



Wedding Music Guidelines — Outside Mass

Annunciation Catholic Church

Houston, TX

Congratulations on your engagement! This document discusses some of what you need to know about music at a wedding at Annunciation; it is not a substitute for consultation with the Music Director, though reading it before that consultation is good “homework” to undertake!

Annunciation celebrates weddings using the “Roman Rite”, a form of worship with roots in ancient Christianity that eventually became the Western world’s “de facto” Christian ritual. Weddings are also part of this parish’s worship life. Both the parish and the Roman Rite carry traditions that have nurtured Christian faith for generations. A wedding’s music carries part of its “identity”. While that identity should include elements that are specific to you, it should also be visibly part of this parish’s worship and of Roman Rite worship.

Music has been integral to Christian worship from its beginnings; St. Matthew’s account of the Last Supper, for example, concludes with Christ and the disciples singing a hymn together, and St. Paul exhorted the faithful to “sing and make melody in your hearts to the Lord.” Weddings are one of the Church’s most joyful liturgies; music is a great part of that festivity!

The following is an outline of the moments during the service at which there is cause to plan music.

1. Preludes and seating of parents - usually soft, reflective vocal or instrumental music. The Music Director usually chooses these selections. (Note that the couple may not be able to hear these selections at the wedding.)
2. Wedding party procession - The Pachelbel *Canon in D* is uniquely suited to this moment in the liturgy owing to its flexibility in the event that the procession is longer or shorter than anticipated. Vocal music may be sung here as well, though that may require a “pause” or unexpected repetition at some point.
3. Entrance of couple/bride - An apt choice is the Gregorian chant “Deus Israël”:

“May the God of Israel join you together: and may He be with you, who was merciful to two only children: and now, O Lord, make them bless Thee more fully.”

—Tobias 7:15 & 8:19

Instrumental music may also accompany this action instead.

FYI: Music between the readings - There are chants sung between the readings that are generally the same at each wedding at Annunciation. The first of these is a “gradual”, sung as a solo after the first reading. For the second, the congregation should sing “alleluia” as a response.

4. Recessional / Postlude - Usually a piece of an “extroverted” character.

Contracting of Musicians

Do not engage the services of any singers or instrumentalists, professional or volunteer, without consulting the Music Director.

Annunciation is blessed with a beautiful pipe organ whose use is normative at all weddings. The parish’s Music Director normally serves as Organist; this ensures a smooth, worry-free flow to the service.

For vocal music, consider a quartet of professional singers. The Music Director sings as one member of the quartet, and the other three are contracted for a reduced rate from the normal fee for a professional singer. The musical possibilities that such an arrangement allows far exceed what can be done with a solo singer.

You may also engage the services of one or more additional instrumentalists such as a trumpeter, string quartet, harpist, etc. for additional variety of sounds.

NOTE: As with flowers, photography, and other such services, is best to entrust music leadership to trained professionals. Even very talented amateur musicians generally do not react as well to unforeseen circumstances as someone who does such work as part of his/her livelihood. **The result can be embarrassment for all involved. The Music Director reserves the right to audition all outside musicians, to assess additional fees for the audition, and to approve or to deny the request to use them.**

Choice of Music

Music selections should match the aesthetic that Annunciation cultivates for regular Sunday services. Well-known examples include Pachelbel’s *Canon in D* and J. S. Bach’s *Jesu, joy of man’s desiring*; the Music Director will discuss these and other ideas with you. Note that some pieces, such as the wedding marches from Richard Wagner’s *Lohengrin* or Mendelssohn’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, we cannot allow because of their particular secular associations. Still other pieces, such as “Here I Am, Lord”, fit poorly with the parish’s liturgical ethos and hence are not part of liturgical worship at Annunciation, including weddings.