

# Investigating the Future of Digital Worship Within the Catholic Church in Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

In recent years, with the rapid development of media technology, people have experienced new lifestyles and space-time experiences, and new developments have taken place in the field of religious communication and worship. This means that digital technologies have become more potent instruments in recent times for improving church services, encouraging community involvement, and furthering the global mission of the Catholic Church. Undoubtedly, the adoption of digital worship practices carries enormous implications for the church's future in Nigeria, a country with a strong Catholic tradition and a thriving Christian community. Thus, this paper critically examines how digital worship is changing in the Nigerian Catholic Church and also looks at the benefits and problems that come with new technology and how they could affect church dynamics, outreach initiatives, and worship styles. Through the conceptual method, the article draws on insights from academic research, real-world experiences, and theological thoughts. This paper thoroughly analyses the future of digital worship for the Catholic Church in Nigeria. It also offers valuable insights for clergy, church leaders, researchers, and practitioners seeking to navigate the connection between technology and worship in the Nigerian context. Ultimately, this paper underscores the transformative potential of digital worship in shaping the future of the Catholic Church in Nigeria and calls for continued exploration, collaboration, and innovation in this rapidly evolving domain.

*Key words:* Catholic Church, Catholic Traditions, Challenges, Digital Media, Digital Worship, Future, Opportunities

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## **Introduction**

The development of digital technology has fundamentally altered how people interact, communicate, and engage in a variety of activities daily. From virtual entertainment to online instruction, computerised innovation has penetrated every part of human life (Aduloju, 2020). In other words, the proliferation of digital technologies has profoundly impacted various facets of society, including religious practices and worship experiences. In Africa, and Nigeria

specifically, where technological advancements rapidly shape and reshape social, economic, and cultural landscapes, churches are increasingly leveraging digital platforms to enhance worship experiences and engage with congregations. Undeniably, technology has had a significant influence on religion in recent times (Enokela, 2023). There are many ways in which this influence is apparent, but one of the most prominent benefits is the ease with which individuals can connect and express their religious beliefs. Kperogi (2020) notes that the continent of Africa has experienced a significant surge in internet penetration rates, driven by the widespread adoption of mobile devices and improved connectivity infrastructure. Specifically, according to DataReportal (2023), Nigeria alone, as of January 2023, had 122.5 million internet users, and its penetration rate stood at 55.4 per cent of the total population. The increase in the number of internet users shows why digital technologies have continued to emerge as powerful tools for enhancing worship experiences, fostering community engagement, and advancing the mission of the Catholic Church worldwide.

In recent times, digital technologies have become more and more potent instruments for improving church worship in the Nigerian Catholic Church. Reaching a larger audience and encouraging more involvement in worship activities are two major motivations for churches to utilise digital technologies. Digital platforms, according to Asaju (2019), offer churches the opportunity to transcend geographical boundaries and connect with members across vast and diverse landscapes. Wobodo (2020) asserts that before the COVID-19 outbreak, digital worship had been a part of Nigerian religious life. Nonetheless, the pandemic made digitising worship more imperative. During the period of COVID-19, as part of the government's efforts to stop its spread, social distancing, isolation, and quarantine laws were implemented, which caused many church leaders and laypeople to switch from in-person services to virtual worship. The change was made following the World Health Organisation's (WHO) 2020 advice to "conduct faith activities remotely or virtually as long as required" (Afolabi and Babatunde, 2021). Thus, Mugambi (2021) notes that online platforms became particularly relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many churches to shift to online worship formats to comply with total lockdown and social distancing measures. Today, individuals can easily interact with each other and openly share their spiritual beliefs, courtesy of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp (Enokela, 2023).

