

Music for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

Statements on liturgical music made during or soon after Vatican Council II.

“The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song closely bound to the text, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy.” (*Sacrosanctum concilium*, # 112)

“A liturgical service takes on a nobler aspect when the rites are celebrated with singing, the ministers of each rank take their parts in them, and the congregation actively participates. This form of celebration gives a more graceful expression to prayer and brings out more distinctly the hierarchical character of the liturgy and the specific make-up of the community. It achieves a closer union of hearts through the union of voices. It raises the mind more readily to heavenly realities through the splendor of the rites. It makes the whole celebration a more striking symbol of the celebration to come in the heavenly Jerusalem.” (*Musicam sacram*, #5)

“Music and song are servants of worship and are its subordinates. Accordingly they must always possess the qualities befitting their place: grandeur yet simplicity; solemnity and majesty; the least possible unworthiness of the absolute transcendence of God to whom they are directed, and of the human spirit, which they are meant to express. Music and song must possess the power to put the soul in devout contact with the Lord, arousing and expressing sentiments of praise, petition, expiation, thanksgiving, joy as well as sorrow, love trust, peace. There is a limitless range for every kind of inspiring melody and the most varied harmony.

Since that is the essential function for sacred music, what ground is there for allowing anything shabby or banal ...? ... Vocal and instrumental music that is not at once marked by the spirit of prayer, dignity, and beauty, is barred from entrance into the world of the sacred and the religious. The assimilation and sanctification of the secular, which is today a distinguishing mark of the Church's mission in the world, clearly has limits. ...

One particular function of sacred song is to give greater impact to the texts offered for the understanding and appreciation of the faithful in order to enliven their faith and warm their devotion.” (Address by Pope Paul VI to the *Associazione Italiana di Santa Cecilia* of Italy, 18 September, 1968.)

Statements made in more recent years.

“In judging the appropriateness of music for the Liturgy, one will examine its liturgical, pastoral, and musical qualities. Ultimately, however, these three judgments are but aspects of one evaluation, which answers the question: “Is this particular piece of music appropriate for this use in the particular liturgy?” All three judgments must be considered together, and no individual judgment can be applied in isolation from the other two. This evaluation requires cooperation, consultation, collaboration, and mutual respect among those who are skilled in any of the three judgments, be they pastors, musicians, liturgists or planners.” (*Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, U.S. Conference of Bishops, 2007, # 126)

- The Liturgical judgment asks whether this composition is capable of meeting the structural and textual requirements set out in the liturgical books for this particular rite. The music must support the liturgical text and convey meaning which is faithful to the teaching of the Church.
- The Pastoral judgment takes into consideration the actual community gathered to celebrate in a particular place at a particular time. (Age, culture, language, education must be considered.)
- The Musical judgment asks whether this composition has the necessary aesthetic qualities that can bear the weight of the mysteries celebrated in the liturgy. Only artistically sound music will be effective and endure. To admit to the Liturgy the cheap, the trite, or the musical cliché often found in secular popular songs is to cheapen the liturgy, to expose it to ridicule and to invite failure.

When we come to consider the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, we find not one single rite, but several major ritual celebrations that presuppose the presence and participation of the local community, since initiation is the responsibility of *all* the baptized. Music is a KEY ELEMENT in enabling the community to engage fully in the journey of those seeking baptism. “For this reason it is important to choose sung responses, acclamations, antiphons, psalms and other songs that will enable the whole community to participate at the appropriate times.” (*SttL*, #202)

The key to successfully engaging the community is to choose music that is truly inspiring and prayerful but certainly within their capabilities. It must be music that the *congregation* can sing – not music for a soloist. This means that difficult rhythms and intervals need to be avoided. The other key to success is to choose wisely *when* to use music. Too much music is just as damaging to the liturgy as too little. Australians tend to be a people who are rather reticent when it comes to singing. We need to encourage them by providing music that is both textually and melodically appealing, and which raises their hearts and minds to God.

