



# Copyright: Quick FAQ

By Paul Mason, Coordinator of Liturgy, Diocese of Wollongong

## 1. What is copyright?

Copyright reserves to authors the right to **reproduce, publish, communicate, publicly perform** and **adapt** literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works, recordings and published editions.

## 2. Who are copyright owners?

Copyright owners are the authors themselves, or their employer (where the work has been created as a part of their employment), or a publisher or a third party to which the copyright has been sold or assigned.

## 3. How long does copyright last?

Works are protected from the moment a work is written down or recorded until 70 years after the death of the author. Arrangements and recordings are protected for 70 years from the year of publication. Published editions are protected for 25 years from the date of publication.

## 4. Is liturgy subject to copyright?

Yes!

## 5. Is permission needed to publicly perform liturgy?

No. Live performance and the playing of recorded music *in liturgy and other worship situations* are exempt from copyright permissions and licence fees normally required to **publicly perform** copyright works.

## 6. What are the implications for parishes and schools?

Parishes and schools must gain permission from copyright owners when they **reproduce, publish, communicate** or **adapt** any copyright protected work for use in liturgy and other forms of prayer and worship. This includes duplicating CDs, photocopying pages from hymnals and other published editions, publishing booklets for special events, transcribing lyrics onto PowerPoint slides or into worship presentation software systems, copying PowerPoint slides into presentation slide sets in PowerPoint software, etc.

Fortunately, most copyright owners of scripture, liturgical texts and hymns have special licence arrangements to make it easy for parishes and schools to obtain permissions to **reproduce, publish** and **communicate** copyright protected works. But, obtaining permission to **adapt** works is difficult if not impossible.

## 7. What about liturgical texts in booklets or slides?

The International Commission for English in the Liturgy (ICEL) is the copyright owner of the majority of liturgical texts. ICEL provides royalty-free permission for parishes and schools to **reproduce, publish** and **communicate** their liturgical texts for use at a specific Mass or celebration of an individual congregation or institution, for example: convention program booklets, jubilee Masses, ordinations, baptisms, first communions, confirmations, funerals, weddings, etc. Acknowledgements must be included in published material.

## 8. What about scripture in booklets or slides?

The text of the scripture readings proclaimed during liturgy should not be included in service booklets or on slides. Handouts for the purposes of individual reflection may include small amounts of scripture texts, for example: for bible study groups, Lenten reflection groups, sacramental preparation groups and other catechetical situations. The copyright owners of the various translations permit parishes, schools and individuals to **reproduce, publish and communicate** up to 500 words of scripture under certain special conditions. Acknowledgements of copyright owners must be included in the publication.

## 9. What about music and lyrics in booklets or slides?

When singing hymns, psalms and Mass settings in the liturgy that are not included in hymnals or other published editions for the assembly, it is important to provide at least the texts of the songs in some form for the assembly. Where the tune is unfamiliar, it is also helpful to provide the melody. This can be done in booklets, bulletin inserts, hymn sheets or in slides for projection.

Copyright owners of hymns, psalm settings and Mass settings have established agreements with a number of copyright licence providers to provide various permissions to **reproduce, publish and communicate** lyrics and melody lines. The major licence providers are Word of Life International (WOLI), Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) or LicenSing Online (LSO). Parishes and schools must have a current license from one of these providers to reproduce and publish booklets containing lyrics.

## 10. What about music for choirs and musicians?

Generally speaking, parishes and schools must purchase published editions of music for use in liturgy for each of their choir members and musicians. CCLI and WOLI both offer annual music copying licences to **reproduce, publish and communicate** a **limited repertoire** of sheet music for choirs and musicians. If the license is not renewed each year all copies made in previous years must be destroyed. The long-term costs of these licences can be significantly greater than purchasing published editions.

## 11. What about music adaptations or changes to text?

Parishes and schools are not permitted to **adapt** liturgical and scriptural texts. Adaptations to lyrics and music are also not permitted without prior permission, which is rarely obtainable.

## 12. What about making recordings?

Parishes and schools wishing to make recordings must firstly obtain the permission of the performer. The only time a licence is not required for making a recording is when it is made for members of the congregation who are house-bound and cannot attend services. All other recording applications require some kind of licence.

## 13. What about non-liturgical parish and school events?

The exemption for public performance of works in a liturgical or other worship service **does not extend** to concerts or other non-worship events.

## 14. What are the consequences of not complying?

Substantial fines and possibly imprisonment of individuals involved.

## 15. Where do I get more information?

See the "Guidelines: Copyright in Parish and School Liturgy" eleven page document for more detailed discussions and advice on each of the questions in this FAQ.