

FAITH Catholic
GUIDELINES FOR COMMENTARIES
Revised August-2015

SET-UP

We request that all authors use the following font, type size and margins. This will approximate the margins and type of the books. References to line count in these guidelines is based on these standards.

Font: Arial Size: 11 Margins: left .75; right 3.75

FOCUS SENTENCE

Each commentary is to be introduced by a one-sentence Focus Sentence. This should be no longer than 2 lines long. This sentence is to summarize the take-home message of the Focus Comment. Those who write homilies, as well as commentaries, should not use the same Focus Sentence for both.

FOCUS COMMENT

This is a lesson or "take-home thought" from the day's readings or the feast being celebrated. However, it needs to be written in only 50 to 60 words (no more than 6 lines). The Focus Comment is often used as a mini-homily by a prayer leader outside of Mass. On a major feast or solemnity (these are noted in bold-face type on your assignment), include reference to the special day.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

This is a summary of the readings, given in 50-60 words (no more than 6 lines). Each reading should be included, with usually one or two sentences for each. This summary is often read before Mass to help the people understand the day's Scriptures. It is not necessary to draw a message from the readings (this is done in the Focus Comment); just tell what they are about.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

PRIEST'S INTRODUCTION

Write one or two sentences (no more than 3 lines) addressed to the assembly, inviting them to pray for the needs of the assembly, the Church and the world. It should sound like an invitation. It is not necessary, but it may add to the invitation to imbed in it a concept from the readings.

PETITIONS

The petitions are to follow this formula:

- #1. The needs of the Church
- #2. Public authorities and the salvation of the world
- #3. Those oppressed by any need
- #4. The local community
- #5. The deceased

The petitions should be general enough that they can be used in any parish in the world and not reflective of local customs, forms of government, events or weather. Our users will adapt them to their own communities. Begin each petition with: *For...or That...*and make this consistent for all five petitions. Each petition is to be no more than 3 lines long. If possible, tie in a concept from the readings in at least one of the petitions. Additionally, at least one petition should incorporate an idea that fits into respect for human life.

Petitions should be framed in a positive vein, making sure they do not imply a negative (praying for priests to be holy, for instance, implies that they are not). Telling God what to do is also not appropriate (For God to bring peace...for instance). Use active voice if possible. We try to make all petitions have three parts: 1) who we are praying for; 2) what we want to have happen; and 3) how this might come about. You can use your copy of the Commentary book as a guide.

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CONCLUDING PRAYER

This is one or two sentences, addressed to the Father (using any appropriate title). This is a closing for the petitions, asking God to look favorably upon the prayers of the assembly. It should not be an additional petition. This prayer is to be no more than 3 lines long. The Concluding Prayer's final sentence must end using one of the following: *...we ask this through Christ our Lord; ...in the name of Jesus the Lord; ...our Lord Jesus Christ*; or (if the prayer is addressed to the Father)...*through your Son Jesus Christ*.

STYLE

Use the New American Bible (2000-2001 edition) when quoting Scripture; italicize the quoted material. Material based on other translations or versions will be rewritten to conform to this translation. This is the version used in the Lectionary.

NOTE: If you use a quotation from a non-biblical source, please cite the author and the book for copyright purposes and verification.

We use Associated Press (AP) Stylebook for most grammatical editing, the Catholic News Service Stylebook for church-related terms; and the Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition, for spelling preferences.

Note this exception to AP Style: Spell out all numerals, such as twenty-four and twelve. Avoid abbreviations since the words of your commentary will be spoken: eg. Father, not Fr.; Saint, not St., etc.

Our style is to capitalize God or words that mean God, such as God the Father, God the Son, Holy Spirit, Our Lord, etc. Lowercase personal pronouns for God, such as he, him, thee, thou.

Use the third person or first person plural. Do not write in the first person. If sharing a personal experience or story, use the third person style (and include a parenthetical explanation for our records).

WRITING LEVEL

Authors need to be sensitive regarding the theological understanding of the majority of people who will be listening to our commentaries. The majority of Catholics have had little or no formal Catholic catechesis since Confirmation and/or graduation from a Catholic High School. Phrases such as *Pauline principles*, *Lucan letters*, and *eschatological thinking*, will almost always end up being edited out – not because they are incorrect, but because such phrases often make the listener feel ignorant. Authors who can take complicated thoughts and make them easier to understand are sorely needed in the world. All our material must reflect mainstream Catholic teaching. We ask our authors to: *use your gifts and talents to educate, inform and enlighten in a meaningful way, the stories of our faith and the history of the Church*.

Our mission is to help the word of God flow through your writing to the ink on our pages into the hearts of all who hear.

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