

How to submit a photo for publication

To submit a photo for publication in the Idaho Catholic Register, it's not very hard. What you need is a decent camera and something to shoot. Whether it's a parish or a school, a once-in-a-lifetime event or a monthly meeting, the needs of the newspaper don't change.

First, you should know that the Idaho Catholic Register does not have a photographer on staff and can't pay you for the photos you submit. We have skilled staff people who can enhance photo quality to a limited degree, but even with that, there are no guarantees:

Rule 1: Cell phones don't produce quality newspaper photos.

It may look nice on your cell or computer screen, but cell phone photos rarely contain enough contrast and detail to produce anything decent on newsprint. Most cell phone photos, like photos on the Internet, range in size from 5-100 KB. Catholic News Service photos which usually appear in the paper, range in size from 600-900 KB. The new camera used by the ICR shoots photos at 1-20 MB (1,000-20,000 KB).

Rule 2: Thou shalt give us one good photo, and there's a good chance it will be printed. Give us 20 lousy photos, and there's a good chance none will be.

Even experienced photographers with good cameras can take some pretty lousy photos. Images can be too dark or too light. They can be blurred. Whenever space permits, we like to run more than one photo of an event, especially if the photos are colorful, well composed and depict different elements. The rcdp e-mail addresses can usually accept up to 5 MB in total attachments, so that means somewhere between 5-10 photos. Rule of thumb: If it doesn't look good to you, it probably won't look better on newsprint. We have begun to refuse to print substandard photos. Don't let yours be one of them.

Rule 3: Thou shalt submit *jpgs* or *tiffs*, always as attachments.

JPGs and TIFFs are the most common formats for photos. TIFFs tend to be larger, but degrade much less during the editing process. JPGs are the most common photo format. We can accept PDFs, but because they are cousins in the true photo family, we tend to be elitist. Please don't embed your images in the message. Sometimes our computers get really snooty and will create errors in the removal that make the photos unusable.

Rule 4: Thou shalt only submit photos with the consent of the people in the photo.

Some newspapers have gotten into trouble because they have inadvertently printed photographs of people who did not want to be seen. Most schools have filed consent forms, but parish groups need to be told that a photo is being taken to be submitted for publication. No sneak attack photos, please.

Rule 5: You shoot it, you name it.

Please include identification for each individual in the photo. Please ensure that names are spelled correctly and that titles, (chairman, cook, cardinal, etc.) are accurate. Also, please include some information about the event being shot, even if it is only for the photo caption. Include a contact daytime phone number or e-mail. If you want the photo credit, please write: Photo by Your Name. The photos become the copyrighted property of the Idaho Catholic Register, which means that no one can steal your material and republish it elsewhere without our permission, which is intended to protect your rights. No permission is needed for the private use of your photo. Finally send all this information to us in a Word format, either in the body of the e-mail (preferred), or as a Word attachment.

Rule 6: Action over inaction; smiles over frowns.

Sometimes, John handing Mary a check with respective delegates on each side is unavoidable, but it sure is boring. Dynamic subjects make dynamic pictures. Please give us something that looks like it came off the cover of Life ... or at least the second best shot.

Rule 7: We're trained in surgery; let us cut.

Please do not submit cropped, flopped or "Photoshopped" images. We follow the highest standards of photojournalism because we take pride in our product. If you send us good raw materials, we'll do our best to publish your gem.