Submission Guidelines

Thank you for your submission to National Catholic Reporter. We do appreciate your taking the time to write something for us. We receive between 25 and 30 unsolicited manuscripts a week. We will review yours as soon as we can. We will do our best to reply within 4-6 weeks.

Here are a few things to bear in mind:

1. We need hard news and sharp features. **Query first.** We may already have a reporter on the story, and we don’t want you to waste your time.
   a. What is a query? Before you do the actual writing, inquire if NCR would be interested in something you propose to write.
   b. A query should do these things:
      1. Explain clearly what you want to write about and why.
      2. Explain why NCR and not another publication should run this story.
      3. Send what you think the lead paragraph or nut paragraph of the article would be. (Academics might call this a thesis statement.)
      4. Sketch out the sources and research you will use. This doesn’t have to be comprehensive, just give us an idea of what you’re thinking.
      5. Tell us how many words you think you will need to accomplish your task. See Point 5 below. Features typically run 1,200 words.
      6. Make a case that you are the writer NCR should ask to write this article.

2. Send a resume and sample articles (pdfs or urls) when you query the first time.

3. Submissions focused on a seasonal event (Christmas, Easter, Mothers Day, etc.) or the anniversary of an historical event, should be submitted a minimum of six weeks in advance. And for the big events (Advent and Lent reflections, for example) we try to plan four to six months in advance.

4. Commentaries on ‘hot news’ topics, such as the election of the pope or the tragedy of the latest natural disaster, war or terrorist attack, probably won’t be accepted unless you have a truly unique angle on the subject or are a noted expert. Our established columnists get first dibs on these kinds of issues and we can only run so many.

5. Generally commentaries should be around 800 words long.

6. We do not publish poetry or fiction.
7. We’re a newspaper not an academic journal, write accordingly.

8. We generally do not accept material that has appeared somewhere else already or that has been submitted somewhere else already.

9. A strong, reported feature story is something we are always on the look out for.

10. If you work for the organization you’re writing about, or are paid to promote its efforts, you’ll need to pitch the story elsewhere.

11. We rarely publish scripture reflections or sermons. (Try our sister publication for that http://celebrationpublications.org/)

12. We very rarely publish unsolicited book reviews.

Send queries to ncr_editor@ncronline.org.

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Links: