



## Guidelines for the Use of Video Projection in Liturgical Celebration

### Introduction

1. One of the cornerstones of the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council was the desire “that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgical celebrations” (SC, #14). In doing so, the focus of the celebration must always be on the liturgy itself. The proper dignity and character of the liturgy must always be maintained. Music, art, environment, and technology play an essential role in both fostering active participation and promoting the proper dignity of the liturgy.
2. Technology can play an essential role in the liturgy. However, if used incorrectly or inappropriately, it can become a superfluous distraction which can quickly and easily diminish the essential dignity of the liturgy.
3. These guidelines are meant to serve as a foundation for the proper implementation of technology within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles

### Copyrights

4. *Before starting any projection project*, parishes/locations are to acquire the proper permissions and licenses for all content that will be used. Copying music and words from a hymnal or missal, photographs, designs or clipart found online, art reproductions in a book, or even an image of stained glass or sculptures at a local parish, without seeking and obtaining permission from those who hold the rights is unlawful. Obtaining permission for all images, videos, sounds and texts to be used in each projection might require an agreement with more than one person or organization. Additionally, it is important to know that copyright owners require payment for a license to use their property and that they frequently do not provide instant responses to requests. Lastly, “Fair use” is strictly limited to certain educational contexts and live performance of music during religious service inside a worship space. See the [Administrative Handbook, 10.4](#) for more guidance. Contact the Office for Divine Worship for assistance with copyright if there are questions.

### Projector and Screen Technology

5. Many churches now have video projectors and screens integrated into new construction or installed later as an add-on to existing structures. This technology is effective when used properly. However, the primary focus of the assembly should be where the ritual action takes place, not the projection screen. The use of projection should support the liturgy, but not serve as a focal point.

## Implementation Guidelines

### 6. Size and Position of Screens

- a. As noted above, the use of projection is not to be the focal point of the liturgy. Screens should be easily visible by the congregation, but discreet enough so as not to dominate the liturgical space.
- b. Retractable screens may be an option if projection is only occasionally used. However, fully extended screens should not block the view of the altar, ambo, president's chair, or main crucifix. If retractable screens are used during a liturgy they should be in place and fully extended before the liturgy begins and remain in place until the conclusion of the liturgy.
- c. Projection onto a blank wall is permissible. However, projection onto the wall directly over the main altar is to be avoided.
- d. Screens and wall projections should be large enough for easy reading. TV monitors are not recommended for this use since even the largest available screens are far too small for most liturgical spaces. Unnecessarily large wall projections are to be avoided.

### 7. Backgrounds and Colors

- a. Background graphics are to be avoided since they may make text and music more difficult to read and usually become a distraction.
- b. Background colors and text colors should be strongly contrasting to improve readability.
- c. Garish or multiple colors and backgrounds are to be avoided so as not to become a distraction. The selection of a color palate should be sensitive to the art and environment of the church and be aesthetically pleasing.
- d. The use of a consistent theme throughout is to be implemented. The use of one background color, one text color and size, discreet ornamentation, and the consistent position and placement of text and music throughout a presentation minimizes distractions and eye fatigue.

### 8. Motion and Transitions

- a. Distracting motions are to be avoided. Bouncing balls, moving cursors, animated pictures, flashing text, and the like will definitely cause the congregation to focus on the screen rather than on the liturgical actions.
- b. Transitions between screens needs to be simple, quick, and as transparent as possible. Elaborate dissolves, fly ins and fly outs, spinning our bouncing text and music are to be avoided as these will also cause the congregation to focus on the screen rather than on the liturgical actions.

### 9. Projection of Text

- a. Fonts need to be simple and easy to read. Script, fancy, or ornamented fonts are to be avoided. Use only one or two fonts throughout a presentation.
- b. Font colors are to be in sharp contrast to the background to increase readability. Use only one or two font colors throughout a presentation.

- c. Font sizes need to be large enough to read from the back of the church but small enough to provide sense and structure to the text.
- d. Prayers spoken by the presider (e.g., the Collect, Prayer of the Offerings, Eucharistic Prayer, Prayer After Communion, etc.) need not be projected.
- e. For the Liturgy of the Word, the readings are not to be projected. The congregation is encouraged to listen to the Proclamation of the Word. An exception may be warranted when readings are proclaimed in different languages during bi- or multi-lingual liturgies.
- f. Provide texts only when necessary. When no responses or instructions are required, provide blank screens so that the focus can remain on the liturgical actions.
- g. When large text blocks are used (e.g., the Nicene Creed) ensure that the text is formatted according to proper sense lines in accord with the Roman Missal to ensure easier reading from line to line and screen to screen.

