

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN CHURCHES WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF SANDHURST.

Time has seen the increase in the use of electronic media within the worship spaces of the Diocese of Sandhurst. This has called for the formulation of guidelines within the Diocese, so that there is may be a common understanding of the benefits and the uses of electronic devices, in particular Data Projectors.

Placement of Projections

The most appropriate place for the screens, whether they be LCD, plasma or white screens, is to the right or left side of the Sanctuary. This will allow most visibility by the congregation. It should be noted though that this could lead to a limited visibility by those on the sanctuary.

The focus for Eucharistic worship is the table of the Eucharist, which we as a community gather around. It is therefore inappropriate to ever project images directly above the table in the centre of the sanctuary.

What to project

The use of projectors should be limited within worship. The projection of hymn words and some of the assembly's prayers and responses in Eucharistic services is the primary use for projection. There may be pastoral reasons for a more expanded use of projection on some occasions, such as Masses when a larger part of the gathered community may be unfamiliar with the responses of our liturgy. Because the elements of bread and wine will be used in reality on the table it is best not to repeat those images on screens near the sanctuary.

Use during Sacramental Rites and gatherings

Parishes need to make clear that the projection of slides during Masses is not appropriate. Slide shows during the rites for funerals, weddings, sacramental or school Masses is not to be promoted. Slides show may be shown before or at the conclusion of the Eucharist but their use during the ritual takes the emphasis away from the sacred nature of the Eucharistic celebration. After consultation with the local parish priest there may be a limited number of slides used after communion to unite the community gathered, but permission for this should not to be presumed.

A few slides before the entrance procession or after communion with photos of the deceased at a funeral liturgy would be appropriate, or the lives of the couple for marriage. If the liturgy is celebrating the life of a particular saint there could be some images from their lives. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal offers the possibility of silence after communion which is something that could be promoted rather than filling up every gap with something to occupy the senses. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal #88 (2006), also mentions the possibility of a hymn of praise here. If

there is to be music which accompanies these images it should be ensured that it is appropriate to a worship setting. It is important that any presentation does not over extend the length of the Mass, or make the slide show the primary focus of the gathering.

Slide shows can become a passive activity and it may be difficult to bring the focus back to the rite itself afterwards.

With non-Eucharistic celebrations there is much more flexibility for the use of slide shows.

Copyright

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Advantages of Data projections

Data projectors and other electronic media present an excellent opportunity for presenting information and ritual so that more people gathered can be included. The "full, conscious and active participation of the assembly" called for by the Second Vatican Council in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy #14 may be assisted by the use of data projectors. Projected images assist the assembly with music and words, especially if particular rites use uncommon responses.

Changes may be made to the liturgical action of the day easily with computers. Their immediacy makes the computers flexibility very valuable. Screens up on the wall rather than books means people look up to sing and respond allowing their voices to more readily fill the worshipping space. It must be remembered, however, that technology should serve the assembly and not control it.