



Circular on the Recommended Guidelines for the Livestreamed Liturgy

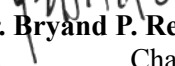
In the recently concluded 123rd Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines – CBCP last January 25-28, 2022, a proposed recommended Guidelines for the Livestreamed Liturgy have been put forward for discussion and deliberation.

The Conference of Bishops, after having discussed and deliberated on the matter, have decided and voted for the approval of the said guidelines to be adopted by all the archdioceses and dioceses in the Philippines. The approval was set *ad experimentum* until the **next Plenary Assembly in July 4-11 of this year 2022**. However, the CBCP has no legislative power to make this binding in all the local Churches in the Philippines. Hence, the CBCP has passed this on to the local archbishops and bishops to decree that these guidelines be implemented in their Local Churches.

Thence, I, **MOST REV. JOHN F. DU, D.D.**, by virtue of the power granted to me as the Archbishop of Palo, hereby, **DECREE** that the approved Guidelines for the Livestreamed Liturgy be **IMPLEMENTED** in all the **Parishes** in the whole Archdiocese of Palo, Leyte. This decree is *valid until the next Plenary Assembly of the CBCP, come July 4-11, 2022*.

Given this 4th of February in the year of the Lord 2022 at the Archdiocesan Chancery and Pastoral Center, Brgy. Salvacion, Palo, Leyte, Philippines.


MOST REV. JOHN F. DU, D.D.
Archbishop of Palo


Rev. Fr. Bryand P. Restituto
Chancellor





Recommended Guidelines for Livestreaming of the Liturgy

Introduction

From March to May 2020, we experienced a nationwide lockdown where churches were closed and public Masses were canceled. “During the days of the suspension of the public celebration of Masses, our parishes have creatively continued to minister and accompany our faithful as they journey through this COVID-19 crisis.” Among these, the Church has acknowledged efforts to use the modern means of communication to enable limited participation in the liturgy especially the Holy Eucharist, affirming that “in this occasion, the means of *live (not recorded)* televisual or internet broadcasts are helpful.”

Thankfully, since June 2021, churches have begun to re-open and worship services have started to resume even with a restricted number of the faithful. Still, at times the government would impose hard lockdowns on selected areas which consequently bring some places back to the closure of their churches.

In those times when many members of the faithful find themselves unable to participate in the liturgy and partake of the sacraments, which “aggravates this condition of uncertainty, discomfort and confusion,” the Church, like a mother, comforts her children by expressing her closeness to them – through prayers, the Word of God and the Sacraments. Although our churches were empty, our congregations continued to flock our social media sites in their thirst for God and need for spiritual nourishment.

Now, as the “new normal” gradually unfolds before us, we have to make a communal discernment. The children, the young and the elderly are still prohibited to physically participate in Church liturgy. Churches are limited to 50% capacity or less. In some dioceses, many churchgoers remain reluctant because of fear and uncertainties. Meanwhile, those who are sick and homebound continue to seek solace through the radio, TV, and live-streamed Masses.

Principles

1. The Diocesan Bishop is the “prime steward of the mysteries of God in the particular Church entrusted to his care, and is the moderator, promoter and guardian of the whole of its liturgical life.” It belongs to the Bishop to ensure the noble and dignified celebration of the liturgy, most especially of the Holy Eucharist, within his territory.

2. Every liturgical act, as the Council affirms, is always and inherently an act of full public worship done by the whole Mystical Body of Christ, that is, by Christ the Head in union with his members. While those who are physically present at the celebration of the Mass, whether as ministers or as the faithful, actively participate at that Mass, those who follow the Mass through the radio, TV or through live-streaming, although they are unable to physically participate at the Mass, are mystically united to it by grace and thus derive from it true spiritual nourishment. This has always been the faith of the Church, as recently reaffirmed by the Apostolic Penitentiary when it said: “Never before has the Church

experienced thus the power of the communion of saints, raising to her Crucified and Risen Lord her vows and prayers, especially the Sacrifice of Holy Mass, celebrated daily, even without the presence of the people, by priests.”

3. At the same time, the celebration of the liturgy calls for our presence and participation. Thus, “as soon as circumstances permit, however, it is necessary and urgent to return to the normality of Christian life, which has the church building as its home and the celebration of the liturgy, especially the Eucharist, as ‘the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed, at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows’ (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10).”

Guidelines

1. All online Masses should be registered with the Diocese where it could monitor the online Masses. This way, the Diocesan Bishop can either encourage more online Masses, or limit them if they are already too many, or if they are not in keeping with the liturgical standards.
2. The eucharistic celebration is to be carried out following the directives of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.
3. The Mass is to be celebrated in a sacred place. Any other place is to be regarded as exceptional.
4. Any semblance of trafficking or trading is to be entirely excluded from Mass offerings.
5. In Dioceses where Mass Media Ministries are already in place, it is encouraged that Masses be centralized through their Mass Media Ministry.
6. As much as possible, only live-streamed Masses and not pre-recorded Masses should be transmitted and participated by those who wish to join it in prayer and in spiritual communion.
7. Christ’s faithful are to hold the blessed Eucharist in the highest honor. To this end, we are to avoid any possible distractions. Chat rooms and running commentaries (prayer intentions and the like), as well as emoji reactions (☺) should be disabled while Mass is going on.
8. Diocesan Bishops shall inform and form the People of God to return to physical presence and communal participation with the Lord in the Eucharist in the churches, not virtualized or simulated (a way also of ‘flattening the fear, not only flattening the curve’) without prejudice to health and safety protocols.

January 25, 2022

Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul