
New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference

30 April 2012

Dear priests

Since the publication of the Roman Missal for use in New Zealand we have received some questions about the use of Ipads or other tablets, e-readers, and mobile phones by the priest instead of the Missal during Mass and other liturgies.

The bishops have considered this matter carefully and have taken note of what is happening in other countries.

All faiths have sacred books which are reserved for those rituals and activities which are at the heart of the faith. The Catholic Church is no different, and the Roman Missal is one of our sacred books. Its physical form is an indicator of its special role in our worship.

The Missal is reserved for use during the Church's liturgy. Ipads and other electronic devices have a variety of uses eg for playing games, using the internet, watching videos and checking email. This alone makes their use in the liturgy inappropriate.

The New Zealand Catholic Bishop Conference has made the following decision about the use of electronic devices in place of the Missal. This decision applies to all priests in the dioceses of New Zealand:

With the publication of the Roman Missal has come the release of a number of Missal applications for the iPad and other tablets, for mobile phones and e-readers.

While these applications are excellent for study purposes, the iPad (and its equivalents), e-readers and mobile phones may not be used by the priest at liturgy.

Only the official printed copy of the Roman Missal may be used at Mass and at the Church's other liturgies.

✠John Dew
Archbishop of Wellington
President, NZCBC

✠Patrick Dunn
Bishop of Auckland
Secretary, NZCBC

✠Denis Browne
Bishop of Hamilton

✠Colin Campbell
Bishop of Dunedin

✠Charles Drennan
Bishop of Palmerston North

✠Barry Jones
Bishop of Christchurch

✠Peter Cullinane
Emeritus Bishop of Palmerston North