

Policy for Concerts in Church

a. Context

Sacred music is part of the tradition of the Church and has been composed and performed at various times in history to enhance the liturgy. Liturgical practice has changed significantly since the Second Vatican Council and there is a stronger focus now on the participation of the Congregation. This means that much of the rich heritage of sacred music is no longer widely used in the context of the liturgy.

The sacred music of previous generations does still, however, have the capacity to lift up the mind and heart to God. It is, therefore, appropriate that concerts of sacred music would take place in the Church, with due regard to appropriate arrangements being made to respect the dignity of the sacred space.

In much the same way, a case may be made for the performance of contemporary spiritual music or songs, especially those with a Scriptural theme, in the Church but outside of the liturgy.

Such performances are enhanced by one or more of the following elements:

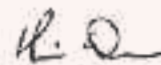
- when some form of prayer begins or ends the proceedings
- when there is a commentary or introduction which, in some way, helps to focus on the spiritual message.

b. Guidelines

When it is proposed to have a concert in a Church, apart from the normal procedures regarding safety and insurance, there are some basic principles which should be adhered to, as follows:

- The Blessed Sacrament would normally be removed to another location and the tabernacle left open, for the duration of the concert.
- The sacredness of the sanctuary and altar area should be respected at all times.
- The music should be consistent with the character and mission of the Church. This does not mean that it has to be specifically liturgical music, but that it should be spiritual in nature and, where singing is involved, the lyrics should be consistent with the message of the Gospel.
- The dress of the musicians should be consistent with the sacred character of the Church.
- If the concert is for fund-raising purposes, the objective of the fund-raising must be consistent with the mission of the Church. Nobody may be refused entry on grounds of non-payment. There can be a suggested offering or a collection, but not a fixed charge.
- While it is permissible for simple refreshments to be served (for example at an interval), in a designated space within the Church, it should be clear that people are not allowed to bring in drinks and snacks to be consumed in the pews during the concert.
- The organisers must accept full responsibility in writing for the supervision of the event and for the safety and security of the building as well as the participants.

Given at St. Mary's, Sligo on 15th August 2023



+ Kevin Doran
Bishop of Elphin



Canon Thomas Hever PP VG
Chancellor