

Diocese of Pittsburgh Church Music Regulations Successfully in Force Since 1931

1. No organist or choir director is to be engaged or used as a substitute who has not been examined and **approved** by the Diocesan Music Commission. — The most important requisite for a church organist in our Diocese shall be a fair knowledge of liturgical matters and the ability to train a church choir, rather than organ technique.

2. At High Mass it is obligatory to sing **all** the prescribed parts (Proper and Ordinary) and to sing them **in their entirety**. The Proper parts, however (i. e. Introit, Gradual or Tract, Offertory and Communion) may be chanted by the choir according to simplified musical arrangements approved by the Diocesan Music Commission. At Requiem High Mass the Sequence **Dies Irae** and the Offertory are to be sung in their entirety, the same as other parts; the Celebrant, therefore, must here have regard for the organist.

3. At High Mass the Celebrant is not allowed to proceed with the Offertory while the Credo is being sung. Likewise he should not proceed with the Consecration until the singing of the Sanctus is completed.

4. It is strictly forbidden to substitute other selections for the prescribed chants of the Mass; for instance, to sing **Ave Maria** or **Ave Verum** or **De profundis** etc. instead of the proper Offertory at Requiem Mass; to sing **Miserere** instead of the "Liberia" at Funeral Mass; etc.

5. According to the teaching of the Catholic Church the members of the church choir (like the altar-boys) hold an **Ecclesiastical Office** next to that of the Celebrant and his Ministers. Consequently Women (ladies or girls) **cannot be members of the church choir**. Mixed choirs of men and women, therefore, or choirs of women only, are forbidden in church **at any time** — that is to say not only for the Sunday High Mass and Vespers but also for High Masses and other Services on week-days.

6. Women may sing "in unison" **from their pews in the body of the church** as part of the Congregation. Congregational

singing not only for hymns at Low Mass and evening Services but also for the Responses and the Ordinary parts at High Mass (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei) has been always considered by the Church as the best of all and most worthy at any time. School girls, therefore, and members of Sodalties should be encouraged to take the lead in this movement. The congregation may also **alternate** (in unison) with the liturgical choir in singing the different verses and phrases of the sacred text. Gregorian Chant is recommended as the most suitable music for the purpose, when a competent teacher is at hand.

7. Whenever school children must be placed in the choir loft at High Mass, the Boys may sing but the Girls **must keep silent**, unless the whole congregation takes part in the singing. Women organists are not permitted to sing **together with nor alternate** with the male choir.

8. No School Sister may play the organ at Mass and other Services in the parish church, in place of the regular organist, without the **approval** of the Diocesan Music Commission. Sisters organists in Motherhouses and Convent Chapels must also be **approved** by the Music Commission. Their church music shall be submitted for the diocesan "stamp of approval".

9. Since church singers are given the "privilege" of holding an Ecclesiastical Office, the Church requires that catholic men "of good will and good conduct" (rather than men of good voice only) be admitted in the choir. According to Pope Pius X: "These men should, by their modest and devout bearing during the liturgical functions, show that they are worthy of the holy office they exercise."

10. Gregorian Chant must be rendered according to the rhythmic method of the Benedictine School of Solesmes. Such method has been authorized and endorsed by the Holy See. Consequently: (a) books containing Gregorian Chant without rhythmic marks are forbidden for church or

school use; (b) organists and school teachers who never attended a regular Course of Gregorian Chant are not permitted to teach the children anything in Gregorian.

11. Music in the modern style may be used in Church, provided it has been previously submitted to the Diocesan Music Commission and given the official "stamp of approval". The latter is required also for music which is known otherwise to be acceptable. As for new compositions in manuscript form, they cannot be approved for church use, since the church is not a place for experiment nor is the congregation a body to practice on.

12. It is obligatory for every Church with a parish school to have a Boy-Choir (not necessarily a **surpliced** Sanctuary Choir) which will be employed at least **once a month** for the Sunday High Mass, with or without the assistance of the men's choir. It is obvious that the selection of boys for the choir (at the beginning of the scholastic year) should precede the selection of boys for the altar, since any intelligent boy can learn how to serve at the altar, but not every intelligent boy may be able to sing.

13. Organists and choir teachers, should see that the members of the church choir become familiar with the Italian pronunciation of the Latin, and also with the meaning of the liturgical text through the aid of a Latin-English Missal—for as men ought to know what they are talking about, so singers ought to know what they are singing about.

14. Musical compositions for "Solo" are strictly forbidden in church. Likewise "solo-singing" is forbidden, except for "incidental phrases" of a long composition (Gloria, Credo, etc). Only the Organist is allowed to sing **alone** when the choir is not present. Hence during the summer months, if the male choir is not available, the organist shall sing **alone** at High Mass and other church services, unless the Congregation can take care of the singing.

