



July 28, 2022

Dear Monsignors and Fathers,

I am writing to you today regarding a matter that has recently come to the attention of the Archdiocese of Detroit. As you may be aware, a secular company is using our Churches as a venue for secular concerts. Although this company might present a convincing argument for parish fundraising or so-called “low entry points,” some of the music they are presenting is not fitting for a sacred environment and cannot be performed in Catholic Churches.

When we celebrate the Rite of the Dedication of a Church, we are setting that particular building aside for what is sacred: worship, devotion, and prayer. The location provides a space for and invites us into a deeper relationship with God. The Church remains a sacred space at all times—even when no liturgical event is taking place.

Although there is a great need to rediscover our roots of beauty and sacred music in the Archdiocese of Detroit, the emphasis must be on that which is sacred. Therefore, we ask that as we further implement our Families of Parishes, you be mindful of the following:

1. We need to provide oversight. The Moderator or Pastor (One Pastor Family of Parishes) is to consult with Dr. Horst Buchholz, our Director of Sacred Music, regarding the appropriateness of the repertoire for any concert held in the sacred space of our Churches.
2. After this consultation, the Moderator or Pastor must write to seek the approval of the local ordinary, Archbishop Vigneron. The letter is to include the proposal, the consultation, and the plan for promotion and advertisement of the event.
3. A [1987 instruction from the Congregation for Divine Worship](#) (Protocol number 1251/87; no additional instructions have been given) explicitly states that all should be able to attend such events. Therefore, we cannot charge admission fees nor acquire money for reserved seating. You are welcome to post information about “suggested donations” so that those who can give a monetary donation may support the Family of Parishes and the musicians. We do not want to turn our Churches into a “marketplace” (John 2:13-17).
4. Once approval for a concert of sacred music in a Church is obtained from Archbishop Vigneron, please note that at the time of the concert, the Blessed Sacrament is to be reserved in a side chapel or another safe and suitably adorned place (see Canon 938, p. 4)
5. The musicians and singers should be appropriately dressed and not placed in the sanctuary. Greatest respect is to be shown for the Altar, the presider’s chair and the Ambo.

As we give our tireless efforts to “Unleash the Gospel” throughout southeast Michigan, we remember that we, the living stones that make up the Church, are formed into the one Body of

UNLEASH THE GOSPEL

Christ, with Christ Himself as the Capstone. The following is from the additional intercession with Eucharistic Prayer III from the Order of the Dedication of a Church:

*Listen graciously to the prayers of this family,
who dedicate this church to you:
may it be for your family a house of salvation and a place
for the celebration of your heavenly Sacraments.
Here may the Gospel of peace resound
and the sacred mysteries be celebrated,
so that your faithful,
formed by the word of life and divine grace
on their pilgrim way through the earthly city,
may merit to reach eternal Jerusalem.*

Please call the Office of Sacred Worship (313-237-4697) if you have any questions or a need for further clarification.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Sr. Esther Mary Nickel, RSM
Director of Sacred Worship