



PAULINE BOOKS & MEDIA

Submissions Guidelines

Have a brilliant idea for a Catholic book?

We can't wait to hear about it! But before you send us anything, please read the following guidelines carefully.

Trust us, it will be worth it.

Please note that our submission guidelines have changed effective February 2024.

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Who We Are

[Pauline Books and Media](#) is the publishing house of the [Daughters of St. Paul](#) and an important part of their media ministry of evangelization. We are passionate about the new evangelization and the power of the media to permeate society with the Word of God. We are a Catholic publishing house, faithful to the magisterium of the Church.

What We Publish

We are looking for well-written manuscripts:

- with a specific audience
- that respond to the real needs and desires of that audience in a unique and fresh way
- with a Catholic sacramental worldview
- that engage the reader through authenticity, stories, humor, and imagination
- that are formational for the whole human person
- that move the person forward in relationship with Christ in the Church
- in a tone that is invitational, pastoral, and compassionate

We are looking for authors who:

- live their faith and are rooted in the Word of God
- have something unique to say, and have already shared their material (through articles, presentations, or small group discussions, for example), and in doing so have shaped it to the needs of the target audience
- are qualified to speak and write about the subject matter
- have a platform or are developing one (more important for adult books)

We're looking for a book that only you can write and that you are passionate about!

For adults, we are looking for books that help people to know and love God and live their relationship with God in their everyday lives.

Some of the main categories we publish are spirituality, adult faith formation, evangelization, prayer and prayer books, family life, personal growth, Marian themes, theology of the body, media literacy formation, lives and writings of the saints, and teacher and pastoral resources.

In general, we do not accept academic texts, accounts of private revelations, fiction for adults, poetry, or personal memoirs.

For kids and teens, we publish fiction and nonfiction in the following categories: board books, picture books, chapter books, middle grade, teen, young adult, and graphic novels. Our subject matter includes saints and biographies; prayer, spirituality, sacraments, and devotionals; virtues and morals; Bible stories; fiction that organically addresses Catholic faith and themes; and supplementary catechetical and faith formation resources.

In general, we do not accept catechetical textbooks or collections of poetry.

We are looking for high-quality manuscripts for children—toddlers through older teens—that:

- convey an authentically Catholic sacramental worldview and
- have a strong, distinct voice that engages readers' imaginations.

In our fiction for kids and teens, we especially look for submissions in any genre with:

- compelling stories with complex, well-developed characters,
- a well-integrated Catholic worldview in the narrative, and
- a distinctive Catholic element.

Our nonfiction seeks to teach the Catholic faith in a way that:

- evokes wonder, curiosity, and creativity.

In all our books for children and teens, we value projects that:

- are sensitive and relevant to the needs of our readers and their families,
- are formational on all levels of the human person,
- bring young people, their families, and their communities to an encounter with the God who loves them and with the Church.

How to Submit for Publication

Email your cover letter, proposal (see below), and sample chapters as attached Microsoft Word files to editorial@paulinemedias.com. Please submit the manuscript as one document, not separate documents for each chapter.

Email is the preferred method of submission. If you must mail yours and you would like it returned, you must provide an appropriately sized, self-addressed, stamped envelope with sufficient postage. In all cases, kindly provide an e-mail address so that we may contact you.

We make every effort to respond to unsolicited manuscripts with an initial expression of interest or a decline within eight to ten weeks. We accept submissions year-round, but response times may be slower in July and August when our sisters make their annual retreats.

Due to time constraints, we are not able to offer feedback on manuscripts that we decline.

For books for adults, please send a proposal that includes:

- your vision for the work
- a description of the intended audience and why they need and would want the book
- your qualifications for writing the book
- links to your website, social media handles, etc. if you have them
- a comparison to similar books that shows why your book is unique
- a table of contents that includes a brief description of each chapter
- proposed total word count and projected completion date
- two or three polished sample chapters minimum (if the manuscript is complete, you may share the entire document with us if you wish)

For books for teens and children, please send a proposal that includes:

- your vision for the work
- a description of the intended audience and why they need and would want the book