Responsorial Psalm and Weekly dismissal from Eucharist

The most obvious music which will involve the whole community will be the antiphon of the Responsorial Psalm and the acclamation for the dismissal. Despite the fact that both these elements have been stressed in the liturgical documents, they are not always included in our Sunday celebrations. It is really important to sing at least the antiphon of the Psalm. If your parish does not have the resources to sing the antiphon from the Lectionary each week, then try using the Common Psalm responses and tones. (*See handout*)

When choosing a setting of the psalm, please ensure that it is actually the psalm and not a paraphrase, or simply ‘based on’ the psalm. The particular verses found in the Lectionary have been chosen for a reason, and while it is not essential that *every* word be sung exactly as in the Lectionary, it is advisable that you keep as close as possible to the given text (or use one of the Common Psalms).

With regard to the dismissal, I would suggest that you find one acclamation (or two at the most) and keep to that week after week. The same acclamation can be used for dismissing the children

for Children's Liturgy of the Word – if you have that in your parish. If you pick something simple and prayerful, there should not be any worry about 'fitting in' with the various styles of music which are sometimes present within a given parish. Two examples of a simple dismissal are:

Go in Peace – John Schiavone (*Christ We Proclaim 1*, p.100)

May the Word of God strengthen you – *Celtic Mass*, Christopher Walker
(*Christ We Proclaim 1*, p. 52)

Go now and listen to the Word of God – Jennifer O'Brien (see handout)

During the weeks of Lent, leading up to the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, use the same music each week for the Penitential Rite (e.g. the "Russian Kyrie" GA 133 or the simple plainchant Mass setting.)

1. Rite of Acceptance

Gathering Hymn: **Praise to you, O Christ our Saviour** – Bernadette Farrell
(GA 407, AOV1 28)

Sing of the Lord's Goodness – Ernest Sands (GA 413, AOV1 131)

Lift up your hearts – Roc O'Connor (GA 416)

Christ, be our Light – Bernadette Farrell (GA 404, AOV2 3)

Greeting

Opening Dialogue

(Sung acclamation)

First Acceptance of the Gospel

Affirmation by the Sponsors and Assembly

(Sung Acclamation)

Signing of the Candidates with the Cross

Sung acclamation: **Christ will be your strength** – David Haas (*Who calls you by name*, p. 29)

Strengthen your people – Jesse Manibusan (*Christ we Proclaim 1*, p. 46)

With your cross of love upon us – Bernadette Farrell (*Christ we Proclaim 1*, p. 47)

Invitation to the Celebration of the Word

Song during procession into the church: **Blessed Jesus, at your word** – Tobias Clausnitzer,
tr. Catherine Winkworth. Tune: LIEBSTER JESU (GA 531)

Liturgy of the Word: First Reading

Responsorial Psalm: **Psalm 33**

Gospel Acclamation: (Lenten Gospel Acclamation and verse)

Gospel

Homily

Presentation of the Scriptures

(Sung acclamation) – **May the Word of God strengthen you** – *Celtic Mass*, Christopher Walker,
Christ we Proclaim 1, p. 52)

Intercessions

Prayer over the catechumens

Dismissal of Catechumens **Go in peace** - John Schiavone OR

In the peace of Christ – John W Kerns (*Christ we Proclaim 1*, p.92)

Dismissal of whole Assembly (if Eucharist is not to be celebrated.)

2. Rite of Election

a) The parish may wish to 'send' the catechumens to the Rite of Election, which is generally held in the cathedral church and presided over by the bishop. After the catechumens are presented to the parish, an acclamation may be sung.

b) Rite of Election

Entrance Hymn/Gathering song -

Church of God, elect and glorious (*Christ we Proclaim* 11, p.5)

Responsorial Psalm (First Sunday of Lent - or a Common Lenten Psalm)

Gospel Acclamation

Affirmation of catechumens

A psalm or song will be sung during the enrollment of names -

Bless the Lord, my soul (Taizé chant, AOV2 142) OR

Chosen to be God's own - Ricky Manalo (*Christ we Proclaim II*, p. 20)

