



Data Protection Guidelines:

Use of Social Media to Broadcast Mass & Liturgical Ceremonies

1. Introduction

The fact that Mass is now taking place behind closed doors has resulted in parishes trying to come up with innovative ways to celebrate Mass and pray in a way that can reach parishioners. This has resulted in parishes using social media in order to stream Mass and other liturgical services. The most common methods are Facebook Live and Instagram Live. These allow parishes to live stream Masses and other ceremonies on their Facebook or Instagram page. Before using this facility, clergy and other contributors should be aware of the privacy implications of this.

2. Implications of Use of Facebook or Instagram Live by parish

Before using Facebook or Instagram Live, clergy and other contributors, should be aware of the implications of doing so. These include the following:-

- Uploading a video to Facebook/Instagram Live means that it is streamed on the internet. Depending on what settings you use, this may mean that anyone who subscribes to Facebook/Instagram may view the video. It is not necessarily confined to your Facebook/Instagram “friends”;
- Once the video is uploaded, the parish loses control of that video. While it is possible to delete the video after broadcasting, if they are left on the parish’s Facebook/Instagram page, they can be shared or saved by individuals who view them. This is not just confined to the parish’s Facebook/Instagram “friends”;
- Videos of this nature should only be retained for as long as is necessary. Therefore, the videos should be deleted from the social media platform after a specified time;
- It is possible for viewers to make comments in relation to the video and post them on the Facebook/Instagram page. These comments are not always complementary!

3. Steps to taken when using social media in this way

- Check the Facebook/Instagram privacy settings of the page you are posting to. The settings dictate who can view the video. These are generally either: (i) everyone on Facebook/Instagram; (ii) the “friends” of the social media account. If you want to direct a particular video to specified individuals, it is also possible to pick the “friends” who you want to see it.
- Monitor the comment below any video posts;
- Set a time frame after which the video will be deleted.

4. Publishing videos containing third parties

These Guidelines are for clergy and other contributors where those individuals are uploading videos of themselves only. Consent of third parties should be obtained in the normal way before uploading videos of those third parties. If you are posting videos of individuals in your household, you are responsible for obtaining their consent.

5. Live streaming of funeral services using social media

It is common currently for family members to live stream funeral services on social media so other family and friends can view the service. Where this is done by the family themselves, who takes responsibility for the streaming and where the video is on the family member's social media page (and not the parishes), the parish does not have to obtain consents of third parties. This is not the same as where there are streaming services in a parish via webcam, which remains the parishes' responsibility.