

icht⁺hus

Style Guide

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Why Style is Important

Errors and inconsistencies in style and formatting make a publication seem less professional. On the other hand, excellent, clean, consistent style makes the content of a publication shine. Since the *Ichthus*' content is about God, good style helps make God shine.

Prayer

O Lord God, thank you for the beautiful gift of written language. Thank you also for the *Ichthus*, and for our opportunity to write, edit, and design. Please help use craft pieces and issues that will proclaim your good truth and show the world who you are. Help us be patient as we edit, and careful as we strive with you to create good work. Let our senses be acute to catch small errors, and help us remain focused on your Kingdom. Continue to speak to us and refine our style so that we can best reach your world and display your grandeur. In the name of Christ our beloved savior, Amen.

American and British English

We use standard American spelling and punctuation.

Audience

The *Ichthus* is written to the intelligent reader, not to Christians in specific. We want to demonstrate the truth, beauty, and power of the Christian faith to those who are not yet within the fold. Therefore, pieces should not be written assuming that the reader is a Christian, or even a religious person. Phrases such as, "As Christians, we ..." must be removed from all pieces. Furthermore, arguments that are grounded in premises only acceptable to a Christian must be nuanced. Rather than saying, "Since the Bible says X, X is true," one could say, "For Christians who believe in the authority of the Scriptures,

since the Bible says X, X is true.” Finally, one cannot assume knowledge only a Christian would have. Only assume the sort of knowledge about Christianity, the Church, and the Bible that a general intelligent reader would have.

Bold and Italics

Do not use bold text in the main text of your pieces. Use italics instead. If you want to emphasize something, say something like, “What we do *matters* to God,” rather than, “What we do **matters** to God.” Similarly, do not use all capital letters for emphasis; italics will serve your purpose.

Boldface, however, is acceptable formatting for a section heading, which is discussed below.

Bylines

Be sure to use a *closing* single quotation mark (') next to the year abbreviation! Do not use an opening single quotation mark (').

Example: Stephen Mackereth '15 is a Mathematics and Philosophy concentrator living in Mather House and is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Ichthus*.

Citations

For all non-biblical sources, we use footnotes for citations. Our style is MLA, including page numbers, when available. Also, the superscript that designates a footnote within the main text should come after all the associated punctuation. For example:

Good: *Some theologians claim Augustine had a negative view of sex.*¹

Bad: *Some theologians claim Augustine had a negative view of sex*¹.

Another example:

Good: *Augustine said, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”*²

Bad: *Augustine said, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in you.*^{2”}

Footnotes need not always go at the end of a sentence. Sometimes they are more appropriate after a clause or after a word. The following two examples are good:

Good: *Many theologians, including Luther³, Calvin⁴, and Augustine⁵, are cool.*

Good: *Though some scholars disagree⁶, others think Paul wrote Colossians.*

For the first citation of a piece, use the full citation, as in the examples below:

Julian of Norwich. *Revelations of Divine Love*. Ed. Roger Hudleston. London: Courier Corporation, 2013. Print. P. 42.

“Sandy Hook Shooting Heroes ‘Saved So Many Lives.’” *The Huffington Post*. 16 Dec 2012. Web.

For subsequent citations, however, author-title-page is sufficient:

Julian of Norwich. *Revelations of Divine Love*. P. 67.

Citing the Bible

Always use in-text citations to cite the Bible. E.g., “God loves you (Jn 3:16, ESV)” and, “God made the world (Gen 1:1).” The first Bible quotation in the piece should cite the Bible version the author is quoting, but after that, the translation does not need to be given unless a different translation is used. For the most part, to avoid confusion, don't cite multiple translations in the piece unless this is particularly helpful.

If you wish to cite a list of passages, use semicolons, and list the passages in the order they appear in the Bible. For example, “Jesus is Lord (Mt 28:18; Acts 2:36; Rom 1:4).” If the book and chapter have already been discussed, refer to a single verse using the format “v. x,” e.g., “Colossians 1 opens by announcing that Paul is the author (v. 1).” Also, refer to multiple verses using “vv.,” as in, “Later in the chapter is the Christ-Hymn (vv. 15-20).”

A final note: parenthetical Bible citations go *before* the final period of a sentence. For example, “God asked Job, ‘Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty?’ (Job 38-40:1, ESV).”

For a list of appropriate abbreviations, see below.

Commas

We use the serial comma, also known as the Oxford comma. Thus, a list is written, “Peter, Henry, and Will,” not “Peter, Henry and Will.” This format, rather than the alternative, is chosen to avoid the confusion that can happen with the other format, as is exemplified by the following sentence: “I’d like to thank my parents, Ayn Rand and God.”

For introductory prepositional phrases, we use commas. For example, we say, “In this issue, we talk about God,” and not, “In this issue we talk about God.”

Contractions

Contractions are allowed but should be avoided except where particularly helpful. Contractions are unprofessional and many writers tend to overuse them. However, while the tone of the *Ichthus* is professional, the *Ichthus* should also be engaging. Since contractions may capture the writer’s voice, they thus may better engage the reader and so may sometimes be appropriate, particularly within more personal pieces.