In Nigeria, where Catholicism has deep roots and a vibrant faith community, the adoption of digital worship practices holds significant implications for the future of the Church. For instance, a long time ago, Pope Paul VI asserted that "the Church recognises that these media if properly utilised, can be of excellent service to humanity since they significantly contribute to men's entertainment and instruction as well as to the spread and support of the Kingdom of God" (*Inter Mirifica*, no. 2, cited in Aduloju, 2019). In the same way, Pope St. John Paul

II (1990) encourages the Church to consider it her duty to make the best use of all the means of social communication at her disposal to spread the Good News. This is why Egere (2013) points out that the Church representatives, especially after the establishment of the *Propaganda Fide* in 1622 and the subsequent establishment of the *L'Osservatore Romano* and Radio Vaticana have made tremendous use of the traditional mass media in their mission of evangelisation. Recently, when digital technology such as the World Wide Web (www) and the Internet facilities created in the 1990s came into existence, the Church did not exclude itself from membership in this digital world.

Although the Catholic Church in Nigeria has recognised the importance of integrating digital technology into its worship, the adoption is not without challenges. A major obstacle to wider adoption, according to (Moyo & Ndhlovu, 2020), is the lack of dependable internet infrastructure, particularly in rural and isolated places. Additionally, concerns about cultural sensitivity and the preservation of traditional worship practices amidst technological innovations have sparked debates within religious communities (Mutongi, 2018). This means that digital technology presents religious institutions, such as the Catholic Church in Nigeria, with both challenges and opportunities when it comes to religious worship. Despite these challenges, Nigerian Churches that are open to adopting new technologies while maintaining their commitment to their spiritual and cultural traditions stand to benefit greatly from digital worship. The truth remains that Nigerian churches may effectively negotiate the intricacies of the digital age and still perform their mission of promoting spiritual growth and the spread of the gospel by utilising digital platforms to improve community participation, establish worldwide connections, and facilitate outreach initiatives. Thus, as the Catholic Church seeks to adapt to the digital age, it must carefully consider the implications of incorporating digital technology into its worship practices, ensuring that such integration aligns with its religious doctrines, traditions, and values held by its age-long traditions.

Hence, the present article investigates the current landscape of digital worship in Nigeria, examines the challenges and opportunities it presents, and explores strategies for overcoming barriers to adoption. Through case studies, analysis, and scholars' insights, the paper focuses on the future of digital worship for the Church in Nigeria, shedding light on the transformative potential of technology in shaping religious experiences and fostering community connections in an increasingly digital world.

### **Digital Worship**

Nowadays, the development of virtual reality technologies has helped to create artificial worlds similar to reality. The transformation of virtual communities into virtual societies has led to the emergence of new movements of worship. In other words, there is constantly a desire to maintain worship in a digital environment, which arises from the advancements in digital technology. Talking about digital worship, the Internet platform comes to the fore. The Internet, which began to permeate society in the 1990s, has facilitated the

emergence of numerous formations. Among these is the "cyber-religion" phenomenon that emerged in the latter part of the 1990s (Küçükvardar, 2019). Thus, using the Internet to conduct religious activities is referred to as "digital worship" by some religious organisations (Küçükvardar, 2019).

The emergence of digital worship actually originated in Western countries, pioneered by the Christian world. The concept of the "Cyberchurch" was first used by Patrick Dixon in 1997 in his book "Cyberchurch." According to Dixon "the new cyber communities will emerge and can grow in a very short time, thanks to web-based technologies" (1997, p. 181). He further states that "traditional worship structures will change through video technologies, communication systems, and community forums, and this situation will spread as a global wave" (Dixon, 1997, p. 181). Also, Bednar (2007), exploring the impact of the blogging movement on faith experience, made a depiction of modern cyber churches. Digital worship, according to Campbell (2013), is a metaphorical frame in which conventional restraints are not applied to religious behaviours. Cyber religion is believed to be a new kind of religious community. Thus, in digital worship, there is a structure in which people carry their spiritual lives into cyberspace. However, Højsgaard and Warburg (2005) state that cyber religion has a deeper meaning beyond what it reflects as a concept. To them,

digital worship is in strict opposition to traditionally structured institutions, where content reflects the main characteristics of postmodern cyberculture. And digital religions, which are also a phenomenon, are changing the traditional structure of pursuits for ontological and metaphysical questions. Because religious institutions are being replaced by a new environment (p. 62).

