

**CATHOLIC STYLE GUIDE**  
**Perpetual Light Publishing**

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**With permission from the Coming Home Network**

## Catholic Style Guide

### INTRODUCTION

The following are general guidelines for authors and editors; they are not intended as a comprehensive stylebook. The primary style reference guide for **books** is *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition (CMS).

The primary style reference guides for the **newsletter** are the *Catholic News Service Stylebook on Religion*, 3rd edition (CNS) and the *Associated Press Stylebook*, current annual edition (AP).

Other useful style references are *Words Into Type* (WIT) and *The Gregg Reference Manual* (GRM).

Where there are differences between the in-house guidelines and other style guides, the in-house guidelines take precedence. Here is the “hierarchy” for the guides. The rules of style in each source on this list take precedence over the rules in the sources below it.

*Catholic Style Guide*

*Catholic News Service Stylebook on Religion*, 3rd edition (CNS)

*Associated Press Stylebook*, current annual edition (AP)

For spelling, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition, is the primary resource.

### CAPITALIZATION

(For general guidelines, see “Religious Names and Terms” in the CMS 8.97-8.111. Some exceptions are listed below. Also see Titles I [Composition Works] and Titles II [People] in this guide.)

#### Quotes from the Bible or Catechism

Maintain the capitalization in quotes from the Bible or Catechism of the Catholic Church even when they differ from our style.

#### Divine Pronouns

Uppercase the pronouns that refer to God, except for “who” and “whom.”

## Selected Examples of Capitalization (also decisions re: hyphenation)

AD (small caps, no periods)

a.m.

Anglican Communion, the (association of churches)

Anglo-Catholic (per MW)

Antichrist

anti-Christian

Apocalypse

*Apologia pro Vita Sua*

**apostle(s):** In general, lowercase. But see the following examples.

**Examples of uppercase:**

“The Apostles preached the Good News” or “the Apostle Paul came to Troas” or “The Apostles Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome” (in reference to a specific apostle or to the 12 Apostles in particular).

“St. Thomas the Apostle traveled to India.”

“Jesus appointed the Twelve Apostles.”

Also, “the Twelve” (or before Judas’ successor was named, “the Eleven”).

Keep in mind the general principle: Capitalize a proper noun when it refers to a particular member of the class designated by the noun. *Ex.*: “The President” = the president currently in office; “the Pope” = the pope currently reigning.

apostolic, apostolic succession; *but* Apostolic Fathers, Apostolic Tradition

baptism of the Holy Spirit (see sacraments for “Sacrament of Baptism”)

Beast of the Apocalypse

**Bible, books of the:** Uppercase “Book”— Book of Genesis.

Bible Belt

**biblical**

**biblical events:** Uppercase when a term is used as a specific reference to a major event, but lowercase when used in its common meaning. For major events in the lives of Jesus and Mary, uppercase when the reference does not use the person’s name, but lowercase if the word is used with the name or with a pronoun referring back to the person (see “biblical events,” CNS B-25).

**Examples**

“With the Fall, sin entered the world” but “With the fall of Adam and Eve, sin entered the world.”

“We commemorate the Passion on Good Friday” but “Jesus’s passion is commemorated on Good Friday.”

“The Church celebrates the Assumption on August 15” but “Her assumption into heaven is celebrated on August 15.”

**Bishop:** follow rules in CNS Stylebook, 26-B

bishop of \_\_\_\_\_ (per JH1)

**Body, Blood, Soul, Divinity:** Uppercase when referring to the Eucharist.

Body of Christ (uc for Church)

Book of Common Prayer

born again

canon of Scripture

Campus Crusade

**Catholic Church; the Church:** Capitalize when referring to the universal Church (the Catholic Church alone or “Christendom” in general); lowercase when referring to the building or the diocese (the **local church**). Also capitalize when referring to the Orthodox, or Eastern, Churches and the Eastern-rite Catholic Churches (referring not to individual parish churches but to “jurisdictions,” such as the Russian Orthodox Church and the Greek Catholic Church). Cap also names of denominations: the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church; and the name of a particular church: St. John’s Episcopal Church. *But* the churches of the Reformation; Protestant churches charismatic renewal, an independent charismatic church, *but* the Charismatic Episcopal Church (uc for denomination name)

Church history

Christology, christological

communion (lc in Protestant denominations); Communion (cap for Catholic & Orthodox)

