

## Choirs, Congregation and Copyright Law

### Summary

Our first pastor, Fr. Pat Mellon, wrote a letter to the music ministry 'strongly urging' choirs to honor copyright, (memo on file). Nothing has changed since then.

#### St. Justin's Statement of Intent

- It is St. Justin's intention to respect and honor copyright law.
- St. Justin's is ultimately responsible for all music, video, text etc. used anywhere on St. Justin's property, whether sponsored by St. Justin's, leased or by private use.
- St. Justin's choirs have received more than a dozen letters indicating our responsibilities as parish, choir and congregation and the associated copyright obligations. These are from Fr. Mellon, CCCB (Cdn Conference of Catholic Bishops) and many publishing houses.

**Copyright law** - from the CCLI website: <http://www.ccli.com/CA/WhatWeOffer/ChurchCopyrightLicenses/Copyright%20Issues.aspx>

"The purpose of the copyright law is to promote the use of copyrights and at the same time protect the rights of the copyright owner.

A copyright is an exclusive right given to an author of an original created work. It is an asset, a legal interest, protected by law. Included in the exclusive rights given to the copyright owner is the right to copy the work into any form, including in print, on screen, or on tape.

The copyright law is very clear on copying music. If you do not have express permission from the rightful owner of the song, you can't make a copy. (It is advisable to have that permission in writing in case of need for legal reference.) There have been a number of copyright disputes, although most have been settled privately. You can imagine how uncomfortable it is for a Christian songwriter to address legal entanglements with a church.

Some church music leaders have made efforts to honor the law and have tried to obtain permission from the copyright owner before making copies. This is often a time-consuming challenge and, in many cases, an administrative nightmare.

Many have agreed -- the copyright law is fair but not practical. That's why more than 145,000 churches across North America are taking advantage of the Church Copyright License from CCLI. "

#### Congregation

##### One-License

St. Justin's currently uses a third party contract to pay for permission to use overhead transparencies for the congregation. This permission does not extend to choirs in any form, and in most cases, is specific to lyrics on transparencies. For a list of publishing houses associated with One-License, see the current member list:

<http://www.onelicense.net/>

##### Existing Contracts

Publishing houses no longer offer single contracts, but where still in force, there is no need to pay again via One-License. Many contracts, e.g. GIA, Sparrow and Hope, allowed one original transparency, and so with updates and maintenance these contracts are expired. A list of contracted lyrics transparencies for the congregation is available at: [http://www.massofsttherese.com/guest/St\\_Justins\\_Copyright\\_Summary-for\\_congregation.pdf](http://www.massofsttherese.com/guest/St_Justins_Copyright_Summary-for_congregation.pdf)

#### All Choirs, Musicians, Singers et al

Similar to day 1 at St. Justin's, anyone on the property, at any time, using any music notation, lyric, words, text, pre-recorded video, CD or tape in any format, (electronic or hardcopy), must have copyright permission. For music notation and lyrics permission is gained by purchasing music. Copies are only allowed where the tune and lyric are classed as Public Domain or where St. Justin's has maintained proof of written permission – a list is available at: [http://www.massofsttherese.com/guest/St\\_Justins\\_Copyright\\_Summary-for\\_Choir.pdf](http://www.massofsttherese.com/guest/St_Justins_Copyright_Summary-for_Choir.pdf)

If you are in doubt, please ask well enough in advance that you can make alternate plans.

Thank you,

St. Justin's Choirs

Ps...a recent note from CCLI indicates that a fine for \$190,000. was recently levied for copyright violations.