



ARCHDIOCESE
OF NEW YORK

FILM PRODUCTION ON CHURCH PROPERTY

Occasionally pastors are enticed to make their facilities available to production companies who wish to film movies or television shows at their parishes. Keep in mind that a copy of the entire script of the production for transmittal, not just the scene to be shot in the church or on parish property must be sent to the archdiocese's director of communications, Mr. Joe Zwilling at joseph.zwilling@archny.org or 646-794-2997 for review. The individual scene might be innocuous, but the rest of the film might be contrary to Church teaching or put us in a bad light.

Even if the parish property would not be identified (for instance, the use of a school classroom that might be portrayed as a public school classroom), if the values promoted are against Church teaching, we still decline.

Furthermore, while it is not advised, if children are to be in the production, a release from every parent of each child is required. If there are any crew that will be in a school building and need to use the facilities or seek access to any area of a school, there should be no admittance to areas where children may be (i.e., cafeteria, bathrooms).

In addition, a facility usage agreement must be signed, and a certificate of insurance provided, which includes evidence of the required coverage and the appropriate language in the description of operations box. Contact Catholic Mutual Group (CMG) at wspellman@catholicmutual.org or 646-794-3025, or the risk management and insurance division at louise.zacher@archny.org or 646-794-2969 for further information or to obtain a copy of the agreement.

Account for any proceeds the parish/entity receives as rental income using the correct accounting codes.

There is, of course, a "sliding scale." If the scene takes place in a church, or is explicitly about the Church, we have tougher standards. If property is used in a generic way (for instance, the TV program *Madam Secretary* shot a scene at Dunwoodie because they liked the look of the building, but it was being portrayed as an embassy), we would use a more relaxed standard.

After the script has been approved, we ask the pastor to be in touch with our real estate and insurance divisions for review of the contract to make certain everything is in order regarding insurance, the fee paid to the parish, etc.

Once this is done, it is still up to the pastor to decide whether he wishes this to take place on his parish property or not.

We never force a pastor to say "yes" but we do sometimes strongly counsel him to say "no."