Communion of Saints

Couple to Couple League

coworker

Creed, the, Nicene Creed, the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds; *but* creeds, no creed  
cross, the

devil (lc)

Diocese of \_\_\_\_\_, *but* the diocese

divine Son

doctorate

**Doctors of the Church**

early Church; early Church Fathers

ecumenical council

email

Epistle of James, Paul’s Epistles, *but* the Apostles taught through epistles

**Eucharist; eucharistic:** (eucharistic liturgy, eucharistic species, and eucharist *if* = occasional Protestant ceremony; **but Eucharistic Adoration**)

Evangelical (uc for type of Protestant)

**Evangelists, Four** (“Luke the Evangelist” but “the evangelist Luke”)

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (when referring to a layperson distributing the Eucharist, not “Eucharistic minister”)

faith (virtue)

Faith the Catholic Faith

**Fathers of the Church / Church Fathers / the Fathers;** Apostolic Fathers

Fundamentalist (uc for type of Protestant)

**godless**

**Good News:** Capitalize when referring to the Gospel.

**Gospel:** Uppercase when referring to the writings of the Four Evangelists (the Gospel of Mark, Mark's Gospel, the Gospels).

**heaven**

**hell**

high church (per JH1)

Holy Communion

**Holy Father** (pope)

Holy Orders

Holy Sacrifice (of the Mass)

Holy Scripture(s)

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

invisible church

Irish-Catholic community; a faithful Irish Catholic (hyphenated for adj; open as noun)

**Jesus, titles for:**

**Examples:**

the Christ; God the Son; the Son of God; the Messiah; the Son of Man; the Word; redeemer, savior, lord: Treat these terms as descriptive (lowercase) if one of the primary names of Jesus appears within the sentence (but treat "Lord Jesus" as a title); treat them as proper nouns if they appear alone (see "Jesus," CNS 116-J; examples: "Jesus is the redeemer of humankind." "Our Redeemer lives!" "Jesus is the lord of all." "The Lord came among us."). Capitalize "our" in "Our Lord" when it appears alone.

**kingdom, the:** the kingdom of God; the kingdom of heaven; but "the Kingdom" (when it appears alone)

Latin American Protestants (no hyphen)

Letter (uc for biblical; see Epistle)

**liturgy:** Capitalize only when part of a proper noun: Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Liturgy of the Hours, Divine Liturgy (the Mass in the Eastern Catholic Churches).

low church (per *Journey Home* 1)

Magisterium

**Mary, pronouns for:** always lowercase.

**Mary, titles for:** Uppercase titles like these: the Virgin Mary, the Blessed Mother, Our Lady, Queen of Apostles. Do not capitalize descriptive references in sentences that use Mary's name or a pronoun referring back to her. For example, "Catholics believe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a virgin" (see "Mary," CNS M-141).

**Mass, Masses:** Uppercase when referring to the eucharistic liturgy.

master of divinity degree, M.Div.

mega-church

miraculous medal

modernism

Mystical Body

New Evangelization  
nondenominational  
nonliturgical

Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter; *but* the ordinariate; the Anglican ordinariate

papacy

papist

parachurch

**paradise:** Lowercase except when capitalized in Scripture quotations.

parish, St. Charles parish (lc p)

person (lc unless referring to one of the divine Persons of the Trinity)

p.m.

**pontiff**

**pope:** Lowercase except when used as a formal title before a name or to designate the reigning pope.

postwar

Profession of Faith (liturgical prayer); a profession of faith

pro-life

providence

**purgatory**

Quran

rapture

**Real Presence:** when referring to the Eucharist

Reformers

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)

rock 'n' roll

Rosary (uc for prayer); Irish rosary (object)

**Sacrament of; name of individual sacrament**

**Examples:**

Sacrament of Baptism

“In Baptism, we are received into the Church” but “Her baptism has been rescheduled”  
(lowercase as an event).

**sacraments**

Sacred Tradition

saints

St. (abbreviate as title)

Scholastic

**scriptural**

**Scripture, Scriptures:** Capitalize in reference to the Hebrew or Christian Bible (see “Scripture, Scriptures,” CNS S-207).

*sola fide*

*sola Scriptura*

**Sign of the Cross**

stations of the cross (per JH1)

subdeacon

Sunday school (per MW)

Tractarian

Tradition, *but* human tradition, or Protestant view of Catholic tradition

transubstantiation

true Church

Upper Room (when referring to the place of the Last Supper)

**Word of God, God’s Word:** Capitalize when referring to Scripture, but note these lowercased examples: “Abraham did not doubt God’s word.” “The world began when God’s word drew it out of nothingness” (CCC 338). Also see “Jesus, titles for.”

