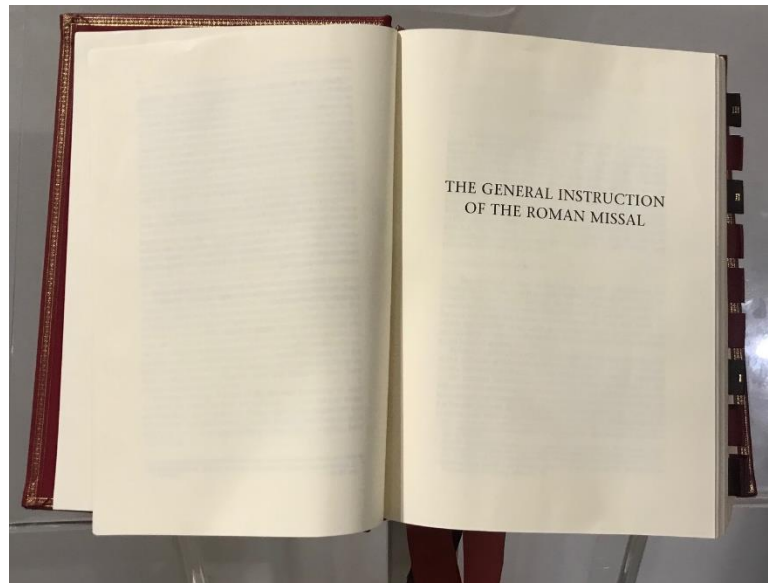


# MUSIC AND THE GENERAL INSTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

(PART I – General Principles and Ministries  
JULY 2022)

A resource to help parish musicians  
understand the principles and practices required  
by The General Instruction of The Roman Missal



# **Music and the General Instruction of The Roman Missal (GIRM) Part 1 (July 2022)**

## **Introduction**

This resource covers part of the content of the workshop “Music and the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)” held on Thursday 9 June 2022.

The GIRM is the rule book for Liturgy and all people who are involved in preparing the liturgy or liturgical ministry are expected to follow the rules. The GIRM is included at the beginning of the Missal and is also published separately.

Structure of the resource:

The tables list the paragraphs of the GIRM where music is mentioned and have a short description of what each paragraph is about. The paragraphs have been organized into different topics, each with its own table. The tables are followed by more detailed explanations of what the paragraphs say.

Part 1 of this resource covers topics that apply generally to celebration of the Eucharist. Part 2 will include topics relating to the Introductory Rites and the Liturgy of the Word. Part 3 will include topics relating to the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Concluding Rites.

## Topic 1.1: General Principles

24	No changes to the prescribed rite.
32	No music during presidential parts.
37	Singing as an independent rite.
38	“Say” and “Proclaim” include singing.
39 to 41	The Importance of Singing.
109	No division of elements between people
115	Singing at Mass.
116	Ministers required for the celebration of Mass.
236	The people do not join in the concluding doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer.
309	The use of the Ambo.
352	Ministers need to know the choice of texts in advance.
366	The words of the Mass parts must not be changed.
390	The Conference of Bishops approves the texts that are to be sung.
393	The Conference of Bishops approves Mass Settings and appropriate music.

(24) The Priest can make choices regarding chants, readings, prayers, etc. as prescribed in the Missal. “However, the Priest will remember that he is the servant of the Sacred Liturgy and that he himself is not permitted, on his own initiative, to add, to remove, or to change anything in the celebration of the Mass.” This principle, of course, applies to everyone not just priests.

(32) There are ‘presidential’ parts of the Mass that are spoken by the Priest alone. “Therefore, while the Priest is pronouncing them, there should be no other prayers or singing, and the organ or other musical instruments should be silent.”

(37) Some things that are sung are rites in themselves; others accompany a liturgical action. For example, the *Holy, Holy, Holy* is a rite in itself, while the Communion Song accompanies the Communion procession. When a song accompanies a liturgical action, for example the entrance procession, it should not be extended unnecessarily after the action is completed.

(38) The words ‘say’ and ‘proclaim’ can refer to either singing or recitation.

(39) Singing is an integral part of worship.

(40) Great importance should be attached to singing during the Mass. It is not necessary to sing everything at every Mass, but there should be singing on Sundays

and Holydays of Obligation. In choosing parts of the Mass to be sung, preference should be given to those of greater importance. For example, the Gospel Acclamation and the acclamations of the Eucharistic Prayer (Holy, Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation and Great Amen) should be sung.

(41) Gregorian chant is proper to the Roman Liturgy, but other forms of sacred music are not excluded.

(109) Several ministers can share the parts of their liturgical ministry amongst themselves at Mass, but single elements of the celebration should not be shared among several people. There should be only one reader for each of the readings and for all of the invocations of the Universal Prayer. If the Responsorial Psalm is sung, it should be sung by a single psalmist.

(115) Mass should be celebrated with singing and a suitable number of ministers, especially on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation.

(116) “[It] is desirable that an acolyte, a reader and a cantor should usually be there to assist a Priest Celebrant” at Mass.

(236) The concluding doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer is spoken or sung by the Priest Celebrant or by the concelebrating priests. It is not spoken or sung by the people. The Eucharistic Prayer is prayed by the Celebrant on behalf of the assembly, who affirm and conclude it with the Great Amen. It is important that everyone should join in singing the Great Amen.

(309) The readings, the Responsorial Psalm and the Easter Proclamation are proclaimed from the ambo. The ambo may also be used for the homily and for announcing the intentions of the Universal Prayer.

(352) All the ministers should know in advance which texts will be used in the celebration of a Mass. Nothing should be improvised.

(366) “It is not permitted to substitute other chants for those found in the Order of Mass, for example, at the **Agnus Dei** (*Lamb of God*).”

(390) The Conference of Bishops may formulate adaptations to the Order of Mass in prescribed areas.

(393) The Conference of Bishops has the responsibility for approving the musical settings for the Ordinary of Mass and other texts and for judging which musical forms, melodies and musical instruments are appropriate for use in the liturgy.

## Topic 1.2: Ministries in the Liturgy

102	The role of the Psalmist.
103	The role of the choir.
104	The role of the cantor/choir director.

(102) The Psalmist sings the Psalm or Canticle between the readings. The Psalmist should be a competent singer with good elocution.

(103) The choir (and other ministers) should ensure that the parts assigned to them are properly carried out and foster the active and prayerful participation of the faithful.

(104) The cantor or choir director supports and directs the people's singing.

## Topic 1.3: The Choir

294	The choir should have a place that facilitates their active participation.
312	The position of the choir.
313	The position and use of musical instruments.

(294) The faithful and the choir should have a place in the church that facilitates their active participation.

(312) The choir should be in a position that makes it clear that they are a part of the assembled community undertaking a specific function.

(313) The organ and other musical instruments should be placed where they can support and sustain the singing of the choir and the people. In Advent the organ and other musical instruments should be used in moderation. In Lent, the playing of the organ and other musical instruments is only allowed to support the singing, except on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Solemnities and Feasts.