



National Association of Pastoral Musicians
May 28, 2021

Liturgical Music in a Post-COVID Church

“One cannot find anything more religious and more joyful in sacred celebrations than a whole congregation expressing its faith and devotion in song. Therefore the active participation of the whole people, which is shown in singing, is to be carefully promoted.” (*Musicam Sacram* 16)

Week after week, year after year, pastoral musicians have endlessly poured out our gift of song to stir the dwelling of God in every heart. Fourteen months ago, this age-old cycle was disrupted by a worldwide pandemic. The COVID-19 virus attacked the very core of music ministry: fostering full and active *communal* participation in the liturgy (see *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14).

As the pandemic loosens its grip on society, we find ourselves faced with two challenges: logistics and renewal. The logistics of our ministries have been ravished and a great deal of time and effort will be needed to rebuild what has been lost. But we have to ask ourselves what this end product should look like. Can we really go back to the way things were? We are called to do better and be better. The pandemic has revealed countless challenges to us as musicians and as members of the Body of Christ. It has prompted us to grow and move beyond the comforts of our previous life. What lessons will we take with us as we move forward?

Some of the questions we consider include: how can we best re-engage our congregations? What is the role of technology in our ministries? How do we renew our choirs and ensembles when some may have moved out of our parishes, or who do not feel ready to rejoin? How do we respond to the summons of ministering to the whole person – not just the liturgical and musical needs but the emotional and familial needs, too? We know this new chapter in our lives and in ministry will have its own set of opportunities, and we can be guided by the lessons of the last fourteen months.

The National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM) is the membership organization for all Catholic pastoral musicians serving in any liturgical capacity. We are ready and eager to help those who serve in ministry through this time of rebuilding and renewal. Together, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we pray that God will indeed “renew the face of the earth” (Psalm 104).