

**Hiring a
Parish Musician—
A Resource for Parishes**

Archdiocese of Cincinnati

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Employment Guidelines for Church Musicians

Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Revised March 2018



Introduction

Because worship is the center of the Church's life (Cf. SC, 10) parishes must provide liturgical celebrations that strengthen the faith of the worshipping assembly. Said in another way, "Good celebrations can foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken it" (Sing to the Lord, STL 5). Musicians are an integral part of parish liturgical life and great care should be taken when employing a new pastoral musician.

The first edition of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati salary guidelines for church musicians was published in 1968. It was the first such document for any diocese in the United States and was adopted as policy by hundreds of parishes across the country. This present revision is the product of the work of the Music Sub-Committee of the Archdiocesan Worship Commission. It is an attempt to simplify, condense and update the previous editions while retaining the more important elements.

In its 2007 statement, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, the USCCB wrote, "The service of pastoral musicians should be recognized as a valued and integral part of the overall pastoral ministry of the parish or diocese; provisions should be made for just compensation. Professional directors of music ministries and part-time pastoral music ministers should each receive appropriate wages and benefits that affirm the dignity of their work" (STL 52). This document, *Employment Guidelines for Church Musicians*, provides the tools to hire a church musician as a member of the parish staff and assists in creating a collaborative work environment, vital to pastoral ministry and effective worship.

It is important to keep in mind that the items addressed in this document are recommendations for the parish–musician relationship and situation. Parish leaders, working with the pastoral musician, should modify these items according to the specific needs and resources of the parish liturgical music program. This document presents the ideal situation in a parish and encourages the hiring of a competent musician who is able to foster musical excellence for the Church's worship.

This document is divided into four sections and two appendices. They are:

- I. What the Musician Should Expect from the Parish
- II. What the Parish Should Expect of the Musician
- III. A Recommended Procedure for Hiring a Musician
- IV. Resources for the Employer

Appendix A Liturgical Music Proficiency-Organ/Conducting Exam Requirements

Appendix B Liturgical Music Proficiency-Piano/ Conducting Exam Requirements

A Theology of Participation and the Music Minister

Among the effects of the Second Vatican Council, one of the most visible was the reform of the Church's liturgy. One development underlying the call for liturgical reform was the theology of the Mystical Body of Christ. By our baptism we are incorporated into the Body of Christ, becoming one with him and with one another. We are united with Christ in his death, and become coheirs of the salvation he won through his resurrection. The Church had already held that in the liturgy it is Christ who offers to the Father a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. The Second Vatican Council further developed the theology of Christ's activity in the liturgy by asserting that Christ is active through the person of the priest and through the members of the worshipping assembly. We who share in the life of Christ through our baptism share also with Christ in offering this sacrifice. We are not, then, passive coheirs but by our baptism we have the right and obligation to offer this sacrifice with Christ. Therefore we celebrate the liturgy – the ritual in which the Christian community gathers as the Body of Christ joined with its Head to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving and to worship God.

The Mystery of God made present in the liturgy unfolds for us in Word, symbols, and ritual – all inviting us to conform ourselves ever more fully to the pattern of Christ. This encounter is so profound it compels us to offer a response, which requires an external expression. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states that "...the Church earnestly

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desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for the very nature of liturgy. . . . In the reform and promotion of the liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else." (14) The Council turned its attention toward music, recognizing its power to engage the faithful in the participation it envisioned and calling it integral to the celebration. (CSL, 112)