Yes (uc for fiat)

## PUNCTUATION

### **Apostrophes with names ending in “s”**

See the rules in CMS 7.17.

Jesus’s

### **Periods**

Used in abbreviations for titles of persons, works, etc.

### **Commas**

Use the serial comma. (Oxford comma)

***Example:***

“Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”

### **Ellipses and Dashes**

***Ellipsis points***

- The three-dot ellipsis is used to indicate omitted phrases, generally less than complete sentences.
- The four-dot method is used when more than one sentence is omitted. The first dot is a true period; what precedes and follows the ellipsis should be complete sentences.
- Other punctuation may precede or follow three, but never four, ellipsis points (CMS 13.50-13.58).
- The first word after an ellipsis is capitalized if it begins a new complete sentence.
- Spacing: when using automatic ellipsis function, space before the ellipsis and after it; otherwise, use a space before, after, and between each dot.

*When not to use:*

- before the first word of a quotation, even if material is omitted
- after the last word of a quotation unless the sentence quoted is itself intentionally incomplete (CMS 13.52)

### *Dashes*

**The em dash:** used for emphasis within text, to set off text, and to convey abrupt break in text (CMS 6.85). Use spaces on either side of these dashes.

#### *Example:*

These blessings withdraw certain persons — or, more commonly, certain objects — from the everyday world and consecrate them totally to God and his service.

**The en dash:** Used between page numbers, without spaces. (In Microsoft Word, hold down the CTRL key and type the hyphen key in the number keypad; otherwise, use the “Insert,” “Symbol,” function.)

#### *Example:*

pp. 26–27

**Hyphens** generally require no space around them.

## QUOTATIONS AND CITATIONS

**Block quotes** should be single-spaced.

For **Scripture quotations**, use the abbreviations in CMS 10.44-10.48. When the quotation ends with a question mark or exclamation point, a period is still added after the closing parentheses.

#### *Example:*

St. Paul writes, “You will say to me then, ‘Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?’” (Rom. 9:19).

Lines of poetry from Scripture or other texts can be quoted in one of two ways, as a block quotation or with slashes:

#### *Examples:*

Who is this King of glory?

The LORD of hosts,

He is the King of glory! (Ps. 24:10).

*or*

“Who is this King of glory? / The LORD of hosts, / He is the King of glory! (Ps. 24:10).

**Citations for block quotations** should appear as follows, with **no** period following the parentheses:

#### *Examples:*

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light. (Matt. 17:1-2)



The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, no. 1)

v. and vv. After a scriptural passage has been cited, if a particular verse within the chapter is cited later in the *same* paragraph, use “v.” to cite the verse number.

**Example:**

“God saw that it was good” (Gen. 1:21); in fact, “it was very good” (v. 31).

Use “vv.” to cite multiple verses in this context: “(vv. 31–32).”

However, if the later citations of the same biblical passage appear in later paragraphs, or if needed for the sake of clarity, use the full citation, repeating the biblical book and chapter with the new verse number(s).

**Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)**

All quotations must include the footnoted material. The text must be exactly as it appears in the second edition (a small exception to this rule is that abbreviations of books of the Bible do not have to be italicized).

**Example:**

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: “He, then, gives us the ‘pledge’ or ‘first fruits’ of our inheritance: the very life of the Holy Trinity, which is to love as ‘God [has] loved us’ (1 John 4:11-12; cf. Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 1:21). This love (the ‘charity’ of 1 Cor. 13) is the source of the new life in Christ, made possible because we have received ‘power’ from the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; cf. 1 Cor. 13)” (CCC 735).

**Parenthetical Citations**

For page numbers, add a comma, “p.” or “pp.”, and the page number(s) after the work’s title. For numbered sections, add a comma and “no.” or “nos.” and the section number(s). (**Note:** If it is generally well-known to the readership that the citation numbers are section numbers, and if a cleaner look is desired, the use of “no.” and “nos.” and the use of the comma after the abbreviation of the work may be dropped — but do so, as always, with consistency in mind. See the above example “As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches. . . .”)

**Examples:**

“The Church has always and everywhere held and continues to hold that the four Gospels are of apostolic origin” (*2006 Catholic Almanac*, p. 93).

“For theirs is a community composed of men” (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, no. 1).

**Internet Citations**

When citing Internet sources, whether in the general text or notes, do not use italic or bold type. Depending on the source or circumstance, it may be preferable to include a

description. Include “http” or “ftp,” as the case may be. (This is especially the case when listing Internet sources in bibliographies).

**Examples:**

<http://www.vatican.va>

For more information, visit the Vatican website, <http://www.vatican.va>.

## SOURCES AND PERMISSIONS

### Fair Use

A very “fluid” concept. In general, we should use *500 words or less* as the fair-use limit, except when quoting a whole composition work such as a poem or an essay. (For general information on fair use, see CMS 4.86.) As a general rule: “When in doubt, check it out.”

### Scripture Sources

- **Revised Standard Version, 2<sup>nd</sup> Catholic Edition (RSV C2)** is the preferred version. May quote up to 500 verses without express written permission, provided the quoted verses do not amount to a complete book of the Bible or account for 50 percent of the total work in which they are quoted. (From the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America “Permissions Policy,” <http://www.nccusa.org/newbtu/permis.html>.)
- **New American Bible (NAB):** From USCCB website 2/19/2016: No permission is required for use of less than 5,000 words of the NAB in print, sound, or electronic formats (for web usage, see below) provided that such use comprises less than 40% of a single book of the Bible and less than 40% of the proposed work. (**Note:** Poetry lines must be followed as they appear or slashes must be used.)
- **Douay-Rheims Bible (1899):** In the public domain. No permission is needed, and there are no fees.

### Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, or CCC can be found online at <http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/files/assets/basic-html/page-I.html#>

### Documents of the Second Vatican Council

- **www.vatican.va:** This is the preferred source. The website should always be credited.
- ***Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*** (edited by Austin Flannery, O.P.; published by Costello Publishing Company/William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.): This is the second-most-preferred source. As of this writing, no prior approval of the text is required, but a word count should be sent to Costello Publishing, which will then charge a fee (in the past, the fees have been very reasonable). For updates, please contact the Book Department manager.
- ***The Documents of Vatican II*** (edited by Walter M. Abbott, S.J.; published by Crossroad): According to a 1994 memo circulated by a former Book Department manager, prior permission to use *any* quote must be obtained from the copyright holder, The America Press.

## TITLES I (COMPOSITION WORKS)

### New Titles (CMS 8.159)

1. Capitalize the first and last words both in titles and subtitles, as well as all other major words (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and some conjunctions).
2. Lowercase **the, a, an**.
3. *Capitalize* prepositions of four or more letters (WIT, p. 147; GRM 360).
4. Lowercase the conjunctions **and, but, for, or, nor**.
5. Lowercase **to, as**.
6. Lowercase the second part of a species name (**Homo sapien**) or the part of a proper name that would be lowercased in text, such as **de** or **von**.

#### **Examples:**

*Mnemonics That Work Are Better Than Rules That Don't*

*Four Theories Concerning the Gospel According to Matthew*

### Hyphenated Compounds in New Titles (CMS 8.161)

There are two methods. For the first method, capitalize the first element unless any subsequent element is a proper noun or adjective. Or, in the second method:

1. Capitalize the first element.
2. Capitalize any subsequent elements unless they are articles, prepositions of four or more letters, coordinating conjunctions, or such modifiers as “flat” or “sharp” following musical key symbols.
3. If the first element is merely a prefix or combining form that could not stand by itself as a word, do not capitalize the second element unless it is a proper noun or proper adjective.
4. Prepositions that are an inseparable part of a verb should be capped:

#### **Examples:**

*When Workers Are Laid Off; How to Find Out the Answer*

5. Contrary to common usage, capitalize the second element in a hyphenated spelled-out number.
6. Break a rule when it doesn't work.

#### **Examples:**

*Cross-Stitching for Beginners*

*Thirty-Three Years to Calvary*

*The E-flat Concerto*

## Existing Composition Titles

### ***General rules***

Italicize titles of:

- Books
- Pamphlets
- Newspaper sections (if published separately)
- Song titles
- Play titles
- Poems
- Other stand-alone documents

### ***Examples:***

*Crossing the Threshold of Hope*

the *New York Times* (article lowercase and *not* italicized, CMS 8.170)

*New York Times Magazine*

*Time* magazine

*The Crusades* pamphlet

### ***Church documents***

In general, italicize. If the Latin title is given followed by the English translation or description, italicize only the Latin (original) title. As a general rule, do not capitalize the parenthetical English description as a composition title. If the English translation of the title is given in lieu of the Latin title, or if both are treated as synonymous (as with Vatican II documents, for example), then the English may be italicized; whatever form is used, *consistency* is the watchword.