Today, the phenomenon of digital worship is changing the traditional structure of many places of worship. Physical forms of worship or meetings are now held in a virtual environment, thanks to the multimedia offers (Küçükvardar, 2019). Digital worship is relevant in today's technological and cultural circumstances. Religious services are provided with the help of the Internet technology. For example, many Pentecostal churches in Nigeria have their own online version and have numerous online members. These virtual churches are distinguished from traditional churches in terms of their physical environment. A vast range of formats are available for digital worship, which is meant to make worship sessions easier and more engaging. Despite their acceptance of modern technology, exponents of digital worship do not entirely reject conventional religious doctrines. Rather, they have opted to acquire the skills via online means and allow digital worship to complement their traditional worship.

### **Traditional vs. Digital Worship in the Catholic Church**

As already pointed out, in an age marked by rapid technological advancement and changing societal norms, religious practices have also adapted, leading to the emergence of digital worship alongside traditional forms of religious

observance. Within the Catholic faith, the contrast between traditional worship, characterised by physical attendance at churches and engagement in sacraments, and digital worship, facilitated by technology-enabled platforms and virtual gatherings, has raised concerns regarding the efficacy, authenticity, and accessibility of each approach or method (Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, 2018). The truth remains that, there are several significant distinctions between the Catholic Church's digital and traditional worship styles. For instance, traditional worship usually entails going to a church or other place of worship in person to partake in rituals like Mass, prayer, and sacraments in a group environment. On the contrary, digital worship describes the remote use of technology to participate in religious activities, such as live-streamed liturgies, online prayer groups, and virtual sacraments.

Nwachukwu (2019) argues that one important aspect to consider is the sense of community and fellowship that traditional worship provides. Attending church in person allows individuals to interact with fellow parishioners, receive support from their community, and feel a sense of belonging. Whereas, digital worship may lack the same level of face-to-face interaction, personal connection, and physical presence, which can impact the overall spiritual experience for some individuals (Nwachukwu, 2019). In addition, traditional worship can improve a worshipper's involvement and connection to being highly spiritual by combining sensory experiences like music, incense, and physical rituals. Of course, these sensory elements may be more challenging to replicate in a digital worship setting, where individuals are participating through a screen and may not have the same immersive experience.

No doubt, in terms of accessibility, digital worship can offer a convenient option for individuals who are unable to attend traditional services due to physical limitations, distance, career, or scheduling conflicts. It can also reach a wider audience beyond the local community, allowing people from different locations to participate in religious practices together. Nevertheless, it is important not to ignore the potential drawbacks of digital worship, such as distractions from the online environment, technical difficulties, and the lack of physical presence that may impact the depth of spiritual connection of some individuals (Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, 2018).

### **Challenges and Opportunities of Digital Worship**

The COVID-19 pandemic, while disrupting traditional modes of worship, has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies and underscored their importance in maintaining continuity and connection during times of crisis in particular. Nigerian churches have the opportunity to leverage digital platforms to reach new audiences, expand their ministries, and foster deeper engagement with members, both locally and across the global diaspora. Without a doubt, the exploration of digital worship for the Catholic Church in Nigeria presents a range of challenges and opportunities that warrant careful consideration.

Okafor (2020) argues that one of the key opportunities of digital worship is its ability to transcend physical barriers, enabling individuals from diverse geographical locations to partake in religious services and communal prayer. Given the vast and diverse population of Nigeria, digital worship has the potential to foster a more inclusive and accessible form of religious engagement, thereby enriching the spiritual experiences of believers across the country. Other benefits of digital worship, according to Afolabi and Babatunde (2021), include:

**Accessibility:** Digital platforms (such as YouTube, Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Zoom) allowed believers to participate in worship services from the safety of their homes during lockdowns. This inclusivity reached a broader audience, including those who might not attend physical church gatherings.

