Saint Joseph’s College  
Guide to Citing Theology Resources in MLA format

The MLA handbook does not provide precise instructions for citing documents of the Church. The following are guidelines for citations in various formats, e.g., print, web, database, etc. A document may be in multiple formats. Cite accordingly.

No matter what the format of the source, there are a few “rules of thumb” when it comes to Catholic Church documents.

Most papal and episcopal documents are treated as books, not as letters or chapters. This means they are italicized or underlined, rather than put in quotation marks. Do not use online automatic formatting for Catholic Church documents, such as www.easybib.com, as these treat the following as letters or chapters, which is incorrect. Follow the guidelines, and do it yourself.

These include the following:
- Papal encyclicals
- Papal decrees
- Council documents (e.g., Vatican II documents)
- Apostolic letters
- Apostolic exhortations
- Anniversary documents commenting on previous encyclical letters
- Bishops’ statements
- Primary works (e.g., works of antiquity through the Middle Ages, such as from Irenaeus, Augustine, Aquinas, etc.)

While the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is treated as a book, a catechetical document is treated as a chapter and put in quotation marks. An example would be the headings: “The Desire for God.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church.*

With regard to papal documents in print or EBook form, indicate the translation or edition you are using in the bibliography. This is not necessary in the citations. Example:
All Vatican II documents are taken from:

In parenthetical citations, give either the Latin or English title. This may be abbreviated. Note that the *EV* for the *Latin* is italicized (or underlined), but the CCC for the English is not.
Examples:
*The Gospel of Life* 13
*Evangelium Vitae* 13
*EV* 13
*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1234
*CCC* 1234

Below is an example of the footnote or endnote format for the 1st entry:

Subsequent footnotes or endnotes:
*Evangelium Vitae* 7; par 13
*Evangelium Vitae* 7

*On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life* 7; par 13

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How does the document title appear in the bibliography?
You have several options in MLA with and without the English translation, and remember that these titles are either *italicized* or underlined.

Examples:
John Paul II. *Encyclical Letter Evangelium Vitae.*
John Paul II. *The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae).*

How does the document title appear in the footnotes and endnotes?
You have several options with and without the English translation, and remember that these titles are either *italicized* or underlined.

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Evangelium Vitae*  
John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae)*

No matter what the source, below are guidelines for bibliography and citations in the various formats (remember, the title can appear in any of the configurations above).

**Print Resources**

**Book - Encyclical**


Parenthetical citation:
(Evangelium Vitae 24)  
(EV 24)  
(The Gospel of Life 24)

1st footnote or endnote:

Subsequent footnotes or endnotes:
*Evangelium Vitae* 24; par 4  
*Evangelium Vitae* 24  
*The Gospel of Life* 24
**Book – Council Documents**

Bibliography

Citations: See above

**Primary Texts and Books with a translator**

Bibliography:

*On the Trinity, On Christian Doctrine, and City of God* are taken from:

Regarding citation of a compilation of primary works, the primary work is cited with the citation type (e.g., section, paragraph, book, chapter, etc.), usually not the page number.

*Note: Primary works (usually works of antiquity through the Middle Ages), either as a compilation or single work, in parenthetical citations normally are listed by the work and not the author. See examples below from Augustine, Aquinas, and Aristotle.*

Parenthetical Citation:

*(On the Trinity I.i.2)*

Note the I.i.2 refers to “Book.chapter.paragraph.”

**1st footnote or endnote**


**Subsequent footnotes or endnotes**

*On the Trinity* II.i.2

**Single Primary Source book with a translator**

Bibliography:

Parenthetical citation:

*(Confessions VII.ii.3)*

**1st footnote or endnote:**


Subsequent footnotes or endnotes:

*Confessions* VII.ii.3.
Print book one volume of a multi volume set

Bibliography:

Regarding citations, the exact location of the text, not the page number, is needed. Often the *Summa Theologiae* is abbreviated *ST*.

Parenthetical citation (any of the following are acceptable):
(Summa Theologiae I-II, Q.3, Art. 2, ad. 1)
(Sum I-II, 2, ii, ad. 1)
(ST I-II, Q. 3, Art. 2, ad. 1)
(ST I-II, Q 3, A 2, ad. 1)
(S.T. I-II, 2, ii, a. 1)

1st footnote or endnote:
Subsequent footnotes or endnotes:
*Summa Theologiae* I-II, 2, ii, a.1 (or any acceptable variation).

Sacred text print version

Bibliography

1st Parenthetical citation:
(Prov. 25.21, RSV)
Subsequent citations from the same translation:
(Prov. 24.21)

Another type of Bible
Bibliography

Parenthetical citation:
(Prov. 25.16, NEB).
Subsequent citations from same translation:
(Prov. 26.17).
Footnotes or endnotes: Normally, even when using footnotes and endnotes, biblical citations remain in text, as the reader wants to know immediately the biblical reference. The reasons to use a footnote with a biblical citation are for an explanation or a cross-reference.

**Electronic Resources**

**Papal encyclical found online**

Bibliography:
(Note the date the encyclical was written and the web publication date are listed.)

Parenthetical citation:
(Caritas in Veritate 72)
(CV 72)

1st footnote or endnote:

Subsequent footnotes or endnotes:
Caritas in Veritate 72

**Electronic book from online database with translator and editor**

Bibliography

Note: If a source offers a permalink, use that link instead of the URL, as shown in the example.

Parenthetical Citation:
(Nicomachean Ethics 1094a 1-2)
(Nic. Ethics 1094a 1-2)
(NE 1094a 1-2)

Footnotes and endnotes:
Follow formatting for web source.

*Note on editors and translators:* For a book with both a translator and an editor, list them in the order in which they appear on the title page.
Journal article from online database

Bibliography

The article has been assigned a DOI (Digital Object Identifier), so it is included in the citation.

Parenthetical citation:
(Smith 788)

Footnote or endnote:
Follow formatting for web source.