The value of participation in the liturgy has been affirmed in the decades since by our bishops who have stated, "In Liturgy, we use words, gestures, signs and symbols to proclaim Christ's presence and to reply with our worship and

praise." (STL, 6) They further developed this by differentiating between internal and external participation and stating that both are important aspects of ritual. (STL, 12, 13) It is interesting to note that in the documents governing the celebration of the liturgy the Church often specifies singing rather than the more general term, music. By singing together acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons,

and songs (CSL, 30) the faithful experience a unity which symbolizes their oneness in Christ. As one body, they join their voices to the voice of Christ, continually offering their thanksgiving and praise to the Father. Singing together – engaging our voices with those of our fellow believers, whether we know them well or know them not – is one way we make present in our celebration the unity that we know is already ours by our baptism. We become a symbol of our unity in Christ. (CSL, 113-114, 118; STL, 67-69, 72) "Of all the sounds of which human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, are capable, voice is

the most privileged and fundamental. Musical instruments in the Liturgy are best understood as an extension of and support for the primary liturgical instrument, which is the human voice.” (STL, 86)

The call for the singing of the assembly as an effective means of participation in the liturgy did not originate with the Second Vatican Council, however. Pope Pius X promoted this in the early part of the twentieth century. Recognizing what beautiful music could contribute to liturgical prayer, he sought the restoration of Gregorian chant to facilitate the musical participation of the faithful. In the liturgy of Pius X, however, the choir and assembly maintained distinct, hierarchical roles. The shift in theology during the sixty years between his papacy and the Second Vatican Council led to reconsideration of the relationship between the choir and the assembly. No longer fulfilling their role in the shadow of the choir, the assembly of believers was called to claim its proper place as the Body of Christ: to offer liturgical prayer fully, actively and consciously through a number of ways, including singing. The assembly would, therefore, become the primary minister of music and its song would be central to the celebration of the liturgy.

In defining the role of the assembly in liturgical prayer, the Church defined the primary role of music and the pastoral musician: “. . . to lead and sustain the singing of the assembly and of the choir, cantor, and psalmist, without dominating or overpowering them.” (STL, 41) The pastoral musician is to use his or her talents and resources to facilitate the full, active and conscious participation of the faithful. Music must serve the liturgy and never dominate it, and pastoral musicians should strive to accomplish this balance in their work. To assist with their ministry, the Church provides musicians with a

framework as put forth in the liturgical documents of the Second Vatican Council and those of the bishops, most recently, *Sing to the Lord*. In addition to specific details regarding pastoral music practice, these documents provide a synthesis of what the Church believes and teaches. Pastoral musicians should know them well to ensure that their ministry flows from the vision of the Church.

The ultimate goal of liturgy is transformation. Transformation of the simple gifts of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, but also the transformation of our lives. In our communal worship “. . .the liturgical assembly partakes in the life of the Blessed Trinity, which is itself a communion of love.” (STL, 10) We seek to conform ourselves to Christ so that we may become more fully what it is that we receive. Liturgical music has a role in this transformation because it has the power to lead us ever more deeply into the Mystery of God. “Christ always invites us. . .to enter the song, to rise above our own preoccupations, and to give our entire selves to the hymn of his Paschal Sacrifice for the honor and glory of the Most Blessed Trinity.” (STL, 14) May the efforts of pastoral musicians enable the Body of Christ to recognize and fulfill its role in liturgical prayer. May musicians themselves grow in wisdom and knowledge as they serve the Church with song.



I. What the Musician Should Expect from the Parish

A. The Exercise of Professional Responsibility

The employment of a competent church musician presumes that he/she is the most qualified person to make appropriate musical choices. He/she must be able to exercise this judgment freely and without pressure from persons responsible for other fields of parish ministry who may neither understand nor appreciate this competency. The musician, while hired by the parish to make decisions concerning selection of quality music for the various liturgical celebrations in a given parish, must also be sensitive to the pastoral and liturgical considerations demanded by the Church's liturgy.

B. Facilities Needed

1. A musical instrument(s) in good working order with properly scheduled maintenance.
2. Adequate, private office space with desk, phone, computer with internet access, filing cabinets and shelves.
3. Rehearsal space with a piano.
4. Space for storage of printed music and choral library.
5. Adequate audio equipment available for recording and playback capabilities in the rehearsal space.