- your qualifications for writing the book
- links to your website, social media handles, etc. if you have them
- a comparison to similar books that shows why your book is unique
- proposed word count and projected completion date
- if your manuscript has series potential, a brief overview of any possible subsequent books and their projected completion dates
- if you are also the illustrator for the project, a few samples of your art or a link to your portfolio
- **For fiction:** the completed manuscript and a synopsis.
- **For nonfiction:** the completed manuscript for any work shorter than 10,000 words; a minimum of two or three polished sample chapters for works longer than 10,000 words, and a table of contents that includes a brief description of each chapter.
- **For graphic novels (fiction or nonfiction):** a Word document of the complete script, PDFs of storyboarded sketches of the first section or chapter, and a few samples of what the art will look like when it is complete; if the manuscript is already complete, please send that instead (however, be aware that you may be asked to do revisions on the art or text during the editing process if your manuscript is accepted for publication). If you are the author but not an illustrator, submit the complete script with potential illustration notes.

Quick List of Dos and Don'ts (Essential for First-time Authors)

Do:

- Become familiar with us and our publications by browsing our website (paulinestore.com), social media pages, and catalogs, noting the kinds of titles we publish and seeing if your project would be a good fit.
- Carefully read these submission guidelines in their entirety and follow them.
- Send your submission by email if at all possible.
- Submit your manuscript and your proposal as attachments to the email. The manuscript should be one whole document, not separate documents for each chapter.
- Send your manuscript as a Microsoft Word document, not as a PDF.
- Include a basic letter in the body of your email but repeat any essential information, including your contact information, in the attached proposal.
- Send an email asking for an update only after you have not received a response within the amount of time indicated.

Please avoid the following:

- Do not call and ask to speak with an editor about your book.
- Do not format the text in your manuscript to make it look like the inside of a book.

- Do not add pictures, clip art, or images of any kind to your manuscript.
- Do not recruit an illustrator to add illustrations. Should your book be accepted for publication, we will engage an illustrator after the editing process. If you are a professional illustrator intending to write and illustrate your book, provide samples. If you have an illustrator in mind for the project, feel free to suggest him or her in your proposal.
- Do not put the entire content of your proposal in the body of your email. The body of your email can be a basic letter, but make sure any essential information in the body of your email is also included in your attachments.
- Do not obtain an imprimatur or ecclesiastical approval. Any editing makes the imprimatur void. If an imprimatur is needed, we will obtain it.
- Do not submit an updated or revised manuscript before receiving a response to your submission.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do you allow simultaneous submissions?

We do accept a proposal or manuscript submitted to us at the same time as to another publisher. If you do so, it is courtesy to mention that it is a simultaneous submission.

Do I need an agent to submit a manuscript to you?

No. We are happy to work directly with authors, although if you do have an agent, they are welcome to submit on your behalf.

What does Pauline Books & Media’s editing process look like? How much control does the author have over changes made?

Manuscripts undergo a round or two of acquisitions edits between the author and editor that focus on “big picture” elements such as structure and content. This is followed by developmental editing that ensures clarity and flow. Both levels of editing are deeply collaborative with the author. Copy editing primarily fixes grammar and catches anything that may have slipped through the cracks during previous rounds of editing. The author sees the manuscript one last time before the finalized version is sent to print.

Our editing process takes place with the author’s full knowledge and collaboration. Authors work one-on-one with their editors toward a common vision for the book and have the chance to give feedback on suggested edits during every round of editing. The end goal is to publish a quality book that both the author and publisher will be proud of.

How long does it usually take for a book to come out?

This depends on several factors, including the time required for the acquisition's deliberations, the length of the manuscript, the number of illustrations or amount of interior design work it requires, your availability during the editing process, and fluctuating times for printing and shipping. The entire process generally takes twelve to eighteen months. Illustrated books will take longer. After your book is contracted, your editor will discuss the timeline of the book's release with you and see how your scheduling needs factor in.

Does my book have to be specifically Catholic for you to consider it for publication?

We publish books that are faithful to the teachings and values of the Catholic Church and reflect a Catholic worldview. We may consider books that do not include an explicitly Catholic element if they align with the Catholic Church's understanding of a topic and encourage readers to pursue an authentic relationship with God (such as a self-help book for those with terminal illness to grow closer to God or a fantasy middle grade novel that focuses on the spiritual growth of its characters). We do not currently publish fiction or nonfiction that is merely virtue-based or clean but has no reference to faith or spiritual topics.

You ask that similar books be listed in my proposal, but my book is completely unique.

If you're having trouble finding comparable titles, include some books on the same topic, but from a different angle, or on a related topic, or written for a similar audience with a similar purpose.

