

# JOURNAL QUESTIONS FOR PASTORAL MUSICIANS FOR THOUGHT AND PRAYER ABOUT CANTORS AND THE ASSEMBLY

## CANTORS

Do you ever count the number of times you are on the cantor schedule? Do you complain about song selection (or anything else) to your director of music ministries?

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Do you come to Mass prepared, or do you request extra rehearsal time each week? How can you better serve your music program and your assembly?

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When you cantor, do you sing from your heart and try to help the assembly pray, or are you up there for attention?

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“As a leader of congregational song, the cantor should take part in singing with the entire gathered assembly. In order to promote the singing of the liturgical assembly, the cantor’s voice should not be heard above the congregation” (*Sing to the Lord*, 38).

## ASSEMBLY

All liturgical ministers are part of the full liturgical assembly: “It is the whole *community*, the Body of Christ united with its Head, that celebrates. . . . In the celebration of the sacraments it is thus the whole assembly that is *leitourgos*, each according to [proper] function, but in the ‘unity of the Spirit’ who acts in all” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1140, 1144). The largest part of that assembly is the congregation—those without a specific ministry other than that given to the whole assembly at Mass: to “give thanks to God and offer the spotless Victim not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him, so that they may learn to offer themselves” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 95).

Since you began your specialized ministry, have you recognized yourself as part of the liturgical assembly?

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Do you understand *why* the sense of a unified assembly is so important?

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Do you take time occasionally to sit in the pews and experience liturgy from the congregation’s point of view?

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For pastoral musicians: Do the members of your congregation participate fully? What can you do as a liturgical singer to help them?

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“Singing is one of the primary ways that the assembly of the faithful participates actively in the Liturgy. The people are encouraged ‘to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons [and] hymns. . . .’ The musical formation of the assembly must be a continuing concern in order to foster full, conscious, and active participation” (*Sing to the Lord*, 26).