C. Assisting Musicians and Support Personnel

1. The assistance of additional musicians in accordance with the particular needs of the parish, e.g., for special seasonal or holy day liturgies, vacation, etc.

2. Assistance from the parish staff in recruitment of choir members and cantors, or other parish volunteers for the music program.
3. Secretarial support.

D. Music Budget

1. Sufficient funds to cover the following supplies:
 - Purchased legally printed music for the choir, organ, piano, and other liturgical music ensembles.
 - Choir folders, pencils, and materials for the repair of music.
 - The usual desk supplies and materials for a filing system.
 - Reference materials and sample choir music subscriptions.
 - Choir robes or other vesture and their proper upkeep if this is a parish custom.
2. Funds for the maintenance of musical instruments for repair and tuning.
3. Sufficient funds for reprint permission and/or annual licenses from various publishers.
4. Sufficient funds for assembly participation aids, including long-term budget goals for the purchase or replacement of the hymnals.
5. Funds for extra musicians for festival liturgies and vacation substitutes.
6. Funds for an annual appreciation event for all volunteer music personnel.

E. Continuing Education and Professional In-Service Training

1. Membership fees for professional music organizations.
2. Subscription fees for other professional music publications (seen as part of the parish library or adult education facility.)
3. Funds for attendance at a convention, seminar, workshop, retreat, etc. to include total expenses for at least one such event per year.

F. Review/Evaluation

The musician should expect an annual review of his/her musical performance and program. Evaluation tools for this purpose are available at the Office of Divine Worship and Sacraments / Archdiocesan Music Director.



II. What the Parish Should Expect of the Musician

Each parish should have as one of its primary goals the employment of a competent church musician. A fully competent musician has the following qualifications:

1. A high regard for his/her profession as an honorable vocation and earnest commitment to his/her duties.
2. A high degree of proficiency in the use of the organ and /or piano as attested to by formal credentials and/or a personal performance audition.
3. A knowledge and appreciation of the Church's liturgical tradition as well as current liturgical practice.
4. The ability and desire to lead and sustain a program of quality congregational singing.
5. Knowledge of quality repertoire available for various liturgical music programs for assembly, adult and children's choirs, organ, piano and other ensembles.
6. Skill as an effective choral conductor with appropriate knowledge of proper vocal technique as demonstrated by formal credentials or choral audition.

7. A working knowledge of other instruments, which might be used in liturgical music.

8. A music program that reflects knowledge of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (1963), General Instruction of the Roman Missal (2011), General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar (1969), Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship (2007), and Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture and Worship (2000).

9. Knowledge of and adherence to the US copyright laws and familiarity with the policies established by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (<http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Copyright-AOC-statement.pdf>).

III. A Recommended Procedure for Hiring a Musician

A. The Hiring Process

1. Organize a search committee to advise the pastor. This committee should include, but not be limited to, the pastor and/or associate, representative members of the parish pastoral council, parish music ministry, and worship commission. The use of an outside musical consultant is highly recommended for this process. The Archdiocesan Office for Divine Worship and Sacraments (ODWS) and the Archdiocesan Music Director can provide names of consultants.

2. This committee must first evaluate the present music program in the parish, determine the needs of the parish, and create a job description, all in light of the guidelines and principles set forth in *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*. The Office of Divine Worship and Sacraments will offer its services in this part of the process. It has a music evaluation tool that might be helpful in the overall evaluation of the music program. For assistance with this, contact the Archdiocesan Music Director.

3. Devise a procedure for auditioning and interviewing candidates. You will find such an outline in this section: B & C.

4. Advertise the position. Include a deadline for application and specify education, experience, and background desired for the position. Request references. Some helpful places to advertise would be:

- The Office for Divine Worship and Sacraments /Archdiocesan Music Director
- www.catholicjobs.com
- The National Association of Pastoral Musicians and its local chapters
(<http://npm.org/index.html>)
- The American Guild of Organists
(<http://www.agohq.org>)
- Various Universities with Music Programs
- More suggestions can be found in Section IV.

