

**Faith in Five – Adults**  
**Sacred Music**  
**September 9, 2022**

1. **The solemn liturgy is a sung liturgy.** There is nothing more uplifting and joyful in sacred celebrations than a whole congregation expressing its faith and devotion in song.

2. **The Psalms** are a treasury of songs to the Lord in the Old Testament. These sacred songs, or sacred poems were meant to be sung. In words and music, the Psalms have taught us how to delight in God's infinite love, proclaim his glory, give thanks for his abounding generosity, and plead for mercy and forgiveness. The composition and singing of inspired psalms, often accompanied by musical instruments, were already closely linked to the liturgical celebrations of the Old Covenant. (Image:

<https://masscomminfo.tumblr.com/> )



3. Jesus and His disciples “sung a hymn”, is recorded in the New Testament, after they ended the Last Supper (Matthew 26:30).

4. The [Sacrosanctum Concilium](#), the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), and the [General Instruction of the Roman Missal](#) all identify the importance of sacred music in the liturgy:

- Singing unifies those gathered to worship, highlights significant parts of the liturgical action, and helps to set the tone for each celebration. It is a noble form of worship.
- The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater than any art. When sacred song is united to the words, it forms a necessary part of the solemn liturgy. The purpose of sacred music is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful.
- Care must be taken so that singing is solemn, and that the assembly be able to actively participate. The songs should reflect the cultural richness of the people and the sanctity of the celebration. The songs themselves must conform to Catholic doctrine, their texts drawn from Sacred Scripture or other liturgical sources.
- Choirs should be diligently promoted, especially in cathedral churches.
- Great importance should be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass. Every care should be taken [to ensure] that singing by the ministers and the people are not absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and on Holydays of Obligation (GIRM, 40).

## 5. Origins of Catholic Hymns

The great majority of the liturgical hymns have had their origin in the Breviary, also known as the Divine Office. The Divine Office is and has been for centuries, the daily prayer of the universal Church. It is a collection of psalms, prayers, scriptural selections, hymns, etc., for every day in the year. It is built around the psalter, its most ancient part. This psalter, consisting of 150 psalms was the groundwork of the Jewish liturgy for a dozen centuries before Christ and was preserved, intact, by the apostles as the foundation of the Christian liturgy. ([Source](#))

6. According to the [Music Sacram](#), "The following come under the title of sacred music here: Gregorian chant, sacred polyphony in its various forms both ancient and modern, sacred music for the organ and other approved instruments, and sacred popular music, be it liturgical or simply religious".

The Gregorian chant is the sacred music of the Roman Rite. It is sung as a melody, in unison and without accompaniment. It is the "church's own music", with its words almost entirely scriptural. It laid the foundation for medieval and Renaissance music. Gregorian chant is named after St. Gregory I, during whose papacy (590–604) it was collected and organized.

In sung liturgical services celebrated in Latin: "The Gregorian chant, as proper to the Roman liturgy, should be given pride of place, other things being equal... Its melodies, contained in the "typical" editions, should be used, to the extent that this is possible. [For these services,] the study and practice of Gregorian chant is to be promoted, because, with its special characteristics, it is a basis of great importance for the development of sacred music". ([Source](#)).

7. In his book, [The Spirit of the Liturgy](#), Pope Benedict, XVI writes: "Wherever applause breaks out in the liturgy because of some human achievement, it is a sure sign that the essence of liturgy has totally disappeared and been replaced by a kind of religious entertainment." While the choir play an important part in the sanctity of the Mass, their role is not meant to draw attention for personal recognition. Applause for the music and choir is not in line with liturgical worship. The rubrics of church liturgy does not include instructions to applaud during or following Mass. We honor God alone, for His grace, mercy, faithfulness and blessings in a holy space. "The faithful should ... be taught to unite themselves interiorly to what the ministers or choir sing, so that by listening to them they may raise their minds to God" ([Source](#)).
8. Singing is the sign of the heart's joy (Acts 2:46). **St. Augustine is attributed to having said, "He who sings, prays twice"**. Let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord and come into his presence with singing!

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