**Flexibility:** Digital worship provided flexibility in terms of timing. People could join services at their convenience, accommodating work schedules, family commitments, and health concerns.

**Spiritual Connection:** Despite physical separation, digital worship maintained a sense of spiritual community. Believers could still engage in collective prayer, worship, and fellowship.

**Miracles and Faith:** Contrary to expectations, miracles did not diminish during digital worship. The belief in God's omnipresence transcended physical boundaries, reinforcing faith even through electronic devices.

However, the integration of digital technology into religious worship also raises significant challenges, including concerns about the preservation of sacred traditions, the potential for technological distractions during worship, and the need to maintain the sanctity of religious rituals in a digital environment (Oluwadare, 2019). For the Catholic Church in Nigeria, which prides itself on rich cultural traditions and deeply rooted religious practices, the task of harmonising digital worship with traditional values presents a complex and multifaceted challenge. Also, the challenges of virtual worship include poor and erratic electricity to watch television and charge phones, high cost of data for accessing social media, poor internet connectivity, and the inability to buy data by some parishioners, especially those who have poor sources of livelihoods (Afolabi and Babatunde, 2021).

Furthermore, the issue of limited internet infrastructure in rural areas, high data costs, and disparities in access to digital devices pose significant barriers to the widespread adoption of digital worship. Similarly, concerns about privacy, security, and the authenticity of online religious experiences have prompted cautious doubt among the faith of some members of the community (Okafor, 2020). Also, the issue of economic disparities and unequal access to digital resources across different regions of Nigeria raises questions about the inclusivity of digital worship within the Catholic Church (Ajiboye, 2021). In a

country where socioeconomic disparities are prevalent, the church must ensure that the integration of digital worship does not exacerbate existing inequalities but should rather serve as a tool for uplifting and empowering all members of the Catholic community, regardless of their socioeconomic status or access to digital infrastructure.

### **Successful Implementation of Digital Worship in the Catholic Church in Nigeria**

The explosion of digital technology, no doubt, has led to the emergence of various forms of digital worship, including live streaming of religious services, digital prayer communities, and online religious education platforms. The Catholic Church in many parts of the world has embraced digital technology as the means of reaching a wider audience, particularly those who may have limited access to physical church buildings due to geographical or health-related constraints. While the adoption of digital technology in worship has been more prevalent in some regions, such as North America and Europe, its implementation in Nigeria and other parts of Africa has been relatively slower. Factors already discussed, such as limited internet infrastructure, economic disparities, and cultural norms, have influenced the pace at which digital worship has penetrated the Catholic Church in Nigeria. Nevertheless, recent developments suggest an increasing awareness and willingness among Nigerian Catholic communities to explore the potential of digital technology in enhancing their worship experiences and spiritual growth.

New technology and digital media hold the key for the Church to fully realise its mission of evangelisation. Thus, Martins (2020) posits that the Church, more than ever before, should embrace social media and new technology to reach out and deepen the faith, especially among young minds, whom statistics show spend more time on their smartphones and other online platforms than they do on conventional or traditional media. He further states that the Gospel and the social teachings of the Catholic Church should leverage digital media if they must fulfil the mission of preaching the good news to the ends of the earth. Among the prominent churches that have successfully implemented digital worship in Nigeria are:

#### **Catholic Church of Divine Mercy, Lekki**

The Catholic Church of Divine Mercy, located in Lekki, Lagos, has successfully integrated digital technologies into its worship practices to enhance engagement and accessibility for its congregation. Okoye (2020) stresses through the church's official website and social media platforms, parishioners can access live streams of masses, prayer services, and special events, allowing those unable to attend in person to participate remotely. The church has also developed a mobile application that provides users with access to daily Mass readings, reflections, prayers, and updates on parish activities. By embracing digital platforms while maintaining fidelity to Catholic teachings and traditions, the Church of Divine Mercy has fostered deeper connections with its members and extended its reach beyond physical boundaries.

### **St. Agnes Catholic Church, Maryland**

St. Agnes Catholic Church, situated in Maryland, Lagos, is another church that has implemented innovative digital initiatives to engage its congregation and promote spiritual growth. According to Okafor (2019), the church's social media presence, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, serves as a platform for sharing daily scripture reflections, inspirational quotes, and announcements about upcoming events. St. Agnes Church has embraced video conferencing technology to facilitate virtual prayer meetings, Bible study groups, and pastoral counselling sessions, providing parishioners with opportunities for fellowship and support, particularly during the time of social distancing. Through its strategic use of digital tools, the church has demonstrated a commitment to fostering community and nurturing discipleship in an increasingly digital era.

### **Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Gwagwalada**

Located in Gwagwalada, Abuja, the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, has leveraged digital technologies to strengthen its outreach efforts and connect with a diverse audience. The church's website features a range of resources, including mass schedules, liturgical readings, and educational materials on Catholic teachings and traditions (Eze, 2021). He also says that Sacred Heart Catholic Church has utilised social media platforms to livestream Masses and share spiritual reflections, reaching Catholics across Nigeria and beyond. Through its commitment to digital evangelisation, the Church has embraced new opportunities for spreading the gospel message and fostering spiritual growth among believers in the digital age.

### **Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Chaplaincy, CIWA, Port Harcourt**

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Chaplaincy, CIWA, Port Harcourt is not also left behind among the few churches in Nigeria that have successfully leveraged digital technologies in transmitting its worship. Through the chaplaincy's official website, and other social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, parishioners have access to live streams of daily and Sunday masses, prayer services, novena prayers, special events, discussions, announcements and updates of chaplaincy activities (<https://mass-online.org>). All these virtual activities allow those unable to attend in person to participate wherever they are. Also, the church has been consistent in transmitting its masses on the second Sunday of every month through the mainstream channel, African Independent Television (AIT). Through the adoption of digital media and adherence to Catholic doctrines and traditions, Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Chaplaincy, CIWA, Port Harcourt has expanded its reach beyond geographical confines and established stronger relationships with its members.

A closer look at these case studies revealed that the four churches have demonstrated the effective execution of digital worship programmes by Catholic Churches in Nigeria, offering creative approaches to utilising technology to improve worship sessions, encourage community involvement,

and advance spiritual development. These parishes have shown how technology may improve the church's mission and foster discipleship in today's world by embracing digital innovations while remaining grounded in Catholic teachings and traditions.

### **Strategies to Maintain Cultural and Traditional Values while Embracing Digital Worship.**

In the dynamic landscape of Nigerian Catholicism, preserving the essence of traditional worship practices while at the same time trying to integrate technology requires a delicate balance of cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and community engagement. By embracing Nigeria's rich cultural heritage, adapting traditional practices to modern contexts, cultivating indigenous leadership, and engaging the faithful in the process, the Nigerian Catholic Church can navigate the complexities of tradition and technology while remaining faithful to its cultural identity and spiritual heritage (Onwuka, 2021). To maintain the traditions of Catholic worship in the current era of embracing technological advancements, it is important to employ these strategies that would help to accommodate both traditional and digital worship.

#### **1. Embracing cultural heritage**

Okoye (2019) believes that central to preserving traditional worship practices, is the celebration and embrace of Nigeria's diverse cultural heritage within the Catholic Church. Emphasising indigenous languages, music, art, and rituals in liturgical celebrations fosters a deep sense of cultural identity and a sense of belonging among parishioners. By incorporating traditional elements into worship services and religious ceremonies, the Nigerian Catholic Church can maintain continuity with its rich cultural heritage while reinforcing the spiritual significance of cultural expressions of faith.

