Protect your parishes from copyright infringement issues

The Archdiocese recently received a notification of Copyright Infringement, with a cease-and-desist letter, regarding the use of an image in a poster that accompanied an announcement published recently in the *Weekly News Bulletin*.

While the poster was provided to us by a well-meaning third party, the Archdiocese is nonetheless legally responsible for this infringement, and for paying an authorization fee to allow the image's use and avoid any further legal difficulties, such as court proceedings.

In light of this event, we are asking all parishes, their pastors, staff, committees and volunteers to ensure that any images they use and send to the Archdiocese are either in the public domain or are documents whose use has been duly authorized by the copyright holder.

We also remind parishes, pastors, staff, committees and volunteers to be mindful of the following areas where a copyright infringement might occur:

- Parish websites
- Parish social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok, YouTube channels, etc.
- Parish bulletins and most especially electronic bulletins sent via email to parishioners

To avoid this pitfall, we strongly recommend that parishes generate their own visual material through the use of apps such as Canva, that provide a wide variety of public domain visual material. Should you wish to use other photos and visual material, please make use of providers of free public domain images such as Unsplash at https://unsplash.com/ Morguefile at https://morguefile.com/ Free Bible Images at www.freebibleimages.org Pexels at www.pexels.com or Pixabay at www.pixabay.com Theses sources are reliable, safe, and most importantly, help avoid any copyright infringement issues.

***You** are responsible for any copyright infringement on your websites and social media platforms*. This includes material uploaded directly to your website, or even those that simply provide a link from your webpage to a document or an electronic parish bulletin. This includes photos, paintings or other images, pieces of music in a YouTube video,

audio material from a podcast or quotes from copyrighted printed material such as a book or sheet music.

You will also be held responsible for ***any unauthorized document sent to you by a third party***, even if you were unaware of any copyright violation.

Please note that companies employed to seek out copyright infringement online use bots to seek out any unauthorized material. For this reason, we strongly recommend a housekeeping of your website and social media. Please make sure that any material posted or in the administrative "back-end" sections of a website is still pertinent. If not, please delete it. Otherwise, the bots will find it!

Thank you,

Daniel Bahuaud
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