

# Music for Exposition of the Holy Eucharist

## Structure

### Exposition

Song

Exposition (Procession from the place of Reservation)

(Exposition after Mass)

### Adoration

Readings, homily, prayers, songs *ad libitum* or Liturgy of the Hours.

(Sufficient time should also be allowed for silent prayer)

### [Benediction

Eucharistic Song

Prayer

Blessing ]

### Reposition

Reposition (Procession to the place of Reservation)

Acclamation

## Introduction

There is a distinct role for music in each of the 4 parts of the Rite: a processional song to accompany the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament; music during the period of Adoration; the Eucharistic Song for Benediction and an Acclamation as the Blessed Sacrament is replaced in the tabernacle. Though some music could easily be sung at any part of the Rite it is important to bring out the contrasting moments within the rite itself.

There is a strong tradition of hymnody for Exposition both of Latin texts and devotional hymns of the last two centuries. Many of these texts were originally written for Benediction, when hymns were not permitted to be sung at Mass. There have also been many fine Eucharistic texts written since the Rite was published in 1978: hymns and psalms settings as well as the wealth of chants such as those from Taizé.

The list of suggestions provided here is not meant to be exhaustive but to provide some resources and stimulate other ideas. Many of the suggestions can easily be found in the hymnbooks most commonly found in Catholic churches.

When preparing music for Exposition remember that it is a celebration of liturgy. Music is used to accompany liturgical action, enable participation and deepen

people's prayer. It is an action of the Church and so overly personal and sentimental texts and settings should be avoided.

Though the Eucharist will form the core theme of much of the music chosen other themes are also appropriate. These may derive from the theme of Eucharist itself such as praise and thanksgiving, the gift of God's creation, God's love for us as well as the life of discipleship the Eucharist nourishes us for. Choices may also be made based on the scripture readings chosen for the period of adoration, the liturgical season or a direct aspect of the Eucharist such as those given below.

### **Exposition**

A song may be sung while the minister comes to the altar.

Where the Blessed Sacrament has to be brought to the altar from the tabernacle by the minister this action is accompanied by a processional song. Songs used to accompany the Communion procession may be suitable.

When Exposition is celebrated directly after a celebration of Mass at which the host is consecrated the Mass ends with the Prayer after Communion and the Concluding Rites are omitted. In this case the song of thanksgiving after communion fulfils the function of this song.

There may be occasions when it is fitting for the service to begin in silence.

### **Adoration**

The period of adoration will be the longest part of a service of Exposition. It will consist of readings, music and periods of silence. The readings will generally be taken from scripture and the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume of the Rite is a collection of readings. (A list of the readings can be found on the Liturgy Office website.) The period of adoration may well follow the pattern of: scripture reading, sung psalm or song, prayer and period of silence. Psalms are given with the scripture readings — settings should be chosen for their reflective character. Another pattern might be a series of short scripture readings followed by a common sung response and then silence. Other types of songs can be used — as well as hymns and chants other sung forms include a Short Litany.

The use of ostinato chants (such as Taizé) can effectively lead in to periods of silence; gentle instrumental music can also be helpful. Setting of the Communion Antiphons of the *Roman Missal* may provide suitable material; in addition the psalms and antiphons of Psallite might also provide a wide range of possible choices. Where there are the resources it may be appropriate for a choir or other group of musicians to sing a motet or piece of music by themselves.

Whatever is chosen should reflect the themes of scripture and be an aid to prayer and meditation. As a simple rule the focus of any text should be on Jesus. Other devotions are placed after the liturgy (see below).

The time of adoration may consist of a celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, in particular the principal hours of Morning and Evening Prayer.

## **Benediction**

At the end of the time of adoration the priest or deacon goes to the altar, genuflects, and then kneels. As the Blessed Sacrament is incensed a Eucharistic Song is sung. Many will have grown up singing *Tantum Ergo* at this point but no text is given in the rite and other hymns are possible.

The Blessing itself takes place in silence.

## **Reposition**

As the Blessed Sacrament is replaced in the tabernacle the rite recommends that the people sing an acclamation. Suitable themes for the acclamation would include thanksgiving or God's love for us.

In some communities it may be appropriate to conclude with a procession to an image of Our Lady and the singing of a suitable hymn there.

## **Psalms**

The following Psalms are given in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass: Volume II*.

Psalm 22 r. 1

*The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*

Psalm 33: 2-9 r. 9

*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*

Psalm 39: 2, 4, 7-10 r. 8-9

*Here I am, O Lord, I come to do your will.*

Psalm 77: 3-4, 23-25, 54 r. 24

*The Lord gave them bread from heaven.*

Psalm 109: 1-4 r. 4

*You are a priest for ever, a priest like Melchizedek of old.*

Psalm 115: 12-13, 15-18 r. 13 or 1 Cor 10: 16

*The cup of salvation I will raise; I will call on the Lord's name.*

*The blessing-cup we bless is a communion in the blood of Christ.*

Psalm 144: 10-11, 15-18 r. 16

*You open wide your hand, Lord, grant the desires of all who live.*

Psalm 147: 12-15, 19-20 r. 12 or John 6:58

*O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!*

*Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.*

## **Song, hymns and chants**

*This list is not intended to be in any way exhaustive rather to provide some ideas and stimulus for those preparing Exposition.*

## **Traditional Latin texts**

Adoro te devote

Ave verum Corpus

Pange Lingua

Tantum Ergo  
Ubi caritas  
Verbum Supernum  
O salutaris

**English (etc) texts**

Adoramus te, Domine (Taizé)  
Alleluia, sing to Jesus!  
Behold the Lamb of God (Bell)  
Bénissez le Seigneur (Taizé)  
Be still for the presence of the Lord  
(Evans)  
Bread for the world  
Christ be beside me  
Christ is alive, with joy we sing  
Come adore this wondrous presence  
Confitemini Domino (Taizé)  
Father, we give you thanks  
Gift of finest wheat  
God is love  
Godhead here in hiding  
Halleluya, we sing your praises (South  
Africa)  
Happy are those (Russian)  
He became poor (Iona)  
He is Lord  
How can I repay the Lord  
I am the bread of life (Toolan)  
In the Lord (Taizé)  
Jesus, remember me (Taizé)  
Jesus the Lord said (Urdu)  
Jesu, the very thought of thee  
Jesu, thou joy of loving hearts  
Keep in mind (Deiss)

Laudate Dominum (Taizé)  
Laudate omnes gentes (Taizé)  
Let all mortal flesh keep silence  
Lord enthroned in heavenly splendour  
Lord, your love has drawn (Dean)  
Love divine, all loves excelling  
Love is his word  
My God, and is thy table spread  
O bread of heaven  
O Christe Domine Jesu  
O food of travellers  
O Godhead hid  
O praise our great and gracious Lord  
O saving victim  
Of the glorious body telling  
Praise now your God  
Santo (Argentina)  
Soul of my Saviour  
Shepherd of souls  
Sweet Sacrament divine  
Taste and see  
Thanks be to God (Dean)  
The love I have for you  
Therefore, we before him bending  
There is a longing  
This is my body  
This is my will  
When the time came

**Other texts**

Settings of:

Philippians 2 (His state was divine)

Ubi Caritas

Communion Songs:

extended settings, written for the 1973 Missal, of the Lamb of God which  
may not be used with the 2010 Missal might be used during Exposition

*A separate document for composers offering texts from the rite is available.*