



22 August 2018

An Open Letter to Diocesan Music & Liturgy Contacts

Re: Church Music Copyright Challenges

The Australian Pastoral Musicians Network (APMN) was formed in 2011 with a core mission to support, educate, represent, and provide networking opportunities for those in Catholic liturgical, catechetical, and religious music ministry. The APMN has official liaison status with the ACBC's *National Liturgical Council* and the *National Liturgical Music Board*. Our three biennial conferences have featured speakers including Michael Joncas, Marty Haugen, David Haas and Australia's own Professor Clare Johnson.

The APMN has become acutely aware of ignorance and confusion in parishes and schools about crucial issues surrounding music copyright. This has always been a widely misunderstood area but further questions have been raised since *LicenSing* and *Word of Life* were merged into **One License**.

There are two main areas of misunderstanding. Firstly, many pastors and music ministers are unaware that they are **placing their parishes and dioceses in legal danger** by reprinting or projecting song lyrics and melodies without an appropriate licence. We are aware of some priests and parish musicians who "don't believe in copyright" or who think that religious music "is for the glory of God" and should be provided free of charge. However, despite their personal positions, this is in direct contravention of the Australian Copyright Act which grants certain exclusive rights to the creators and publishers of all music, including religious music. **The legal ramifications for parishes and schools cannot be ignored.**

Secondly, many parishes and schools that **do** have a licence in place are not fulfilling two key terms of the licence. **A licence holder is obligated to complete an online report** of all songs used each week so that royalty payments can be correctly distributed to copyright owners. Additionally, **composer and copyright information must be printed or displayed** on all reprints or projections of copyright material.

In short, if a parish or school is projecting song lyrics or melodies on to screens or reprinting them in song sheets or bulletins they must purchase a licence to do so. Under the terms of the licence they are obligated to report all songs used and to display copyright information on all projections or reprints. **Any practice outside of these terms is illegal.**

The July issue of the APMN newsletter was focused on copyright issues. A copy of the newsletter is attached and I invite you to freely circulate it to pastors, parish support staff, and liturgy and music contact people throughout your diocese. We hope that, along with your leadership at the diocesan level, this information will help educate these key people about their legal copyright responsibilities.

Furthermore, the APMN may be able to partner with you to provide some face to face education opportunities for those ministering in your parishes and schools. Please feel free to contact us for any further information: executive@apmn.org.au

With best wishes,

Michael Mangan

National Chair: Australian Pastoral Musicians Network