Why would I publish with a traditional publisher when there are so many avenues available for self-publishing?

Traditional publishing offers many advantages, some of the most important being that the publisher pays the author for the right to publish his or her book and most of the administrative and promotional work is taken on by the publisher. Other forms of publishing require the author to pay the publisher and to take on or hire out all of the work themselves.

Pauline Books and Media is a traditional publisher. We pay a royalty with an advance; we will not charge you any fees to publish your book. (However, if you use copyrighted material in your book, you may have to pay the owners of the copyright for permission to use their material.)

Advantages of traditional publishing over self-publishing or hybrid publishing include:

- In-depth editing from an objective viewpoint, by experienced editors who are invested in collaborating with you to make your book the best it can be.
- Our experienced team at PBM works closely with its authors to develop a finished book that the author—as well as the book’s audience—absolutely loves.
- Professional design for both the cover and interior of your book by experienced designers.
- Substantial assistance to promote and market your book by those committed to the book’s success.
- Multiple distribution channels expertly set up which are available upon publication of your book: traditional retail, distributors to libraries and bookstores, digital distribution (including multiple e-book formats and channels), and possibilities for licensing and translating the book in other countries.
- Receiving payment to have your book published. Usually, the publisher pays the author for the right to publish, distribute, and license the book (e.g., international licenses).
- Publishing a successful book with an established publishing house means that you have an interested party to look at future manuscripts.
- At every step, your book will be supported by the weight of the publishing house’s expertise, which comes from decades of publishing experience.

I self-published a book. Can I submit it for publication?

If you have self-published a book, you are welcome to submit it to us for consideration. We occasionally publish books that have been previously self-published. However, please realize that we will consider your book not as a ready-to-go work, but as a manuscript that will go through the same editing process as our other books. You may submit it as a PDF, but know that, should we go ahead with the project, we will need the manuscript as a Word document with all formatting and images removed.

Why was my manuscript declined? Can I resubmit it if I revise it?

We are not able to give specific feedback on manuscripts that are declined. If your book is declined, these are some reasons that may have contributed to it:

- Your book is not a good fit for us. Even if a book is well written and fills an important need, our distribution/marketing may not reach that particular audience well enough for us to publish it. (It is not to anyone’s advantage for a publisher to take on a book if they can’t market and distribute it effectively.)
- Your book is too similar to a project we have already published or that is in progress.

- Your book does not prominently feature an element of Catholic faith and life.
- In our judgment, your book will not reach the audience you have in mind. This could be because of length, style, lack of qualifications, lack of a “hook,” or other reasons.
- Your proposal shows that you have not read our submissions guidelines or done sufficient research on how to prepare a proposal for a publisher.
- Your book lacks a well-developed or original concept.
- The writing quality of your book is not publishable, or your submission appears to be an early draft that has not been sufficiently revised before being submitted.

If your manuscript is declined, you are still free to share future manuscripts with us. However, please do not submit the same manuscript again. If we are interested in having you revise and resubmit the manuscript, we will clearly indicate this in our correspondence with you.

What are some resources you recommend?

There are many helpful books and websites available for beginning and published authors, and we encourage you to research the basics of writing and how to submit to a traditional publisher before submitting a proposal to us.

For anyone writing on a spiritual topic, especially if referencing your personal experience, we recommend this book that has proven immensely helpful, especially for first-time authors:

- [*The Art of Spiritual Writing*](#), by Vinita Hampton Wright

For anyone looking to know more about a Catholic or sacramental worldview, we recommend:

- [*Mysterion: The Revelatory Power of the Sacramental Worldview*](#), by Father Harrison Ayre

For children’s and young adult book authors, here are some helpful resources. (We do not endorse every view expressed in these resources.)

- [*Writing Picture Books \(Revised and Expanded Edition\)*](#), by Ann Whitford Paul
- [*Writing Irresistible Kidlit: The Ultimate Guide to Crafting Fiction for Young Adult and Middle Grade Readers*](#), by Mary Kole
- [*The Magic Words: Writing Great Books for Children and Young Adults*](#), by Cheryl B. Klein
- [*Renée M. LaTulippe’s Lyrical Language Lab*](#) ([free videos](#) and paid courses on writing rhyme and meter for children’s books)

If you have a question about our submissions process or guidelines that was not answered here, you can direct your inquiry to editorial@paulinemediacom. God bless!