### ***Examples:***

In *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (on the Eucharist in its relationship to the Church), Pope John Paul II says that “the Church draws her life from the Eucharist.”

*But*

In *On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church*, Pope John Paul II says that “the Church draws her life from the Eucharist.”

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *Catechism*

*Code of Canon Law*, canon law (lowercase, no italic)

*Lumen Gentium* (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*)

*Humanae Vitae* (on the regulation of birth)

*Pacem in Terris* (“Peace on Earth”) [literal translation]

### ***Institutional books***

Italicize when referred to by the full title (or sometimes by a shortened version).

### ***Examples:***

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (the article “The” is not part of the title), the *Catechism*

*The Official Catholic Directory* (2005) (“The” is part of the title; the *Kenedy Directory* is acceptable on second reference)

***Liturgical books***

Not set in italics.

***Examples:***

Sacramentary

Lectionary

the Ordo, but *The Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and Celebration of the Eucharist* (2006), published by Paulist Press (book title)

Roman Missal

Liturgy of the Hours

Book of Blessings

(**Note:** For a more comprehensive listing of liturgical books, see “liturgical books” in Catholic News Service’s *Stylebook on Religion, Third Edition*.)

***Liturgical rites***

When referring to the official text, italicize.

***Examples:***

*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*

*Rite of Penance* (but “the penitential rite”)

**TITLES II (PEOPLE)****Religious Titles**

Generally, these should be capitalized and spelled out when they precede a personal name; lowercased when following a name or used in place of a name, except when used in direct address (CMS 8.19-8.26; also see “Titles and Offices,” CMS).

***Examples:***

Pope Benedict XVI, the pope (but “the Pope” when referring to the reigning pope)

Francis Cardinal George (*not* Cardinal Francis George), the cardinal

Archbishop John Noll, the archbishop

Bishop John D’Arcy, the bishop

Monsignor Owen Campion, the monsignor

Father Gary Smith, the priest (*not* the father)

Deacon William Jones, the deacon (transitional and permanent deacons)

Brother John Smith, the brother

Sister Frances Smith, the sister

(See CMS 8.26 for non-Catholic religious titles)

**Religious Orders**

Use periods for abbreviations (GRM 519; see CNS Appendices, or OSV’s *Catholic Dictionary* or *Catholic Almanac* for abbreviations).

***Examples:***

Father Ronald Jones, O.F.M. Cap.; or Capuchin Father Ronald Jones

Brother John Smith, O.F.M., or Franciscan Brother John Smith

Sister Frances Smith, O.P.; or Dominican Sister Frances Smith

**Holy Persons**

Generally, spell out the title (CMS 15.27), except “Saint.”

**Examples:**

St. Thomas More

Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha

Venerable Matt Talbot

Servant of God John of Monte Corvino

**Secular Titles**

Again, generally, these should be capitalized and spelled out when they precede a personal name; lowercase when following a name or used in place of a name, except when used in direct address (CMS 8.19-8.26; also see “Titles and Offices,” CMS).

**Examples:**

President George Bush, the president (but “the President” when referring to the president currently in office)

Senator Richard Lugar, the senator (“Pardon me, Senator, but Mr. Smith has the floor.”)

Representative J. Edward Roush, the congressman (“He is the representative for the Fourth District” but “At the news conference, the congressman [*not* “the representative”] said ...”)

Governor Mitch Daniels, the governor

Queen Elizabeth II, the queen

Emperor Wilhelm II, the emperor

General Ulysses S. Grant, the general

**Some Exceptions**

Mr. John Smith

Mrs. Jane Smith

Dr. John Doe, the doctor

**GENERAL COMMENTS ON PREFERRED FORMAT FOR ELECTRONIC FILES**

- Notes to the editors or designers should be placed within double brackets. For example: [[Place Photo 1-1 here]]
- Art and photos: Please consult the editor for dpi specifications if supplying digital files. Please provide instructions on the placement of art and photos. One method of labeling art and photos is by chapter number and order of placement: for example, “1-1” would be the first photo of Chapter 1.