5. Evaluate and screen the résumés. Choose between three and five for interview and audition.

6. Inform the chosen candidates of the audition procedure and schedule an audition and interview with each.

7. Make a recommendation to the pastor.

8. Ultimately, it is the pastor who hires and negotiates the terms of employment of the musician.

B. Sample Audition Process

Following the selection of candidates, a process to audition the candidates needs to be organized. It may be advisable to employ consultants from outside the committee to assess the musicianship of the candidates. The following “sample audition” is a typical process to assess the skills of an organist; it can be adapted as needed. The format and expectations need to be communicated to each candidate before arriving for the audition. Give him/her sufficient time to prepare for the audition.

I. KEYBOARD SKILLS (allow approximately 30 minutes for this part of the audition)

A. Hymn Playing

Be prepared to play one of the following hymn tunes incorporating an introduction, creative registrations and free accompaniment:

LIEBSTER JESU
ST. COLUMBA
PASSION CHORALE
DIVINUM MYSTERIUM
WONDROUS LOVE

B. Accompany a responsorial psalm (with a cantor present)

C. Play a set of Eucharistic acclamations (Holy, Mystery of Faith, Amen)

D. Play a contemporary style piece on the piano

E. Organ Literature

1. A work by Johann Sebastian Bach: a prelude or a fugue, a movement from a trio sonata, or one of the major chorale preludes.

2. An organ literature work from the Romantic period or the 20th/21st century

II. CONDUCTING SKILLS (allow approx. 35 minutes for this part of the audition)

If the position involves conducting a choir, the following “sample audition” process involving the parish choir can be used or adapted as needed:

1. Direct the parish choir through a short vocal warm-up (5 min.)

2. Rehearse and direct the choir in the performance of all or any portion of one of the following a cappella pieces. (15 min) (select 3 titles for the candidate to choose from ahead of time)

Pitoni: Cantate Domino

Rutter: God Be in My Head

Proulx: Eastertide Carol

3. Rehearse and direct the choir in the performance of all or a portion of one of the following accompanied works. (15 min) (select 3 titles for the candidate to choose from ahead of time)

Mozart: Ave Verum Corpus

Friedell: Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether

Vaughan Williams: O How Amiable

C. Interviewing the Candidates

The search committee is the normal group to interview the candidates. Allow approximately one hour for interviewing each candidate. Have someone take notes of the candidate's answers and record the committee's impressions of each candidate. Carefully prepare the interview process and organize a list of questions to ask in the interview covering the candidate's liturgical knowledge, organizational skills & personal goals as well as the following general areas:

- What is your philosophy of music in the Catholic Church?
- What would be your musical priorities in this parish?
- What importance do you place on the role of the assembly in Catholic worship?
- Why do you think you would be good for this position?
- What challenges does it offer?

Following the audition and interview process, the committee members select their choice from among the candidates and make their recommendation to the pastor.

IV. Resources for the Employer

Local Resources

Archdiocese of Cincinnati

The Office for Divine Worship and Sacraments
 100 East Eighth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 • (513) 421-3131
 Archdiocesan Music Director • (513) 421-2222
<http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/worship/>

National Resources

American Guild of Organists

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1260
 New York, NY 10115
 (212) 870-2310
www.agohq.org

National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM)

962 Wayne Avenue, Suite 210
 Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-4461
 Phone: (240) 247-3000 • Fax: (240) 247-3001
 General Email: npmsing@npm.org
www.npm.org

Major National Universities with Departments of Church Music

Catholic University of America

The Benjamin T. Rome School of Music
 620 Michigan Avenue
 Washington, DC 20064
 (202) 319-5414
www.music.cua.edu

University of Notre Dame

Department of Music

105 Crowley Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556

(219) 631-6211

<http://music.ndu.edu>

Yale Institute of Sacred Music

409 Prospect Street

New Haven, CT 06511

(201) 432-5180

www.ism.yale.edu

Local Universities and Colleges with Music Departments

Athenaeum of Ohio

6616 Beechmont Avenue

Cincinnati, OH 45230

(513) 231-2223

www.athenaeum.edu

Miami University

Music Department

119 Center for the Performing Arts

Oxford, OH 45056

(513) 529-3014

<http://www.fna.muohio.edu/musweb/index.html>

Northern Kentucky University

Music Department

Louie B. Nunn Drive

Highland Heights, KY 41099

(859) 572-6399

<http://artscience.nku.edu/departments/music.html>

Sinclair Community College

444 West Third Street

Dayton, OH 45402-1460

(937) 512-3000

http://www.sinclair.edu/academics/divisions/lcs/mus/?_ga=2.73130963.1767916818.1509564347-1541916666.1506186934

Thomas More College

333 Thomas More Parkway
Crestview, KY
(859) 341-5800
<http://www.thomasmore.edu/music/>

University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music

P.O. Box 210003
Cincinnati, OH 45221-0003
(513) 556-5463
www.ccm.uc.edu

University of Dayton Department of Music & Theater

300 College Park Avenue
Dayton, OH 45469-1679
(937) 229-3936
<https://udayton.edu/artssciences/academics/music/welcome/index.php>

Wittenberg University Department of Music

Krieg Hall
P.O. Box 720
Springfield, OH 45501
(927) 327-6231
<http://www5.wittenberg.edu/academics/music/index.shtml>

Wright State University Music Department

3640 Colonel Glenn Highway
M-135 Creative Arts Center
Dayton, OH 45435
(937) 775-2787
<https://liberal-arts.wright.edu/music>

Xavier University Music Department

3800 Victory Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45207
(513) 745-3801
<http://www.xu.edu/music>

Appendix A—Liturgical Music Proficiency Exam – Organ/Conducting

This exam is roughly equivalent to that administered to an organ “secondary” or “minor” student on the college undergraduate level. It is offered to non-degreed personnel who, nevertheless, by reason of formal study have achieved at least a minimal level of professional competence. It qualifies one for referral to any available church music position in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, and is offered under the auspices of the Music Committee. The performance section of the exam lasts approximately one half-hour, while the written liturgical part of the exam lasts approximately one hour. This exam is given upon request. Please contact the Archdiocesan Music Director (513-421-2222) to schedule the examination.

Please be aware that throughout this performance examination, the playing should demonstrate appropriate organ technique, including: good phrasing, legato style, pedaling.

Organ Proficiency Examination

- A. Prepare and play a hymn well, with pedals and independent bass. (chosen from a list to be provided).
- B. Sight read a hymn. The examiners will provide this on the day of the exam itself.
- C. Play an anthem accompaniment (chosen from a list to be provided).
- D. Play a responsorial psalm (chosen from a list to be provided). A cantor will be provided.
- E. Play a set of Eucharistic acclamations: Holy, Mystery of Faith, Amen (chosen from a list to be provided)
- F. A good knowledge of basic organ registration (pipe), construction, tonal design, and console function and control.
- G. The preparation and performance of an organ work of the difficulty of one of the Bach “Eight Little Preludes and Fugues” or any of the organ works of Mendelssohn (candidate’s choice.)
- H. Provide an accompaniment for a melody from chord markings. (The melody will be sent prior to the examination)

Conducting Examination

Demonstrate basic conducting (chosen from a list of choral titles to be provided; a quartet of singers will be provided)

Liturgy Examination

A written exam in liturgy will also be required for this certification. It may be taken separately, but usually given on the same date as the organ playing examination. This exam requires a general knowledge of Roman Catholic Worship and the ability to prepare a complete order of service for the

celebration of the Eucharist by making competent choices from the available options. The two liturgies that must be planned will be sent in advance of the written examination.

Knowledge of the following Liturgical Documents is required for the written exam:

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (December, 1963)

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (2011)

General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar (1969)

Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship (November 2007)

Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture and Worship (November 2000)

[All these documents can be found in the LTP Publication, *The Liturgy Documents*, Vol. 1 5th ed. available through the Archdiocesan for Divine Worship and Sacraments (513) 421-3131.]

Appendix B: Liturgical Music Proficiency Exam – Piano/Conducting

Recognizing that many musicians in the Archdiocese are more familiar with piano / keyboard instruments rather than the organ, and that much of newer musical repertoire is written for piano/ keyboard, it has become necessary to develop additional Archdiocesan standards for piano and keyboard.

This exam is roughly equivalent to a piano “secondary” or “minor” on the college undergraduate level. It is offered to non-degreed personnel, who, nevertheless, by reason of formal study have achieved at least a minimal level of professional competence. It qualifies one for referral to any available church music position in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and is offered under the auspices of the music sub-committee of the Archdiocesan Worship Commission. The performance section of the exam last approximately one half-hour, while the written liturgical part of the exam lasts approximately one hour.

Please be aware that throughout this performance examination, the playing should demonstrate appropriate piano technique, including: phrasing, use of pedals, and variation in dynamics.

This exam is given on request. Please contact the Archdiocesan Music Director at (513) 421-2222 to schedule the examination.

Piano Proficiency Examination

- A. Prepare and play a hymn well (chosen from a list to be provided).
- B. Sight read a hymn or contemporary composition of moderate difficulty arranged for piano. This will be given on the day of the exam.
- C. Play an anthem accompaniment (chosen from a list to be provided).
- D. Play a responsorial psalm (chosen from a list to be provided). A cantor will be provided.

E. Play a set of Eucharistic acclamations: Holy, Mystery of Faith, Amen
(chosen from a list to be provided)

F. The preparation and performance of a piece of piano literature (chosen from a list to be provided)

G. Provide an accompaniment for a melody from chord markings. (The melody will be sent prior to the examination)

Conducting Examination

Demonstration of Basic Conducting (chosen from a list of choral titles to be provided; a quartet of singers will be provided.)

Liturgy Examination

A written exam in liturgy will also be required for this certification. It may be taken separately, but is normally given on the same date as the piano/keyboard performance part of the exam. This exam requires a general knowledge of Roman Catholic Worship and the ability to prepare a complete order of service for the celebration of the Eucharist by making competent choices from the available options. The two Sunday liturgies that must be planned will be given in advance.

Knowledge of the following Liturgical Documents is required for the written exam:

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (December, 1963)

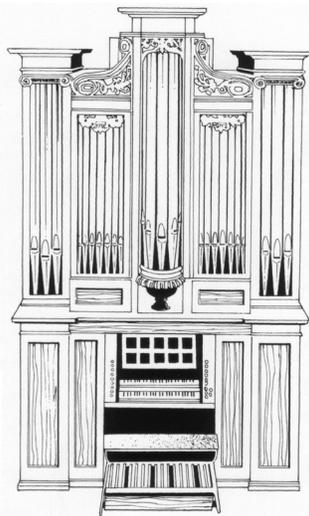
The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (2011)

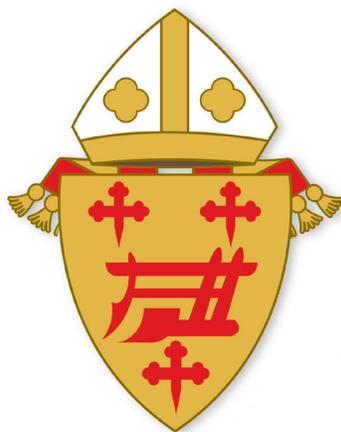
General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar (1969)

Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship (November 2007)

Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture and Worship (November 2000)

[All these documents can be found in the LTP Publication, *The Liturgy Documents*, Vol. 1 5th ed. available through the Archdiocesan for Divine Worship and Sacraments (513) 421-3131.]





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