

THLS502 Liturgical Music (Professional Term 5, 2025, online via Zoom)

Professional learners choose 8 of the 16 available sessions to attend.

It is suggested that you attend Session 1 as it is foundational for the other sessions. If you choose sessions that are divided into two parts (i.e., Part 1 and Part 2, such as sessions 6 & 9, and sessions 10 & 12), it is suggested that you attend both Parts rather than just one.

Monday July 7

- Session 1: 9.00am-10.30am **The purposes of music in liturgy**
What is music? What is liturgy? What is liturgical music? How does liturgical music differ from other types of religious music? What are the purposes of music in liturgy? This session will explore all of these questions, identifying useful definitions and utilising examples to demonstrate key points.

- Session 2: 11.00am-12.30pm **A theology of sound/music as theology**
Liturgical music is enacted theology and a way in which we express faith, become catalysed to participation, and are drawn into unity. This session explores aspects of a theology of sound, and music as a form of theological expression. How does sound reveal God? Is sound a sacramental? This session investigates the performative nature of words in ritual, the power of music expressed, elicited, and encoded by music, and the power of silence.

- Session 3: 1.30pm-3.00pm **Brief introduction to the history of liturgical music –**
This session will explore key moments along the timeline of liturgical music history and will analyse particular stylistic markers interfacing with the perception of music in the liturgy at those timepoints. It will also investigate the tensions in the origins of liturgical music that continue to play out today, through use of select examples.

- Session 4: 3.30pm-5.00pm **Musical structure of the Catholic liturgy**
Where *can* we use music in Catholic liturgy? Where *should* we? What does the Church teach on this? Who should sing what? This session will explore the principles of graduated participation and progressive solemnity; which are the more and less important sung elements in liturgy; the role of the choir in the liturgy; types of liturgical music; and what the GIRM instructs about liturgical music.

Tuesday July 8

Session 5: 9.00am-10.30am

Forms and functions of music in liturgy

This session will investigate music as a symbol of our faith, identifying its artistic, ministerial, and liturgical functions in order to understand how it facilitates prayer, conveys theology, promotes group cohesion, aids mnemonic capacity, bears the oral tradition, and enables expression of emotion in order that through it we might encounter God. It will study the forms and performance modes of liturgical music; what styles of music are appropriate for inclusion in liturgy; how music can promote full, conscious and active participation and liturgical intelligibility; and what constitutes good liturgical music performance practice.

Session 6: 11.00am-12.30pm

Official Church teaching on liturgical music – Part 1

Over the course of two sessions (6 & 9) we will look at official Church teaching on liturgical music from its first document in 1903, to its most recent documents, produced by various levels of Church authorities. We will utilise Joncas' analysis to explore what these documents have to say on the following key questions: What is Roman Catholic worship music? What is the purpose of music in liturgy? What qualities should Roman Catholic music exhibit? What people are to make music in liturgy? What instruments are to be used to make music in liturgy?

Session 7: 1.30pm-3.00pm

Textless Music in Worship

The performance of textless music can be a powerful medium in Christian worship for experiencing God's presence and action particularly in relation to the implicit, qualitative, and feeling dimensions of such experience. In this session, we will engage with some musical-liturgical scenarios (involving textless music pieces) and explore together what is possible – in terms of Christian meaning-generation for worshippers – when textless music is selected, performed, and contextualised in worship in an appropriate and effective way.

Session 8: 3.30pm-5.00pm

Preparation of Group Presentations

In this session postgraduate students studying THLS502 for credit will work together to prepare group presentations for assessment.

Wednesday July 9

- Session 9: 9.00am-10.30am Official Church teaching on liturgical music – Part 2
Over the course of two sessions (6 & 9) we will look at official Church teaching on liturgical music from its first document in 1903, to its most recent documents, produced by various levels of Catholic Church authorities. We will utilise Joncas' analysis to explore what these documents have to say on the following key questions: What is Roman Catholic worship music? What is the purpose of music in liturgy? What qualities should Roman Catholic music exhibit? What people are to make music in liturgy? What instruments are to be used to make music in liturgy?

- Session 10: 11.00am-12.30pm Principles for judging/selecting liturgical music – Part 1
Sessions 10 & 12 will investigate principles for judging and selecting appropriate music for liturgy. Taking seriously the theology expressed in texts, the quality of musical composition, the requirements of the liturgical occasion and the contextual needs of particular worshipping assemblies, these sessions will look at questions of aesthetics, style, musical priorities, developing common repertoire, and various additional judgments that can usefully inform the task of selecting appropriate liturgical music.

- Session 11: 1.30pm-3.00pm Liturgical Music in the Cathedral
This lecture/demonstration concentrates on liturgical music programs in Cathedrals. Insights will be given into liturgical music choices, opportunities, philosophy/approach and future directions. The presentation will look at the similarities and differences between cathedral and parish music programmes, the resources that are required and desirable, the responsibilities, challenges and satisfactions encountered by liturgical musicians, and some exploration of the various instruments and musical ministries employed to serve the assembly's prayer.

- Session 12: 3.30pm-5.00pm Principles for judging/selecting liturgical music – 2
Sessions 10 & 12 will investigate principles for judging and selecting appropriate music for liturgy. Taking seriously the theology expressed in texts, the quality of musical composition, the requirements of the liturgical occasion and the contextual needs of particular worship assemblies, these sessions will look at questions of aesthetics, style, musical priorities, developing common repertoire, and various additional judgments that can usefully inform the task of selecting appropriate liturgical music.

Thursday July 10

- Session 13: 9.00am-10.30am **Ministers of music / Liturgical music as prayer**
What is a minister? Who are the ministers of music in liturgy? This session will investigate the challenges and joys of being a liturgical music minister and explore the spirituality of the liturgical musician. It will also study the ways in which liturgical music is prayer and how liturgical musicians can praise God through the exercise of their ministry.

- Session 14: 11.00am-12.30pm **Encouraging the Assembly's Song**
The Vatican II liturgy assumes that the assembly will sing. How can we encourage the assembly's song? What techniques can be employed to facilitate the assembly's understanding and embrace of its singing role? What does the assembly need to sing well? This session will explore how singing together facilitates group bonding and serves to generate and strengthen the assembly's identity as the body of Christ, and how building a common musical repertoire can aid in supporting the assembly's sense of corporate identity.

- Session 15: 1.30pm-3.00pm **Group Presentations**
In this session postgraduate students undertaking THLS502 for credit will offer presentations of their group work for assessment.

- Session 16: 3.30pm-5.00pm **What constitutes 'good' liturgical music?**
Drawing together the principles identified and investigated throughout the unit, this final session will articulate what makes liturgical music theologically sound, musically good, liturgically fit-for-purpose, contextually appropriate and pastorally effective.

N.B. While every effort will be made to contain topics to their allotted session timeframes, in a dynamic learning environment (with questions and discussions taking place), at times sessions may overrun their timeslot which means that not all material may be covered as planned. Notes will be provided.

N.B. If you wish to attend more than 8 sessions as a Professional Learner, you may do so for an additional fee per additional session. See website for details.