

PROMOTING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE LITURGY THROUGH SACRED MUSIC

Seeking to strengthen the bonds of communion throughout the Diocese of Jefferson City, Bishop W. Shawn McKnight calls for a synodal process of consultation and discernment regarding the sacred music used in the celebration of liturgy.

“As moderator, promoter, and guardian of the whole liturgical life of the particular Church entrusted to him” (*Traditionis Custodes*, art. 2), Bishop McKnight will use this process and its results to promote a more active and conscious participation in the liturgy by encouraging Catholic faithful to become familiar with certain Mass settings in both English and Spanish. Developing familiarity with common Mass settings will allow greater participation by our faithful when attending diocesan liturgies and other Masses outside of their home parishes.

Four initial Mass settings have been identified, and the list is open to change following greater consultation of pastors, liturgical music ministers and all the faithful.

TITLE	COMPOSER	PUBLISHER
Chant Mass		
Mass of Frances Cabrini	Keil	OCP
Revised Mass of Creation	Haugen	GIA
Misa del Pueblo Inmigrante	Hurd	OCP

While not an exhaustive list, pastors, administrators, chaplains and liturgical ministers are to see that these Mass settings are used often enough so that the Christian faithful become familiar with them.

Furthermore, it is vital that we ensure the greatest care be taken to prevent scandal from marring the beautiful celebration of the Eucharist.

Therefore, it is forbidden to use music by composers who have been found by his or her diocesan bishop or competent authority to be credibly accused of sexual abuse. The Chancery will provide and maintain [a list of such composers](#), which will be updated from time to time. All hymns by these composers are strictly prohibited from use in the celebration of all liturgies in the Diocese of Jefferson City.

It is also important to recognize that some hymns in current distribution may not be appropriate for use in Catholic liturgies. The use of such hymns could damage our communion as Catholics in what we believe, as well as our relations with other faith groups. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine has established six criteria that every pastor and liturgical minister should consider when determining whether a song is suitable for the liturgy:

1. Deficiencies in the Presentation of Eucharistic Doctrine
2. Deficiencies in the Presentation of Trinitarian Doctrine
3. Hymns with Deficiencies in the Doctrine of God and His Relation to Humans
4. Hymns with a View of the Church that Sees Her as Essentially a Human Construction
5. Hymns with Doctrinally Incorrect Views of the Jewish People
6. Hymns with Incorrect Christian Anthropology

Further explanation of these criteria is available in the document “[Catholic Hymnody at the Service of the Church: An Aid for Evaluating Hymn Lyrics.](#)”

The Diocesan Liturgical Commission shall invite the participation of the diocesan chapter of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians to assist them with the consultation of liturgical music ministers in the parishes throughout the diocese on this entire policy, including the choice of Mass settings for diocesan celebrations, the prohibition of music by credibly accused composers and criteria to be used in the selection of liturgical hymns. After concluding this consultation process, the Diocesan Liturgical Commission shall propose their recommendations to the Presbyteral Council and Diocesan Pastoral Council by 1 August 2025.

It is Bishop McKnight’s firm hope that this consultation will shape the final form of this policy before the end of the *ad experimentum* period. May our efforts together to promote sacred music in the liturgy help us to fulfill the teaching of the Second Vatican Council: “The treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care. Choirs must be diligently promoted, especially in cathedral churches; but bishops and other pastors of souls must be at pains to ensure that, whenever the sacred action is to be celebrated with song, the whole body of the faithful may be able to contribute that active participation which is rightly theirs” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 114).