Dashes

Dashes should be formatted as en dashes with spaces on either side, as in the following example: “The only open question is just how – or rather, through whom, in particular – I will show Jesus that I love him back.”

Often, dashes are not necessary, and commas will work just as well. The writer should consider other options before settling on the use of a dash.

Divine Pronouns

In the past, our convention was to refer to God and to the Father using capitalized pronouns but refer to Jesus using lowercase pronouns. For example, we said, “God is our creator, and He loves us.” However, we might also have said, “Jesus is our

savior, and he is also our king.” Since we might have been denying the Trinity with this stylistic convention, this particular point of style was always somewhat contentious.

Now, we do not adopt a convention for capitalizing these pronouns. Within a piece, an author may choose to refer to God and to the members of the Trinity using whatever pronoun formatting the author prefers. However, pronoun use must be consistent *within* the piece. If a piece begins with, “God is great, and He loves us,” but later says, “God and his Kingdom should be our focus,” then there is an error.

We do, however, have conventions related to capitalization of some other Christian words. First, always capitalize “Bible” but leave “biblical” in lowercase. Thus, we might say, “The biblical books are in the Bible.” Second, capitalize “church” when referring to a specific organization, such as the Catholic Church, or when referring to the universal Church. However, do not capitalize when referring to simply “a church.” So we say, “The Church is the sinner’s only home on earth,” but also say, “A church near my home caught fire yesterday.” If referring to the Catholic Church or the universal Church, one may use the capitalized pronouns “She,” “Her,” etc., but should not use lowercase versions of these pronouns.

E.g. and I.e.

First, note the difference between these two abbreviations. “E.g.” is for examples and “i.e.” is to clarify what was previously mentioned. We say, “I like desserts, e.g., pie, cake, and cookies,” and say, “The Son of God, i.e., Jesus Christ, is my savior.”

Stylistically, we include a comma after the second period of both abbreviations.

Ellipses

Avoid these for the most part, but if you must use them, format as follows: “He went on and on and on . . . Then he stopped.” We include a space before the ellipsis, spaces between the periods, and a space after the ellipsis.

“Ichthus”

The correct rendering of our publication's name is the *Harvard Ichthus*, or the *Ichthus* for short. It's analogous to “the *New York Times*.”

Pull Quotes

Pull quotes are brief excerpts from a piece that are displayed in large font outside the main text. They are suggested by writers and finalized by designers. As such, *Ichthus* members at all stages of the issue production process should know how to choose a good pull quote. Pull quotes should be very engaging and should express central ideas of the piece.

Designers should not use quotation marks around pull quotes unless the excerpts are actually quotations from other people or sources and are not original words of the author of the piece.

Quotation Marks

Keep periods and commas inside quotation marks but leave semicolons and colons outside quotation marks.

Good: *He said, “I love you,” then shut the door.*

Good: *I adore John 11:35, which says, “Jesus wept”; it's a great verse.*

Section Headings

Section headings are good to use in most pieces, especially longer pieces. The titles of these should be engaging and communicate the main idea of the section.

Titles

Piece titles are crucial. An engaging title leads to more readers, and an accurate title means readers take away the key message of the piece. Clever titles are great, but they need to capture what the piece is all about, too.

Tone

The tone of the *Ichthus* is professional but accessible. We want Christianity to be respected as a religion that can be examined carefully and critically, so we strive for academic excellence. This is why we cite our sources. However, we are primarily aiming to reach our peers, not theologians. We need to write in a way that will encourage others to read and help others understand what we want to say.

Abbreviations for Books of the Bible

Genesis	Gen	Matthew	Mt
Exodus	Ex	Mark	Mk
Leviticus	Lev	Luke	Lk
Numbers	Num	John	Jn
Deuteronomy	Dt	Acts	Acts
Joshua	Jos	Romans	Rom
Judges	Jdg	1 Corinthians	1 Cor
Ruth	Ruth	2 Corinthians	2 Cor
1 Samuel	1 Sam	Galatians	Gal
2 Samuel	2 Sam	Ephesians	Eph
1 Kings	1 Ki	Philippians	Phil
2 Kings	2 Ki	Colossians	Col
1 Chronicles	1 Chr	1 Thessalonians	1 Th
2 Chronicles	2 Chr	2 Thessalonians	2 Th
Ezra	Ezr	1 Timothy	1 Tim
Nehemiah	Neh	2 Timothy	2 Tim
Esther	Est	Titus	Tt
Job	Job	Philemon	Phm
Psalms	Ps	Hebrews	Heb
Proverbs	Prov	James	Jas
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Peter	1 Pet
Song of Solomon	Song	2 Peter	2 Pet
Isaiah	Isa	1 John	1 Jn
Jeremiah	Jer	2 John	2 Jn
Lamentations	Lam	2 John	3 Jn
Ezekiel	Ezk	Jude	Jud
Daniel	Dan	Revelation	Rev
Hosea	Hos		
Joel	Joel		
Amos	Amo		
Obadiah	Oba		
Jonah	Jon		
Micah	Mic		
Nahum	Nah		
Habakkuk	Hab		
Zephaniah	Zeph		
Haggai	Hagg		
Zechariah	Zech		
Malachi	Mal		