

Employing and Paying Music Ministers

By Paul Mason, Coordinator of Liturgy

The Church is most grateful to the many people who see liturgical music ministry as one of the ways of expressing their stewardship of the gifts that God has given them. Our celebrations of Mass would be very much impoverished without the ministry provided by the many musicians and singers who regularly give of their time, talent and treasure to lead our singing. The time given includes the hours spent each week in preparing and rehearsing for Mass, in distributing rosters and coordinating volunteers, in developing the assembly's music repertoire over time, in cataloguing and maintaining sheet music assets, in copying song sheets and reporting song usage to copyright license providers, and in preparing slides for overhead presentation. The talent contributed includes the money and time spent with music and liturgy teachers learning and developing their God-given musical gifts for liturgy. In addition, music ministers often contribute money to the costs of musical instruments, music manuscripts and other music ministry resources used at Church.

Professional musicians by trade, whose income is dependent on charging for their musical skills, are also invited to donate their services to Church ministry as part of their stewardship of God's gifts. The Church is always very grateful for all professionals - architects, teachers, health care professionals, builders, electricians, plumbers, florists, etc. - who donate their services to the Church free of charge as part of their contribution to the stewardship of the Church. In the case of professional musicians, their gift is often more than a tithe (i.e. more than four hours of professional services each week).

In justice, the Church also recognises that it has an obligation to remunerate people for appropriately qualified professional services. Canon Law addresses this area specifically:

Can. 231

§1. Lay persons who permanently or temporarily devote themselves to special service of the Church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation required to fulfill their function properly and to carry out this function conscientiously, eagerly, and diligently.

§2. lay persons have the right to decent remuneration appropriate to their condition so that they are able to provide decently for their own needs and those of their family. They also have a right for their social provision, social security, and health benefits to be duly provided.

For these reasons the Church and its agencies employ paid full-time and part-time permanent and casual professional lay persons in areas such as education, health care, youth work, social work, pastoral care, counselling and aged care, as well as administrative roles in finance and accounting, information technology, human resources, communications, marketing, fundraising, legal, secretarial and administration services.

So also, when the Church has a need for many hours of service per week from a professional director of music ministry, a music teacher, a liturgy coordinator, a voice trainer, a choir director, a singer or a musician, it expects to pay an appropriate level of remuneration.

Many parishes employ full-time and part-time directors of music ministry, choir directors and professional musicians to promote the active participation of the assembly in the Mass so that their celebrations will be an uplifting experience of the community at prayer and worship. The Church also encourages the employment of appropriately remunerated professional liturgical singers and musicians for baptism, wedding and funeral liturgies and other major liturgical events.

Professional music ministers are expected to have the necessary knowledge and experience of liturgy, as well as the musical skills necessary to lead the assembly in uplifting liturgical celebrations.

The following resources are available to assist parishes with regard to employing and paying professional liturgical musicians for services:

- *The Director of Music Ministry in the Parish: Work and Remuneration* (Washington, DC: National Association of Pastoral Musicians, 2001)
<http://www.npm.org/Sections/images/DMMDSalaryGuidelines.pdf>
- *Hiring a Director of Music: A Handbook and Guide* (NPM Publications, rev. ed. 2006); see <https://www.npm.org/publications/>
- 2002 Archdiocese of Melbourne Rates Guide
(rates need adjustment to reflect wage increases since 2002)
<http://www.cam.org.au/evangelisation/Liturgy-Music/Liturgical-Guidelines>
- 2013 Musician's Union of Australia Rates Guide
<http://www.musicians.asn.au/union/rates.html>
 - Sample of current rates
 - Casual accompanist / singer for a funeral or wedding \$152.44 (3 hour minimum call)
 - Casual leader of a duet for a wedding \$165.38 (3 hour minimum call)
 - Weekly accompanist / singer \$121.95 (3 hour minimum call)