 3365, 7.)

*Question:*

Are all these Ordinary and Proper parts prescribed for all High Masses?

*Answer:*

For the High Mass, the Solemn High Mass and the Pontifical Mass, the choir must sing all the Ordinary and all the Proper appointed for the liturgical day. (M.P. 111. 8; D. 2959, 2994, 3365, 3624.)

*Question:*

At what point in the liturgy should these various parts be chanted?

*Answer:*

The proper time is given below:

*Asperges/Vidi Aquam:*

After the intonation of the Celebrant. This chant is only sung at the principal Mass on Sundays. The chant must be sung according to the rubrics, and following the official liturgical books, with the proper repetitions and responses. The Asperges is sung at the principal Mass on all Sundays of the year, except from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday, inclusive of the latter, which is to say that on Trinity Sunday the choir resumes the chanting of the Asperges.

*Introit:*

Sung when the celebrant reaches the altar to begin the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar. (D. 2424, 7.)

*Kyrie:*

Sung immediately after the Introit.

*Gloria:*

Sung when appointed by the rubrics immediately after the intonation of the Celebrant. The Celebrant intones "Gloria in excelsis Deo," and the choir continues "Et in terra pax..."

*Responses at the Collect:*

The choir sings the responses at the collects: "Et cum spiritu tuo" and "Amen."

*Gradual/Alleluia/Tract/Sequence:*

In the Solemn High Mass and in the Pontifical Mass the choir sings the chants appointed for the day, after the Subdeacon concludes the chanting of the Epistle. The choir does not answer "Deo gratias" after the Epistle. In a Missa Cantata, the priest may chant the Epistle at the altar, or another cleric may chant the Epistle in the sanctuary, after which the choir sings the appointed chants. However, in the Missa Cantata, the Priest may choose to read the Epistle at the altar during which time the choir begins to sing the chants appointed. It should be noted that the Tract and Sequence are found only in a few Masses.

On certain liturgical days (i.e. Ember Days) there will be multiple lessons chanted and multiple chants sung prior to the chanting of the Holy Gospel.

#### Responses at the Chanting of the Holy Gospel:

The choir sings the responses at the Holy Gospel: “Et cum spiritu tuo” and “Gloria tibi Domine.” Note that in the Tridentine liturgy there are no sung responses after the Holy Gospel.

#### Credo:

When appointed by the rubrics the Celebrant intones “Credo in unum Deum,” and the choir continues “Patrem omnipotentem...”

#### Response prior to the Offertory Proper:

Just before the chanting of the Offertory Proper, the Celebrant chants “Dominus vobiscum,” the choir responds “Et cum spiritu tuo,” and the celebrant chants “Oremus.”

#### Offertory:

Immediately after the Celebrant chants the previous “Oremus,” the choir sings the Offertory proper to the liturgical day.

#### Responses at the Preface:

The choir sings the responses at the Preface: “Amen,” “Et cum spiritu tuo,” “Habemus ad Dominum,” and “Dignum et justum est.”

#### Sanctus and Benedictus:

If the choir is sing a Gregorian chant setting of the Sanctus and Benedictus as found in the Kyriale, Liber Usualis or Graduale Romanum, the choir will sing this immediately after the Celebrant concludes the chanting of the Preface.

If the choir is singing a musical setting of the Sanctus and Benedictus that is not from the Kyriale, (i.e. polyphonic setting or harmonized setting), then the choir sings the Sanctus immediately after the Celebrant concludes the chanting of the Preface. After the choir concludes the singing of a polyphonic or harmonized Sanctus, they waits for the Consecration, and then, after the consecration, the choir then sings their polyphonic or harmonized setting of the Benedictus during the second half of the Roman Canon (i.e. after the Consecration.)

At the moment of the Consecration singing is not permitted. (Caeremoniale Episcoporum I. 28, 9.)

Amen at the end of the Canon of the Mass:

The choir sings the “Amen” at the end of the Canon.

Responses at the Pater Noster:

The Celebrant alone chants the Pater Noster. At the end the choir sings the “sed libera nos a malo.”

Responses at the Breaking of the Host:

Here the choir will sing the “Amen,” and the “Et cum spiritu tuo.”

Agnus Dei:

After the “Et cum spiritu tuo,” the choir sings the Agnus Dei.

Communion:

Once the Celebrant begins to distribute Holy Communion the choir chants the Communion proper to the day.

Post-Communion Collect:

The choir sings the responses at the collects: “Et cum spiritu tuo” and “Amen.”

Dismissal:

The choir sings the response: “Et cum spiritu tuo.” After the priest sings “Ite Missa est” or “Benedicamus Domino,” the choir sings “Deo Gratias.”

Blessing

Unless the Celebrant is a Bishop the Blessing is recited and not sung. When the Celebrant is, however, a Bishop, the choir sings the responses to the Pontifical Blessing:

*Question:*

What parts of the High Mass may additionally be sung by the choir at a High Mass? In what language is the choir expected to sing these additional parts of the High Mass?

*Answer:*

At a High Mass, the choir may also sing the following:

Prelude:

Before the celebration of the Mass, the choir and the people may sing an appropriate liturgical hymn or motet in either Latin or in the vernacular.

#### Processional Hymn:

As the priest processes to the altar, the choir and the people may sing a hymn in either Latin or in the vernacular. As the priest enters the sanctuary the hymn should be concluded, and as the Sacred Liturgy is about to begin. If the Sprinkling Rite is to follow, the choir will chant the “Asperges” or “Vidi Aquam” as appointed by the rubrics, or if the Sprinkling Rite is omitted, the choir immediately sings the Introit as the Celebrant begins the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar.

#### Additional Offertory Music:

While the rubrics do not require additional offertory music, it is often desirable and advantageous to have the choir sing other appropriate music (i.e. hymn, antiphon, motet) after the chanting of the Offertory proper. These additional selections must be sung in Latin and may not be sung in the vernacular. These additional musical selections should conclude as the priest says the “Secret Collect.”

#### Additional Communion Music:

While the rubrics do not require additional music during the distribution of Holy Communion, it is often advantageous to have the choir sing other appropriate music (i.e. hymn, antiphon, motet) during the distribution of Holy Communion. These selections must be sung in Latin and may not be sung in the vernacular. This music should conclude as the Celebrant reads the Communion proper from the Missal after the ablutions.

#### Recessional Hymn:

After the Celebrant reads the Last Gospel the choir may sing an appropriate Recessional Hymn in either Latin or in the vernacular.