

10 Tips for a Live Streamed Mass

Technical Resources Used

- Web Camera 1: Papalook AF925 focused on the wider altar area
- Web Camera 2: Logitech C510 focused on the front of the altar for Exposition
- Conference Speaker & Microphone: Jabra PHS002W placed on the altar
- Web Hosting Site: www.wix.com
- Live Streaming & Recording Software: OBS Studio

1. Camera Location & Picture Gallery – we set the camera directly in front of the altar to develop the easiest placement to encourage a personal encounter between myself as the celebrant and our online congregation member/s i.e. I can't really forget that the camera is there. Not every room has the capacity to have this camera location and if a side angle is used it would be more of a challenge for me to remember that the camera is there. I asked our online congregation to send me pictures of themselves to create a gallery behind the camera – seeing smiling faces really helped!
2. Setting – our online congregation only has a small window to view the Mass so I used a few ideas from making stage sets to arrange the sanctuary so that the Altar, Presidential Chair & Lectern can be seen. Items at the rear of the sanctuary had to be raised up. Checking back on the screen & marking an item's location with masking tape was helpful in case I needed to move it later.
3. Movement – for anything around the Presidential Chair, initially, I discovered that my left arm disappeared off camera when I was leading a prayer so by placing my right foot on a masking taped cross on the floor to my front/right meant that I was now in shot when my arms are outstretched.
4. Eye Contact – if this was a monologue in a TV studio, our eye contact would mainly be focused on the camera. However, as we're aware, leading prayer involves other areas of focus with our eye contact not only on the camera but also our eye contact with heaven and on the altar too. For example, in the Offertory I try, though often forget, to look up in saying "Blessed are you, Lord God of Creation...", look to the altar at "we have received the bread we offer you..." and look at the camera in saying "fruit of the earth & work of human hands" to encourage this union.
5. Music – singing is not my gift, so I limit myself to singing the Gospel Acclamation & Doxology. If you're used to singing more parts of the Mass, ask somebody for their honest opinion... "Can I sing well?" If there's a pause in

their reply, perhaps it's best to not over use your singing voice as off key sounds are greatly exaggerated online as I discovered myself.

6. Slow Down – I really struggle in this area however it is important to slow down a tad as this is another area that is also exaggerated online.
7. Simple Vestments – we may love our highly embroidered chasuble but it'll just be a blur to the online congregation so the simpler, more vivid, colours the better.
8. Scripture Commentary & Short Homily – Simplicity is often the key to not only the Homily but everything in Live Streaming but adding a line of introduction to the 1st Reading & Psalm helped me to set a context when I'm reading all the scripture before proclaiming the Gospel. Also, if I want them to stick with me, I don't need to make my Homily too long otherwise they'll 'literally' switch off. However, a few lines each day has been well received and supports my prayer life too.
9. Notices – with our folks not having a Parish Newsletter in front of them, on Sunday's especially, I really needed to lift some of the items off the page with enthusiasm and let folks know what's going on in the coming week, including the next live streamed liturgy.
10. Things go wrong – we had a whole week of technical difficulties followed by a few days of very stable streaming then we lost the sound – if the BBC, with millions spent on production, have technical difficulties, we're inevitably going to have them too. There are so many technical variables in play. We're also going to make mistakes during the Mass, that are normally forgotten on a regular day, but this may be recorded. I remind myself to get back on the horse & go again. I've been at this for a couple of weeks now & I make mistakes every day (& will probably continue to do so) in this unfamiliar context but ultimately, it's really enjoyable to try something new in these most unusual of times.

Fr David Cain – A Two Week Live Streamer of Mass