



What does copyright mean to me?

Copyright law gives to the copyright owner the exclusive rights to their original material. Copyrighted texts and melodies of liturgical music are the property of copyright owners. Pastors, parish musicians, school principals, and liturgists should know the boundaries and legal responsibilities when photocopying music and lyrics. If in doubt, contact the publisher. The primary Catholic/Christian liturgical music publishing companies and their contact information are included on the back page of this brochure. Obtaining copyright permission is playing fair. It justly compensates artists for their work and time. Quality liturgical music can only continue to be published when composers are remunerated for their talent. Unauthorized copying and use of these materials is not only a legal matter, but also an issue of social justice. As liturgical ministers, we must abide by the laws of the church and the state. "Thou shall not steal." (Exodus 20:15)

What type of copyright license does a parish need?

Several different levels of copyright licenses are available from all the major publishers. They vary in price and in scope. There are annual, selected, one-time, and seasonal licenses, to name a few. All of these licenses are for WORDS and MELODY ONLY and nothing else.

How do I format a worship aid?

If you have a license to copy the words and melody line for one-time use or through parish reprint license, the specifics are directed by the music publisher. There are regulations as to how to notate that the music is being copied with permission. Always check with the publisher to assure accuracy when producing worship aids.

What about copies for ease of use?

A choir member may enlarge a purchased piece of music to aid in reading that music. Also, to facilitate an awkward page turn, a photocopy may be made from original purchased music. If in doubt, call the publisher.

If the music I need is no longer in print, can I make copies? (What about "Public Domain"?)

No, not without permission from the publisher. They can give permission for a small fee to photocopy these pieces. When the work to be copied is in public domain, permission is not required. Public domain is defined by Dictionary.com as "the status of publications, products, and processes that are not protected under patent or copyright."

What if our parish/school already has copied music?

Destroy unauthorized photocopies and recordings and replace them with legal editions. Possession of any illegal copies is the same as harboring stolen goods.

Can we use music books year after year like Breaking Bread 2005?

No. Parishes pay copyright for those music books only for the year indicated. After that year the books must be discarded and new music books purchased. If parishes want to use the same music book year after year, they should purchase a hymnal, not an annual music book.

Do I need permission to print “just the words”?

Yes, absolutely! The words as well as the music are protected under copyright laws. Also, words cannot be changed without permission. When making translations, permission must be obtained from the publisher.

What are the penalties for making unauthorized copies of copyrighted music?

Embarrassment, at first. Additionally, the law provides for the owner of the copyright to recover damages for unauthorized use of copyrighted music. These damages include the profits of the infringer and statutory damages, ranging from not less than \$500 to not more than \$100,000 per infringement. There have been cases where entire dioceses have been sued because of copyright infringement at the parish/school level.

If you have questions about music copyrights, contact the music publisher of the particular piece of music.

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Liturgical Commission
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Liturgical Music Publishers

GIA Publications
7404 South Mason Avenue
Chicago, IL 60638
www.GIAMusic.com

Oregon Catholic Press (OCP)
5536 NE Hassalo
Portland, OR 97213
1-800-548-8749
www.ocp.org

**World Library Publications
(WLP)**
3708 N. River Rd.
Franklin Park, IL 60131
1-800-866-6150
www.wlp.jspaluch.com

**Church Music Publishers
Association**
www.cmpamusic.org

**Christian Copyright
Licensing International**
www.ccli.com

**The Diocese of
Victoria in Texas
Liturgical
Commission**



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Basic Music Copyright Knowledge

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A complete copy of the Copyright Law of 1976 and further information may be obtained by writing the Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington DC 20559 or by using the website of the Library of Congress,
www.loc.gov/copyright.