Final Hymn - **Take the Word of God with You** - Christopher Walker (GA 494,)

3. The Scrutinies

Entrance Hymn (for Mass) [Third Sunday of Lent - the Woman at the Well;
Fourth Sunday of Lent - Blind Bartimeus
Fifth Sunday of Lent - Raising of Lazarus]

Penitential Rite

Responsorial Psalm

Gospel Acclamation

Calling forward the Elect

[Exorcism] - **God to enfold you** - John Bell

(© 1997 WGRG, The Iona Community, in "Love and Anger", p. 68.)

Dismissal of the Elect

4. Presentation of the Creed (Third Week of Lent)

Gathering Song

Responsorial Psalm

Gospel Acclamation

Following presentation of the Creed -

This is our faith - Arthur Hutchings *Gather Australia* 348.

Final Hymn - **In faith and hope and love** - *Gather Australia* 442,

5. Presentation of the Our Father

Gathering Song

Responsorial Psalm

Gospel Acclamation

Following presentation of the Our Father - Refrain of **Christ, be our light**

6. Easter Vigil

Service of Light (Elect DO NOT light their candles at this point)

Liturgy of the Word

Celebration of Baptism

- Presentation of Elect
- Invitation to Prayer
- Litany of the Saints (remember to add in those saints after whom those who are to be baptized have been named.)
- Blessing of Water
- Renunciation of Sin
- Profession of Faith
- Baptism (with sung acclamation) – **Up from the waters** – Martyr Haugen (from the collection *Up from the waters*, GIA Publication)
 - **Blessed be God who chose you in Christ** – Arthur Hutchings (see handout)
- Anointing
- Clothing with baptismal garment
- Presentation of lit candle
 - (**Receive the Light of Christ** – Erica Marshall, *Gather Australia* 256)

Renewal of Baptismal Promises (by all in the congregation)

Reception of candidates into full Communion

After the candidates have been received into full communion, it would be appropriate to sing the acclamation, **This is our faith** – Arthur Hutchings (GA 348), or
There is one Lord, on faith, one baptism, (GA 346)

Confirmation (of both newly baptized and those received into full communion)

- **Veni sancte Spiritus** – Taizé. This can be used very successfully and prayerfully.

Depending on the number of people who are to be confirmed, make good use of the ostinato and use the verses sparingly. Always allow for the first person to be confirmed in silence. Other hymns suitable for singing during Confirmation include **Holy, Sacred Spirit** (Monica Brown) and **The Gift of the Holy Spirit** (Kathleen Boschetti.)

List of Psalms which are used throughout the rituals of the RCIA

- 16 Keep me safe, O God, you are my hope (*Psalms for the Easter Triduum and Other Major Feasts* – Jenny O’Brien / *Psalms for the Sundays of Year B* – Jenny O’Brien; *Catholic Worship Book* 269 – Douglas Mews)
- 19 Lord, you have the words of everlasting life (GA 20 – David Haas; *Psalms for Feasts and Seasons* – Christopher Willcock; *Psalms for the Easter Triduum* – Jenny O’Brien,
- 23 The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. (GA 25 – A. Gregory Murray; *Responsorial Psalms, Year A* – Colin Smith; *Psalms for the Sundays of Year A* – Jenny O’Brien)
- 25 To you, O Lord, I lift my soul (GA 26 – Christopher Willcock; *Psalms for the Sundays of Year C* – Jenny O’Brien; *Psalms for All Time* – Paul Mason)
- 30 I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me (GA 29 / *Psalms for the Easter Triduum and Other Major Feasts* – Jenny O’Brien; *Responsorial Psalms, Year A* – Colin Smith)
- 33 Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own (see handout) OR
 Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you (*Responsorial Psalms, Year A* – Colin Smith) OR
 The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord

- 42 Like a deer that longs for running streams, my soul longs for you, my God (*Psalms for the Easter Triduum and Other Major Feasts* – Jenny O’Brien OR
My soul is thirsting for the living God.
As the Deer Longs – Bob Hurd (GA 38, AOV1 120)
- 51 Create a clean heart in me, O God (GA 41 – Christopher Willcock; GA 40 / *Psalms for the Easter Triduum and Other Major Feasts* – Jenny O’Brien; *Psalms for All Time* – Paul Mason)
- 91 Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble (GA 53 – Marty Haugen; *Psalms for the Sundays of Year B* – Jenny O’Brien)
- 103 As a father is kind to his children, so kind is the Lord to those who fear him. (See handout)
- 104 Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth (*Psalms for Feasts and Seasons* – Christopher Willcock; GA 62 – Percy Jones; *Psalms for the Easter Triduum and Other Major Feasts* – Jenny O’Brien; *Responsorial Psalms, Year A* – Colin Smith)
- Ex 15 Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory (*Psalms for the Easter Triduum and Other Major Feasts* – Jenny O’Brien; *Psalms for All Time* – Paul Mason)
- Is 12 You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation (*Psalms for the Easter Triduum and Other Major Feasts* – Jenny O’Brien)

List of Common psalms:

19, 22, **25**, 27, 34, 47, **51**, 63, 66, 72, 85, **91**, 95, 98, 100, **103**, **104**, 118, 122, 130, 136, 145
(Those marked in bold type are those which occur during the RCIA rituals)

Simple acclamation for the beginning of each RCIA gathering:

O Word of God – Ricky Manalo (*Disciples in Prayer*. Year C. © 2003 OCP, Portland, Oregon.)

Hymn to be used in RCIA meetings (can also be used for Reconciliation services)

There is a longing – Anne Quigley. © 1992, OCP Publications. (*Christ we Proclaim* 1, 83)

Refrains useful for prayer during RCIA meetings

Many of the Taizé chants come into this category, particularly the ‘Kyrie Eleison’s, and “O Lord, hear my prayer.”

The Alleluia and Verse before the Gospel

Keep the number of Alleluia settings down. You might like to choose one setting for Advent, one for Christmas and Easter and two for Ordinary time. One Lenten acclamation is sufficient.

- NB.** The important thing about choosing music for use during the RCIA rituals is to ensure that it is
- known by the catechumens/elect/candidates and the parish as a whole;
 - that it is *singable* by all concerned;
 - that it enhances the rite being celebrated;
 - that it can be used as the basis for future prayer – both liturgical and personal

Common Responsorial Psalms and Responses

The following is adapted from the introduction of Psalms for Feasts and Seasons by Christopher Willcock, SJ.

The Lectionary offers the Common Responsorial Psalms and Common Responses as a resource for communities who wish to sing the responsorial psalm, but whose musical capabilities would prevent them from singing the psalm proper to every Sunday and major feast. A psalm chosen from the Common collection may therefore be used if the responsorial psalm that follows the First Reading on a particular day is not known in a musical setting. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Third edition, 2011), #61 notes:

In order that the people may be able to sing the Psalm response more readily, texts of some responses and psalms have been chosen for the various seasons of the year or for the various categories of Saints. These may be used in place of the text corresponding to the reading whenever the Psalm is sung.

The following psalms may be used in place of those designated in the Lectionary as follows:

ADVENT

Psalm 25 (24) To you, O Lord I lift my soul
Psalm 85 (84) Lord, let us see your kindness

CHRISTMAS

Psalm 98 (97) All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God

EPIPHANY

Psalm 72 (71) Lord, every nation on earth will adore you

LENT

Psalm 51 (50) Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned
Psalm 91 (90) Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble
Psalm 130 (129) With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption

HOLY WEEK

Psalm 22 (21) My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

EASTER VIGIL

Psalm 136 (135) God's love is everlasting

EASTER

Psalm 118 (117) This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad.
Psalm 66 (65) Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

ASCENSION

Psalm 47 (46) God mounts his throne with shouts of joy; a blare of trumpets for the Lord.