## 10. Projection of Music

- a. If hymnals or songbooks are available in the pews, a simple slide referencing the name of the song and its number in the proper book may be sufficient.
- b. If music is to be projected on the screens, both lyrics and musical notation should be projected. Even though many members of the congregation may not be able to read music per se, standard musical notation is intuitive enough for the people to easily recognize the natural rise and fall of pitch of notes and a general sense of which notes are longer and shorter.
- c. Font colors for musical notation and lyrics need be in sharp contrast to the background to increase readability.
- d. Font sizes need be large enough to read from the back of the church but small enough provide sense and structure to the music and to provide a natural flow from line to line and screen to screen.

## 11. Projection of Artwork

- a. The use of simple and appropriate artwork or pictures should be limited to pre and post liturgy projections. Artwork and pictures displayed during the liturgy are distracting and clearly move one's focus from the liturgical actions taking place.
- b. Simple, tasteful, and small ornamentation may be used to highlight a text block or a place in the liturgy (e.g., a small cross or a simple banner behind the title).
- c. Animated artwork or pictures should never be used in a presentation.

## 12. Projection of Live Video

- a. The focus of the assembly should be on the ritual actions taking place, whether they are at the altar, ambo, or presidential chair. The focus should not be on the projection screens. Live projections of the liturgical actions are not to be simultaneously projected onto the projection screens (e.g., proclamations of the Word, the homily, the Eucharistic Prayer, etc., should not be simulcasted within the assembly).

- b. Live video feeds of the Mass may be projected in overflow locations outside of the main church, if appropriate for the occasion.
- c. However, live video feeds may not be used as a mere convenience. A valid overflow situation must be present. Otherwise, people are encouraged to join the main assembly in church.

### **13. Projection of Pre-recorded Video**

- a. Occasionally, video presentations are recorded by the Archbishop or others to promote certain programs or communicate essential information to the congregation. Video homilies approved by the Archbishop (or delegate) may be shown during the normal homily time. Other videos should be shown before or after Mass.
- b. Appropriate videos to celebrate ordinations, weddings, funerals, or other special occasions may be projected prior to or after Mass, but never during a Mass.

### **14. Pre- and Post-Service Projection**

- a. The projection of simple and appropriate religious art before or after Mass may be done to enhance the liturgical environment. Artwork based on the Gospel of the Day is recommended. A single slide is recommended since multiple, rotating slides may be distracting.
- b. The projection of parish announcements before or after mass is permissible. However, they should be kept to a minimum so as not to intrude upon one's ability to prayerfully prepare for the liturgy or to give thanks after the liturgy.
- c. Video projections before or after mass are permissible. However, they also should be kept to a minimum so as not to intrude upon one's ability to prayerfully prepare for the liturgy or to give thanks after the liturgy. The sense of providing entertainment or parish commercials should be avoided.

### **15. Challenges to Consider**

- a. Even by implementing the above best practices, focus from the main liturgical action cannot always be avoided. To avoid having peoples' "eyes glued to the screen," project only what is necessary to help the congregation to a fuller participation in the liturgy.
- b. Screens and projectors are not usually visually appealing. It takes dedicated effort to blend this technology in to the art and environment so that it does not intrude on the liturgical space.
- c. External light at different times of the day can make even the best screens and projections difficult to see. The use of strongly contrasting background and text colors can minimize this effect.
- d. The preparation of slides for a liturgy can take considerable time, especially in the beginning. Proper training is essential. Staff and/or volunteers need a realistic sense of the time and commitment necessary to produce regular, high quality presentations.
- e. Last minute changes to the music and text can be quite difficult, especially if the appropriate staff and/or volunteers are not available on short notice before a liturgy.

- f.** Cheaper and/or outdated equipment may save money in the short term; however, quality and longevity of equipment is essential. Equipment failures during a liturgy will not only interrupt the flow of the liturgy, but provide a permanent distraction for the rest of the liturgy.
- g.** Proper maintenance of the equipment is essential. Fans and proper airflow must be constantly cleaned and maintained. Projection light bulbs must be regularly replaced. Computer equipment must be kept up to date. Regular backups are essential.
- h.** Even the best equipment relies on a properly trained AV team. Training should encompass not only the technical aspects of the equipment, but an emphasis on liturgical sensitivity as well, including proper advancement of slides. The team must be large enough to cover all Masses and parish celebrations at which projection is used.

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