15. No individual singer (except the organist) can be permitted to sing **alone** for Weddings and Funerals. Whenever special music is requested for these occasions **FOUR** singers at least (a Male Quartet) must be engaged.

16. It is forbidden to sing anything in the **vernacular** during High Mass and Vespers. Hymns in the vernacular, however, may be sung **immediately before and after**

High Mass and Vespers, and also **during Low Mass**. At Funerals, nothing can be sung in the vernacular—neither before nor after the Mass since the Church provides the proper chants, namely; "Subvenite", "In Paradisum" and "Benedictus Dominus" or De profundis.

17. It is forbidden to sing or play in church any music from secular sources, or music in use in Non-Catholic churches, like the **Ave Maria's** by Schubert, Gounod, Millard, Rosewig, etc., "O Promise me," "I Love you truly," etc.; "Nearer, my God, to Thee," "Face to Face," "The end of a perfect day," etc.; Wagner's "Lohengrin March", Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" and Midsummer Night's Dream, "Chopin's Funeral March," etc.

18. At Requiem and Funeral Masses the organ can be used (in subdued tone) **only** to accompany the singing, that is, the organ must stop playing when the singing ceases. The same rule holds at Ferial Masses and Sunday Masses during Advent and Lent, except on "Gaudete" and "Laetare" Sundays respectively.

19. It is forbidden to accompany the Celebrant with the organ for the **Preface** and the **Pater Noster**. It is an abuse to sing **Deo gratias** after the Epistle, or **Laus tibi Christe** after the Gospel at High Mass. So, too, to sing the Responses in **harmony** instead of in **unison** at High Mass.

20. Church Choirs of fewer than Ten, Fifteen and Twenty **volunteer members** are forbidden to sing music for Two, Three and Four Voices respectively.

21. Music being a "complimentary" part of the Liturgy should not be made to appear as the principal part. Musical Programs, therefore, or other items concerning church music and church choirs, whenever intended for publication in the local Catholic or secular papers, must be submitted for approval to the Diocesan Music Commission not later than Monday of the week of publication.

22. The Diocesan Music Commission must see not only that the music to be rendered in church is **good in itself**, but also that it is **well within the ability of the choir and of the organist and properly executed**. For this purpose and for the educational benefit of organists, choir directors and church singers, a Recital of liturgical music will be given on Sunday afternoons at the Synod Hall by church choirs.

23. It is strictly obligatory for Organists and Choir Directors to attend the meetings called by the Diocesan Music Commission. Likewise it is obligatory for Church Choirs to take part in the Sunday Recital at the Synod Hall whenever appointed by the Music Commission. Organists and Choir Directors must attend at least TEN of these Recitals, **within the year.**

24. Masses and other music by the following composers are forbidden for church use: Ashmall, Battman, Bartholomeus, Bordese, W. Brown, Concone, Durant, Farmer, Giorza, Gounod, B. Hamma, Kalliwoda, Kahn, Lambillotte, LaHache, Leonard, Loesh, Luzzi, Marzo, Mercadante, Millard, Poniatowski, Rosewig, Schubert, Sorin, Stearns, Weigand, Wilkes.

25. The following English-Latin Hymns and Collections are forbidden for church and school use; St. Basil's Hymnal; The Gloria Hymnal; Catholic Youth's Hymnal (Christian Brothers); Catholic Choir Manual (Wynne); Crown Hymnal; May Chimes; Hellebusch's Hymnal; Psallite Hymnal; American Catholic Hymnal (Marist Brothers); Wreath of Mary; New Catholic Hymn Book; all of Berge's, Giorza's, Gaines', Marzo's, Peter's Rosewig's and Werner's Collections.

26. Organ accompaniment to Gregorian Masses by L. Bonvin, P. Griesbacher, Fr. Mathias, N. Montani, J. Otten and J. Singenberger is forbidden because of the new rules which govern Gregorian Rhythm and Gregorian Aesthetics.

27. When, for any reason, the observance of Church laws concerning Music and Choirs is impossible, let the pastors be content with Low Mass, at which appropriate hymns in Latin or in the Vernacular may be sung by the congregation.

28. Organists or choir directors who within **One Month** after receiving notice from the Music Commission fail to send a written assurance that abuses on their part against any of the Regulations listed above have been corrected, will be **disqualified** for any church position in the diocese of Pittsburgh.

29. The names of organists, choir instructors and school teachers who prove that they possess a solid liturgical-musical training and experience together with a Catholic attitude toward the Diocesan Authority, will be published from time to time in the Diocesan Catholic Papers, so

that Pastors and others concerned with church music may be informed.

30. The ELECTROTONE (or Hammond Organ) is forbidden for church use at its present experimental stage.—The ORGAN (or Everett Organ) is permitted for church use, provided the organist shows discretion in operating the Amplifier. Its cost, however, is not any lower than that of a middle-size Pipe Organ (Wicks or Kilgen Organ) which is certainly to be preferred.