PENTECOST

Psalm 104 (103) Lord, send out your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.

GENERAL

Psalm 19 (18) Lord, you have the words of everlasting life

Psalm 27 (26) The Lord is my light and my salvation

Psalm 34 (33) Taste and see the goodness of the Lord

Psalm 63 (62) My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

Psalm 95 (94) If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts

Psalm 100 (99) We are God's people, the sheep of his flock

Psalm 103 (102) The Lord is kind and merciful

Psalm 145 (144) I will praise your name forever, my King and my God.

Psalm 122 (121) Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Of course, the psalms listed for the various feasts and seasons are not restricted to those times. The criterion governing all usage is that the psalm be related in some degree to the reading that precedes it. A good way of knowing whether a particular Common Psalm is suitable is to compare it with the one designated in the Lectionary for that day.

By using the Common Psalms, a community can gradually build up its repertoire and not be faced with the difficulty of either having to learn many new psalms in rapid succession or using just a few psalms that are well-known but which do not properly fulfil their function after a given First Reading.

Common Responses

Another method by which a community is always able to sing the psalm and not have to learn a new every time is by using the Common Responses. These ten responses may be attached to any appropriate psalm, whose verses are sung by the cantor who uses a simple psalm tone.

1. Come, O Lord, and set us free (Advent)
2. Today we have seen your glory, O Lord (Christmas)
3. Remember, O Lord, your faithfulness and love (Lent)
4. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia (Easter)
5. Praise the Lord for he is good (Praise 1)
6. We praise you, O Lord, for all your works are wonderful (Praise 2)
7. Sing to the Lord a new song (Praise 3)
8. The Lord is near to all who call. (Petition 1)
9. Hear us, Lord, and save us (Petition 2)
10. The Lord is kind and merciful (Petition 3)

Example of a Common Response and Psalm Tone

Come, O Lord, and set us free.

(For use during Advent)

Christopher Willcock, SJ.

Response:

Musical score for the response. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line has the lyrics: "Come, O Lord, and set us free, come, O Lord." The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand.

Psalm tone:

Musical score for the psalm tone. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line is a simple, single-note melody. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand.

Taken from *Psalms for Feasts and Seasons*

© 1977, 1990 Christopher Willcock, SJ. Published by Collins Dove.

Example of a Common Psalm - Psalm 95 (94)

Antiphon

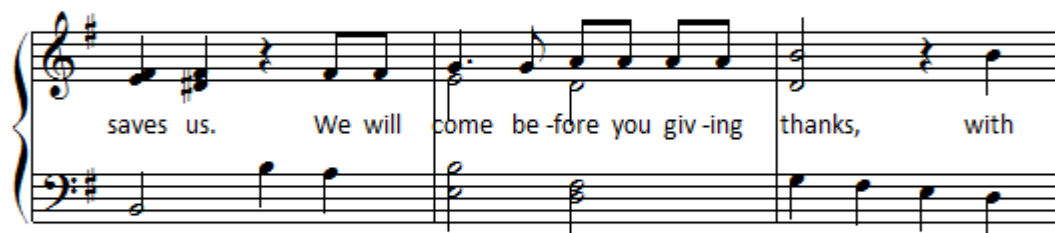


If to - day you hear God's voice, har - den not your hearts.

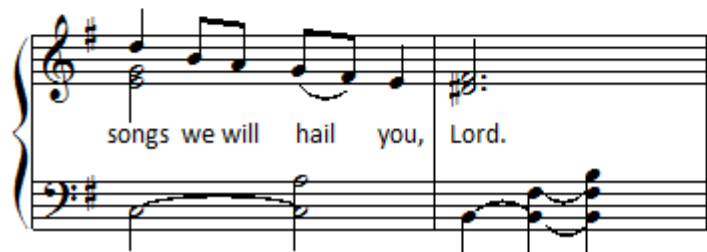
Verse 1



1. Come, ring out our joy to the Lord; hail the Rock who



saves us. We will come be - fore you giv - ing thanks, with



songs we will hail you, Lord.

