

Style Guide for St. Matthew Catholic Church

This style guide is intended to improve consistency within our publications and ensure clear messaging in support of the St. Matthew Catholic Church identity. These guidelines apply to writing for print and electronic publications, including the bulletin, the website, e-communications, department manuals, annual reports, mailings, etc. In accordance with the Diocese of Charlotte, St. Matthew generally follows Associated Press and Catholic News Service (USCCB) style guidelines when writing for publication. A copy of each of the style guides is located in the Communications Office for reference. Here are some helpful rules when writing materials for publication by St. Matthew.

- **Months** – Spell out months of the year. If used as part of a date, abbreviate *Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Dec.* Spell out *March, April, May, June and July*. If the month as part of a date is listed in a headline, spell it out.
- **Times** – Use figures except for noon and midnight. Write as follows: 7 pm; 7 to 8 pm; noon and midnight
- **Numbers** – spell out whole numbers below 10, use figures for 10 and above. For school grades, spell out first through ninth and use numerals for 10th through 12th grades.
- **Punctuation** –
 - Day and date: Friday, Jan. 8, at 8 pm
 - Do not include a comma before “and” in a series. (at the 9 am, 10:45 am and 12:10 pm Masses)
 - Punctuation should fall inside a closed quote. (She said, “God is good.”)
- **Percentage** – Spell out percent unless space is an issue and use a numeral. (35 percent increase)
- **Spacing** – Include only one space after a period.
- **Titles** – Capitalize official job and organization/department titles but not general positions or roles. (Faith Formation Coordinator, Director of Liturgical Ministries, First Friday Ministry, Living Your Strengths; altar servers, lectors, ushers)
- **Campus Locations** – Capitalize the names of offices or church campus locations if it includes the proper name of the building such as New Life Center Banquet Room, Daily Mass Chapel and Parish Center Family Room. Do not capitalize if it is a general location such as narthex, sanctuary, church office and gift shop.
- **Junior, senior** – Abbreviate as Jr. and Sr. only with full names. Do not precede by a comma.
- **Addresses** – Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd., St. only with a numbered address. Spell out otherwise. (Drive, Road and Terrace are always spelled out.) Use periods in the abbreviation of P.O.
- **Academic Degrees** – Spell out and lowercase names of degrees when referenced generically in running text: He earned a bachelor’s degree, a master’s in history, a master of business administration and a doctorate. Use such abbreviations as B.A., M.A., LL.D. and Ph.D. only when the need to identify individuals by degree on first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. Use these abbreviations only after a full name – never after just a last name. Capitalize degree abbreviations with periods and set off with commas when following a name: John Doe, Ph.D., was the guest speaker.

Church/Catholic Terminology

- **Mass** – always capitalize the word Mass when used in reference to the liturgy.
- **Jesus and God** – capitalize pronouns used to reference Jesus or God. (Jesus gave His life to save ours.)
- **Sacraments** – Only capitalize Eucharist and other terms referring to this sacrament. Do not capitalize baptism, reconciliation, confirmation, matrimony, holy orders and anointing of the sick. Lowercase the word “sacrament” when used in combination with them: sacrament of confirmation.
- **Scripture** – Capitalize. Do not capitalize modifying adjectives: sacred Scriptures, holy Scripture.
- **Church** – Do not capitalize unless used as part of the formal name of a building, a congregation or a denomination: *Holy Redeemer Church, the Catholic Church*. Lowercase when used in an institutional or general theological sense: *The church is the people of God. The church teaches that ...*