

CHURCH OF IRELAND PRESS OFFICE

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Copyright and Photography Guidance for Parishes and other ministries

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In recent months, several church organisations on the island of Ireland have been required to pay charges of **up to £2,000 / €2,300** for infringing copyright by publishing photos without permission. These have included news photos taken by agencies such as Getty, Reuters, Press Association, AP and AFP. Agencies use regular online searches to check how and where their photos have appeared.

It is therefore important for all parishes, and similar ministries, to:

1. **Review** their past and present content on social media feeds and websites;
2. **Remove** all photos taken by professional photographers for which permission has not been given;
3. **Inform** their diocese if an infringing photograph been shared with them for further publicity.

This guidance does not apply to photographs taken by clergy, members of staff, or volunteers. If permission has been given by a professional photographer, credit is given in the caption or the social media post, and any relevant payment has been made, no further action is needed.

If an infringing photograph has been published in a magazine, the website editor should consider removing all back copies of the magazine from the website, provided that copies are stored separately for archive purposes.

Before publishing a photograph, three steps are needed to keep right with copyright:

1. **Receive permission** – ask for and receive permission from the photographer (or agency);
2. **Give credit** – ensure that the photographer will be credited when it is published;
3. **Pay as needed** – most agency websites will display prices and easy-to-use payment processes.

Several design platforms provide high quality stock photographs with copyright permission. Canva Pro, for example, is widely used for designing flyers, booklets and graphics for websites and is freely available to registered charities in the UK and Ireland, after a short registration process is completed.¹

Copyright protects the incomes of people who make content, and copyright law applies to everyone.² As a principle, it treats others as we would wish to be treated, and we want to ensure that everyone in the Church can positively communicate their ministry within boundaries which respect creativity.

*Peter Cheney
Press Officer*

¹ Further information about this opportunity can be found at www.canva.com/canva-for-nonprofits

² The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 in the UK and Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000 in Ireland.