Verse 2



2. Come in, let us bow and bend low; let us kneel be - fore God who

made us, for we are the sheep of God's pas-ture, the

flock that is led by God's hand.

Verse 3

3. O lis-ten to-day to God's voice: "Hard-en not your

hearts as at Mer-i-bah and Mas-sah in the de-sert, when your

fa-thers tried me, though they saw my work."

Go now and listen to the Word of God

Jennifer R. O'Brien

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of music. Each system has a voice line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: "Go now and listen to the Word of God. The Word of God brings e - ver - last - ing life. The Word of God brings e - ver - last - ing life." The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand.

Voice: Go now and lis - ten to the Word of God.

Piano: Go now and lis - ten to the Word of God. The

Word of God brings e - ver - last - ing life. The

Word of God brings e - ver - last - ing life.

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Music for the RCIA

Psalm 33: Happy the people

Jennifer R. O'Brien

Antiphon:

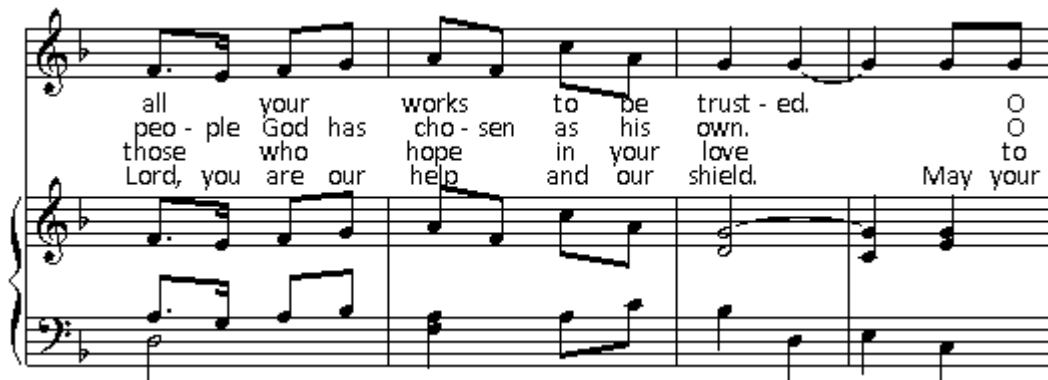


Hap - py the peo - ple the Lord has cho - sen to be his own.

Verses:



1. Your word, O Lord is faith - ful and
2. They are hap - py whose God is the Lord, the
3. Lord, you look on those who re - vere you, on
4. Our soul is wait - ing for the Lord, O



all your works to be trust - ed. O
peo - ple God has cho - sen as his own. O
those who hope in your love to
Lord, you are our help and our shield. May your

Lord, you love right and just - ice, You
 Lord, you look down from hea - ven, You
 res - cue their souls from death to
 love be up - on us, O Lord, as we

fill all the earth with your love.
 see all the child - ren on the earth .
 keep them a - live in the fam - ine.
 place all our hope in you.

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Psalm 103

Jennifer R. O'Brien

Antiphon:

As a fa - ther is kind to his child - ren, so
kind is the Lord to those who fear him.

Verses:

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord, all my
2. O Lord, you are com - pas - sion and love, slow to
3. As the hea - vens are high a - bove the earth so
4. As a fa - ther has com - pas - sion on his child - ren, you have

be - ing, bless God's ho - ly name; my
 an - ger, rich in mer - cy. You
 strong is your love for those who fear you. As
 pi - ty Lord, on those who fear you: when they

soul, give thanks to the Lord and
 treat us not ac - cord - ing to our sins nor re -
 far as the east is from the west so
 keep your cov - en - ant in truth, when they

ne - ver for - get all God's bless - ings.
 pay us ac - cord - ing to our faults.
 far do you re - move our sins.
 keep your will in their mind.

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