#### **2. Adapting tradition to modernity**

In navigating the intersection of tradition and technology, the Nigerian Catholic Church has adeptly adapted traditional practices to modern contexts without compromising cultural authenticity. Integrating technology into worship spaces through the use of multimedia presentations, digital hymnals, and projection screens enhances the aesthetic appeal of liturgical celebrations while preserving the integrity of traditional rituals. By embracing technology as a complement to, rather than a replacement for, traditional worship practices, the Nigerian Catholic Church bridges the gap between tradition and innovation (Nwosu, 2020).

#### **3. Cultivating indigenous leadership**

Preserving cultural authenticity within the Nigerian Catholic Church necessitates the cultivation of indigenous leadership and expertise. Indigenous priests, theologians, and pastoral workers play a crucial role in guiding the integration of technology while ensuring that cultural sensitivities and values are respected. Collaborating with local communities and indigenous scholars to develop contextualised resources and liturgical adaptations to ensure that

technological advancements align with the cultural sensibilities of Nigerian Catholics. By focusing on indigenous leadership and expertise, the church can navigate the complex terrain of tradition and technology with cultural sensitivity and authenticity.

#### 4. Engaging the faithful

At the heart of preserving cultural and doctrinal genuineness is the active engagement and involvement of the faithful in the life of the church. Empowering parishioners to participate in the planning and implementation of digital initiatives would certainly foster a sense of ownership and investment in preserving traditional worship practices. Providing opportunities for parishioners to contribute their cultural insights, talents, and spiritual experiences will enrich the fabric of worship and ensure that technological advancements resonate with the lived realities of Nigerian Catholics. By fostering a culture of collaboration and co-creation, the Church will ensure that the integration of technology enhances, rather than detracts from, traditional values in worship (Onwuka, 2021).

### **Encouraging Pastoral Agents to Embrace Digital Worship in Nigeria**

With the inevitability of the use of digital technology in worship, pastoral agents are offered further means for fulfilling their mission (Aduloju, 2019). John Paul II (1998) encourages pastoral agents (whether they are young or old) to rise to the challenge of new technologies by bringing to them a moral vision rooted, in their religious faith, in their respect for the human person, and in their commitment to transforming the world by God's plan. This means that there is a need for them to use modern technology to facilitate communication and dialogue among their members and to strengthen the bonds of unity between them. Thus, in an ever-evolving landscape of Nigerian Catholicism, priests, religious, and other pastoral agents, including parishioners, should be encouraged to embrace digital worship as a crucial endeavour. The following are some of the ways the pastoral agents can be empowered to incorporate digital worship to complement the existing physical worship.

#### 1. Providing digital literacy training

A fundamental step in empowering Catholic priests, religious and parishioners to embrace digital worship is to provide them with comprehensive digital literacy training. According to Okeke (2020), many clergy and members of the congregation may lack familiarity with digital tools and platforms used in worship settings. Therefore, offering structured training programmes on topics such as live streaming technologies, social media management, and digital content creation. Equipping priests, religious and parishioners with the skills needed to effectively navigate and utilise digital resources in their ministry and worship practices becomes a must.

#### 2. Encouraging experimentation and innovation

Empowering Catholic priests and other pastoral agents to embrace digital worship involves, creating a culture that encourages experimentation and

innovation. Church leadership can foster an environment where clergy, religious and lay leaders feel empowered to explore new technologies and creative approaches to worship. Encouraging the sharing of best practices and success stories within the faith community can inspire others to embrace digital tools and platforms in their ministry. By celebrating innovation and creativity, the Nigerian Catholic Church can cultivate a culture of adaptability and responsiveness to the evolving needs of its members (Nwachukwu, 2019).

### 3. Providing technical support and resources

Access to technical support and resources is essential for empowering Catholic priests and parishioners to embrace digital worship. Establishing dedicated support teams or help desks within dioceses or parishes enables clergy and lay leaders to seek assistance with troubleshooting technical issues, implementing digital initiatives, and maximising the effectiveness of digital tools. Additionally, providing access to online tutorials, instructional videos, and digital resources empowers individuals to deepen their understanding of digital technologies and apply them creatively in worship settings (Okonkwo, 2021).