I ask the complete and whole-hearted assistance of priests, sisters, organists and members of church choirs in order that we may once for all secure a conformity with the law of the Church in the matter of music at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and at other liturgical Services—which will mark us as a Catholic-minded people, obedient to the Vicar of Christ, and reverent towards the ancient traditions of the Faith. The Diocesan Music Commission has no standards except those, and no desire to enforce unique notions of its own; it is competent in its field and it has a right to ask every Catholic in the Diocese to encourage and support its work. I shall be grateful to Pastors and Superiors of Religious Houses for any opportunities they may afford their organists and music teachers for self-improvement, and in general for the elevation of the standard of music in Churches, Convents and Parish Schools.

+ HUGH C. BOYLE,
Bishop of Pittsburgh.

SUGGESTIONS

To Pastors:

(a) We would beg Pastors to bear in mind that the purpose of a beautiful church, of a splendid liturgical service and of a fine sermon may be entirely defeated by the incompetence of the organist. On the other hand too often the organist receives little consideration for his work (to put it politely) and no encouragement for self-improvement. Pastors should not forget that **a better equipped organist means better music in church, a more dignified liturgical service and a congregation inspired to cooperate loyally in the parochial enterprises.**

(b) Music books are made of perishable material and they wear out with use. You cannot expect volunteer choir members to be interested in their work with books falling apart or not sufficient in number. Nor can you expect volunteer singers to attend rehearsals if the same Mass and the same

Hymns are to be sung all the year round.

(c) Likewise the pipe-organ is not an everlasting instrument, therefore it needs repairing now and then, it needs "tuning" at least four times a year (at the change of the seasons) on account of the different temperatures affecting the metal pipes. **Economy now** (in the matter of organ repairs) means a bigger expense later and unsatisfactory service in the meantime.

d) An appeal to the congregation should be made once a year (preferably in September when church choirs generally resume their duties) encouraging and urging young men of the parish to join the liturgical choir.

To Organists:

a) It is not the large number of singers nor the rendition of elaborate music that makes a "good choir", but rather the good judgment of the organist in choosing music within the powers and ability of the choir, and the proper rendition of the same.

(b) People go to the theatre for excitement and entertainment, but go to church for prayer and recollection. Loud singing and excessive organ-playing in church, often make of it a place of discomfort and distraction for the faithful. Never allow your singers (Men or Boys) to "force" their voices in singing.

(c) Absolute silence in church at the more solemn moments of the liturgical service is far more eloquent and effective than organ-playing. It is suggested, therefore, not to play the organ during the Consecration and from the end of the "Benedictus" till the "Agnus Dei" at Mass. Likewise during the blessing at Benediction.

(d) There are only three successful means to improve your work and become efficient in the field of Liturgical Music, namely: **Reading, Observation and School Training**. For your benefit, a weekly article concerning liturgy, church music, its legislation, its history and aesthetics, etc. is published in THE PITTSBURGH CATHOLIC (special subscription for Organists \$1.00 per year); a Church Choir Recital is given on Sunday afternoons at the Synod Hall; a School of Church Music has been established at the Duquesne University. You should avail yourselves of these opportunities.

To Church Singers:

(a) By his singing, the choir member takes active part in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, thus sharing special spiritual

fruits from it. It is a **privilege**, therefore, to be a member of the church choir — but it is also a **responsibility** which commands a scrupulous attendance not only at the Sunday Services but at the weekly rehearsal as well. The latter is by all means necessary even for the best trained choirs.

(b) The only purpose of church music is **the glory of God and the edification of the faithful**. Any personal ambition, therefore, or any desire to "show off" in singing should be sacrificed and discarded. Self-control and self-denial are most necessary to church singers.

To Sisters and School Teachers:

(a) The diocesan Scholastic Program calls for **Twenty Minutes** of Music daily in our schools—such period must **actually** be devoted to music both sacred and secular. It is not fair, in fact, that Catholic children (who are "obliged" to attend Catholic schools) be deprived of musical knowledge which plays such important part in man's education. School children should be taught to sing appropriate hymns (in unison) during the children's Mass on Sunday.

(b) It is suggested that one or two Sisters look after the behavior of the Choir Boys while the latter sing in the choir loft and the organist is busy at the organ. A sensible, sympathetic co-operation between School Sisters and the organist is most necessary for the success of the Boy-Choir.

(c) Let us teach children how to sing by **Musical Notation** rather than by the antiquated methods of Alphabetical Letters or Numerical Figures in use centuries ago, before the invention of the Staff.

To All Those Concerned with Church Music

Regular lessons on Organ, Gregorian Chant, Harmony, Counterpoint and liturgical Composition are given at the Duquesne University of Pittsburgh by competent teachers, at very reasonable terms. A Certificate from the University or from some other recognized School of Church Music will be required henceforth from organists seeking any important position in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

THE DIOCESAN MUSIC COMMISSION

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