

# Catholic Style Guide & Helpful Information

## Style Guide

When writing Catholic, a lowercase “c” means “universal” while a capital “C” refers to the Church or members of it, for example, “I am a Catholic.” This is true of all religions: Protestant, Orthodox, Islam, Christianity.

When writing church, use a capital “C” when it’s part of a proper name: Saint Mary’s Church. Use a lowercase “c” for other uses.

When referring to the deity, capitalize God. When referring to idols, do not. For example, “He treated his car like a god.” When making a reference to polytheism, use “gods.” Lowercase all personal pronouns that refer to God (e.g., he, him, his). Use uppercase when referring to the Trinity or the individual persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

When writing the names of the sacraments, they should begin with a lowercase letter except for the Eucharist. The “s” in baptism changes to a “z” when it is used as “baptized.”

Communion: Capitalize all references to the sacrament, but not adjectives modifying it or nouns it modifies (first Communion, holy Communion, Communion service). Lowercase communion for all uses outside the church service.

Mass: Capitalize Mass. Use the verb “celebrate” when referring to the Mass.

Places and concepts such as kingdom of God, purgatory, heaven, and hell are lowercase.

Capitalize Bible and Scriptures since they refer to a book.

Source: *CNS Stylebook on Religion*, Third Edition. Washington, D.C.: Catholic News Service, 2006.

## Commonly Misspelled Terms

|           |          |         |          |              |
|-----------|----------|---------|----------|--------------|
| altar     | anoint   | apostle | divine   | sacrifice    |
| canon law | disciple | priest  | alleluia | confirmation |

## Roman Numerals

Popes are numbered using Roman numerals.

I: 1    II: 2    III: 3    IV: 4    V: 5    VI: 6    VII: 7    VIII: 8    IX: 9

Add X in front of a number to make 10. For example, XVI is 16. Add two X’s to make 20. For example, Pope John XXIII is John the 23rd.

## General Information

The “CCC” refers to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992, 1997).

Clergy refers to those who have received the sacrament of holy orders: bishops, priests, and deacons. All others are either lay people, consecrated men and women, or religious.

Diocesan Bishop: the man in charge of the governance of a diocese (geographical division of the church). He is also known as the Ordinary. An auxiliary bishop is an assistant bishop. A coadjutor bishop is an assistant bishop with automatic right of succession upon the death or retirement of the Ordinary. Bishops are required to submit their resignation to the pope when they reach 75 years of age.

Cardinals: Bishops who are either the head of a diocese or work at the Vatican. It can also be a title given by the pope as an honor to a special priest. Cardinals serve as special advisors to the pope. Those under the age of 80 elect a new pope.

Pope: the Bishop of Rome and successor of Saint Peter who is the head of the Catholic Church. The current pontiff is Francis, the former Jorge Mario Bergoglio. He is from Argentina and was elected in March of 2013. Note that his official papal name is Francis, and not Francis I. Benedict XVI’s current title is “pope emeritus.”

Vatican II: an ecumenical council held at the Vatican from 1962-1965 that included all the bishops of the world. It promulgated sixteen official documents.

## Guidelines for Receiving Communion

### Catholics

- Should not be conscious of grave sin.
- Fasted for one hour.

### Other Christians

- Because of Catholics’ belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, other Christians who are members of communities that do not share this belief are not permitted to receive.
- Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own Churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of communion by Christians of these Churches.

### Non-Christians

- While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family.

These guidelines in their entirety can be accessed at: <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/current/intercom.shtml>.