

JUST A THOUGHT ... about Mass online. (1)

*I found this reflection which in my opinion has several good points that we would do well to reflect upon. You may have noticed that the online streamed Mass is removed from the Facebook page after a short time. We are not aiming to create 'Massflix'. May we have a blessed weekend to celebrate mothers.*

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The driving force behind COVID liturgical solutions is the need to communicate. Catholics know innately that the liturgy is a means of communication.

An ancient Māori proverb says: "What is the most important thing in the world? It is people; it is people, it is people."

Liturgy, at the level of rites, is structured symbolic communication. It is an interpersonal, sensate dialogue – on many levels – that uses symbols and signs to communicate its meaning and purpose.

Authentic liturgical communication is essentially a dialogue, and the rites are adapted so that a community can "see" itself mirrored in its liturgical praxis. As a result, authentic liturgical adaptation is always ongoing because the community is ever-changing.

I think our need for religious communication has driven our use of contemporary communication platforms for Sunday Masses

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If believers are not attending online Masses because virtual reality cannot deliver real physical presence and participation, then we must acknowledge there is a qualitative difference that virtual environments cannot deliver.

They are reminding us that technologized worship can supply an immediate need, but it cannot feed the soul. We need proximate, not virtual, presence, as well as active conscious participation in Eucharistic worship – at least in the (post-conciliar) tradition (established by the reform of St Paul VI).

So, I still have questions concerning virtual reality as the reality consistent with liturgical mediation. While communication is the key to liturgical praxis, not all communication platforms are proper to the liturgy.

What is essential to liturgical practice is the full, conscious and active participation of the Church – clergy and laity – in the single act of worship. I remain convinced that this is missing in virtual Eucharistic experiences.