### 4. Fostering collaboration and networking

Collaboration and networking among Catholic priests and parishioners play a vital role in empowering individuals to embrace digital worship. Creating platforms for clergy and lay leaders to connect, share ideas, and collaborate on digital initiatives fosters a sense of community and mutual support. Whether through virtual forums, workshops, or conferences, networking opportunities enable individuals to learn from each other's experiences, exchange insights, and collectively explore innovative approaches to digital worship within the Nigerian Catholic Church (Ogbu, 2022).

## **The Future of Digital Worship in the Nigerian Catholic Church**

Looking ahead, the future of digital worship for the Catholic Church in Nigeria holds great promises. By leveraging technology thoughtfully and intentionally, the church can deepen its connection with the faithful and adapt to the changing needs of society. This may involve exploring virtual reality experiences for immersive worship, developing mobile apps for prayer and reflection, and utilising data analytics to better understand the needs and preferences of the congregation.

In light of the complexities and opportunities presented by the future of digital worship, the Catholic Church in Nigeria should consider the following suggestions to effectively navigate the integration of digital technology into its worship practices and community engagement efforts:

1. **Ethical Guidelines:** Develop clear ethical guidelines for the responsible use of digital technology in religious contexts, emphasising the protection of individual privacy, the preservation of sacred traditions, and the reverent conduct of digital worship services.

2. **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** Prioritise inclusivity and accessibility in the implementation of digital worship, ensuring that digital resources are made available to all members of the Catholic community, regardless of their socioeconomic status or geographical location.
3. **Cultural Relevance:** Tailor digital educational materials and worship experiences to resonate with the cultural and linguistic diversity of Nigerian believers, acknowledging the unique cultural traditions and religious expressions across different regions of the country.
4. **Collaboration with Tech Experts:** Collaborate with technology experts and digital innovators within the Catholic community and beyond to leverage best practices in digital worship, online security, and responsible data management.

### **Conclusion**

With the speed at which technology is developing, the integration of technology and digitalization has become essential for organisations and institutions in various sectors including churches. These technologies can help the church achieve its goals of reaching out to the world, building relationships with members, and advancing the gospel. It may allow the church to use digital worship to strengthen communities and interact with people in fresh and meaningful ways. Although digital worship offers convenience and accessibility, traditional worship in the Catholic Church provides a sense of community, sensory engagement, and spiritual connection that may be difficult to replicate in a digital setting. Both forms of worship have their own unique benefits and challenges, and churches and individuals may choose to engage in a combination of traditional and digital practices based on their personal preferences and circumstances. The adoption of digital technologies in Nigerian Catholic parishes, at least from the sample cited, has already begun to revolutionise worship experiences, outreach efforts, and community engagement. Livestreamed Masses, virtual prayer services, mobile applications, social media platforms, and artificial intelligence-driven resources are empowering Catholics to deepen their faith, connect with the Church, and participate in worship activities in new and innovative ways.

However, the future of digital worship in Nigeria will require concerted efforts from church authorities and leaders, organisations, technological innovators, and the faithful themselves to ensure that technology is used in ways that are authentic, inclusive, and aligned with Catholic teachings, traditions and values. Collaborative initiatives aimed at promoting digital literacy, fostering community engagement, and supporting pastoral ministries will be essential for all pastoral agents to navigate the opportunities and challenges presented by the digital age. Ultimately, the future of digital worship for the Catholic Church in Nigeria is one of dynamic growth, transformation, and renewal. It is believed that by embracing digital innovation while remaining rooted in the rich cultural heritage and spiritual traditions of the church, Nigerian

Catholicism can continue to proclaim the gospel message, nurture discipleship, and build vibrant communities of faith in the digital era. Finally, as the Nigerian Catholic Church embarks on this journey of digital transformation, she should do so with hope, faith, and a steadfast commitment to spreading God's love and mercy to all nooks and crannies of Nigerian society.

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