

THE PLAIN MAN'S GUIDE
TO THE TRADITIONAL
ROMAN RITE OF HOLY MASS

By
Philip Goddard

For Antonia , Edmund, Hugh, Benedict and Dominic

Ut te diligant, et quae tibi placita sunt tota dilectione perficiant

Acknowledgement

I should like to express my thanks to Peter Grace, who read the first draft of my text, made many helpful suggestions and saved me from a large number of careless errors. His assistance was especially valuable in connection with those passages in the Ordinary of the Mass of Hebrew origin, since I have no knowledge of that language.

It is difficult to believe that, after having been subjected to the scrutiny of Peter's profound and meticulous scholarship, there could possibly be any errors left, but if such there be, they are entirely my own.

Index

Plain Man's Guide

Introduction

Chapter I
Pronunciation & Grammar

Chapter II
The Preface

Chapter III
The Canon: Part I

Chapter IV
The Canon: Part II

Chapter V
More Grammar

Chapter VI
Mass of the Catechumens

Chapter VII
The Offertory

Chapter VIII
The Communion Rite

Chapter IX
The Collect, Secret & Postcommunion

Chapter X
The Requiem Mass

Vocabulary

Introduction

There were two official languages in the Roman Empire of the first few centuries AD, Latin in the west and Greek in the east. They were the languages of civil administration, of the army, of the law courts, of the major cities and of international trade. In addition, Latin had replaced various local languages as the dominant language of peninsular Italy, and Greek was likewise the dominant language of mainland Greece, the Aegean islands and the coastal cities of Asia Minor and Cyprus. But the empire as a whole was polyglot. Latin and Greek were not spoken, and to a considerable degree probably not even understood, by the great majority of the Roman Emperors' subjects, who lived in the small towns and the countryside, farmed the land or provided services to those who did, and spoke a large number of diverse traditional languages. In the provinces of Gaul, Spain, Britain and parts of North Italy various branches of Celtic prevailed, in North Africa Punic and Berber, in Egypt Coptic, on the eastern side of the Adriatic Illyrian, and on the north shores of the Aegean Thracian. Asia Minor was a linguistic patchwork; in the interior Cappadocian, Isaurian and Lycaonian continued to be spoken till the end of the imperial period, and the people of Galatia, whose ancestors had emigrated there from Gaul hundreds of years earlier, still spoke in St. Jerome's day a language similar to that of the district round Trier in north-east Gaul. The peoples of the lands lying between the Eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamia spoke Semitic tongues such as Syriac and Aramaic. Many of the inhabitants of these provinces would perhaps have understood some Latin or Greek, as the case may be, but probably very few could speak them fluently and even fewer had them as first languages.

One of the leading authorities on the later Roman Empire has summed up the situation thus: "There seems to have been a sharp cultural cleavage between the upper classes, who had not only received a literary education in Latin and Greek, but probably spoke one or other of these languages, and the mass of the people, who were not only illiterate, but spoke in a different tongue...it is clear that many of the common people, not only peasants but townspeople, had no knowledge of Greek or Latin." (A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, Basil Blackwell 1964 p.995).

The Apostles were no exception. Though some of them, in particular St. Peter and perhaps also St. John, may well have learned Greek in later life, Aramaic was their first and for most of them their only language. Although Our Lord exhorted His Apostles to "Go forth and teach all nations", the emergent Church perforce remained confined to Aramaic speaking Judaea until the conversion of St. Paul, who was not only a Hellenised Jew and a Roman citizen who spoke and wrote good Greek in addition to his many other accomplishments, but who was also possessed of a burning conviction that the Christian message must be taken to the Gentiles and of the energy and determination to put this conviction into practice. And so, thanks to the missionary journeys of St. Paul and his companions, Christian communities began to appear in many of the major cities of the eastern Roman Empire, and, at a quite early date, in Rome itself. There were certainly Christians living in Rome by the year 57, when St. Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, and probably as early as 49, if the expulsion of the Jews from Rome referred to in Suetonius' *Life of Claudius* (also mentioned in Acts 18.2) occurred as a result of dissension between Orthodox and Christian Jews, as it is usually interpreted. There is however no evidence as to who it was who planted the first seed of Christianity in the imperial capital, though it was certainly neither St. Paul nor St. Peter, who did not come to Rome until much later.

The earliest Jewish Christians in Palestine must have celebrated the Eucharist in Aramaic. The Hebrew in which most of the books of the Old Testament were written had already ceased to be a spoken language, and translations from Hebrew into Aramaic for use in the

synagogues had probably already begun to be made. But Aramaic was no more than a relatively insignificant language spoken in a backwater of the Roman Empire, and the liturgy celebrated by St. Paul's converts was unquestionably Greek. For scriptural readings, the new communities used the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint. St. Paul's letters to these communities, which were carefully preserved by them and became part of their corpus of standard liturgical readings, were in Greek, and so were the Gospels when they eventually came to be written. And although the language of Rome itself was Latin, the first Christian community in the imperial city also celebrated its liturgy in Greek. This is not so surprising as it might first seem; Christianity was, from the Roman point of view, a religion imported from the Greek speaking east. Moreover, all educated upper class Romans and many middle class Romans learned to speak and write Greek as school children, not only for cultural reasons but also because it was from these classes that the provincial governors, administrators and army commanders were drawn and they had to be capable of serving in the eastern provinces. Even among the uneducated masses there were many immigrants, particularly slaves and ex-slaves from the east, who spoke or at least understood Greek.

What is perhaps more surprising is that notwithstanding the great increase in the size and importance of the Christian community in Rome, and the gradual spread of the faith throughout the western Empire, Greek remained the liturgical language of the Roman Church throughout the second and third centuries. Only in the fourth century did this change, and the change was not complete until nearly the end of the century. Unfortunately we know very little about how this took place, not even whether it was sudden or gradual. The fact that the inscriptions on the tombs of the Popes change from Greek to Latin from the time of St. Cornelius, who died a martyr's death in 253, has been claimed by some scholars to be significant, but in fact there is no evidence that this was accompanied by any change in the language of the liturgy. What is certain is that the Canon (or Eucharistic Prayer) was still being said in Greek after the middle of the fourth century, since the author Marius Victorinus Afer, in a treatise against the Arians written about the year 360, switches from Latin into Greek when he wants to quote from it. Soon after this date, however, St. Ambrose (who died in 397) quoted the central portion of the Roman Canon, which has survived (with some linguistic variations) to this day, in his book *De Sacramentis*. This Canon appears to be a new composition, not a translation from Greek, and it seems therefore that the switch from Greek to Latin, at least for the Canon of the Mass, took place during the papacy of St. Damasus (364-388). This does not necessarily mean that the changeover to Latin had not begun before his papacy; it may have been a gradual process. The readings in particular may already have been in Latin by St. Damasus' time. We know that both the Old and the New Testaments had been translated into Latin many years earlier, at least as early as the time of Tertullian, who died around the year 225. Fragments of this pre-Vulgate Latin text have been preserved as quotations in writings of the period, and they survived here and there in the liturgy even after St. Jerome's translation was adopted for general liturgical use.

This change in the liturgical language of the west has often been quoted as a precedent for change to a vernacular liturgy by twentieth century enthusiasts for such a liturgy. It is, however, nothing of the sort. In the first place, Latin, though it was spoken by the educated classes and generally in the larger cities of the west, was, as we have seen, not the first language of the majority of the subjects of the Roman Empire outside Italy. St. Augustine tells us in one of his letters that when he was arguing with the Donatists, who came mainly from an estate and farming background, he had to use interpreters since he had little Punic and they had no Latin. St. Augustine's opponents would have been most surprised to have been told by a twentieth century liturgical reformer that the switch to Latin was a change to the vernacular. The nun Egeria, who made a pilgrimage to Palestine in the closing years of the fourth century, and left an account of her journey, tells us that in that country the

appointed readings were first read in the liturgical language, Greek, and then translated into Aramaic for the benefit of the congregation, a procedure strikingly similar to that which prevailed in the old Roman rite prior to the post-conciliar reforms. Secondly, the change was from a single liturgical language, Greek, to another single liturgical language, Latin; there was never any question of translating the liturgy into a large number of vernacular languages. The latter is an innovation of the second half of the twentieth century, without precedent in the history of the Catholic Church.

The reasons for the change from Greek to Latin, like many later changes in the liturgy, were probably largely political. The Emperor Diocletian, at the beginning of the fourth century, had divided the empire into a western and an eastern half, with a separate emperor, or Augustus, for each half. It was temporarily re-united by Constantine, who moved the imperial capital from Rome to Byzantium, which he renamed Constantinople after himself. But after his death in 337 it was divided once more, this time for good, and the two halves increasingly went their separate ways, in outlook as well as in language. It is this division of the empire that lies at the root of the division between Catholic west and Orthodox east that persists to this day. In this context, it was almost inevitable that the Church of Rome, the capital of the western empire, should cease to use Greek as its liturgical language. The personality of St. Damasus may also have played some part; he was born into a well off family from the upper levels of society and had a profound admiration for Latin literature and Roman culture; it was at his behest that St. Jerome undertook his translation of the entire Bible into Latin, and he embellished Rome with a number of new churches dedicated to Roman saints, particularly that which still bears his name, S. Lorenzo in Damaso. He also wrote Latin verse epigraphs, commemorating the apostles and martyrs of Rome. His Romanising tendencies were continued by his successor Siricius, to whom we owe the church of Sta. Pudenziana, another Roman saint, with its magnificent, though sadly mutilated, apse mosaic in which Christ appears surrounded by His apostles, all dressed like Roman senators. In fact the late fourth and early fifth centuries were characterised by a wave of extensive church building in and around Rome, under the direction of the Popes of that period. It is against this background that the change in the liturgical language should be understood.

Latin was to remain the liturgical language of western Europe for the next 1,600 years, notwithstanding a proposal at the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century to allow use of the vernacular. The Protestant reformers had made a vernacular liturgy one of their central principles, and the liturgies which each group of reformers, whether Lutheran, Calvinist, Zwinglian or Anglican, composed for use in its own churches naturally emphasised the particular beliefs of that group, as distinct not only from orthodox Catholic beliefs but also from those of other Protestants. The Council fathers, faced with an unprecedented assault on the Church's teaching and fearful that vernacular liturgies would dilute the deposit of faith and allow scope for all sorts of diverse interpretations of Catholic doctrine, rejected the proposal and decided against allowing the use of the vernacular in the liturgy. In fact, the ecclesiastical authorities remained strongly opposed even to the publication of translations of the liturgy into the vernacular, until the influence of the liturgical movement in the nineteenth century brought about a softening of this attitude, and the Church began to allow the publication of the missals in Latin, side by side with vernacular translations, with which Catholics of the pre-Vatican II era were so familiar.

The history of the last two hundred years, like that of the sixteenth century, has also witnessed a major assault on the Church's teaching, not this time from dissident Christians but from atheistic materialism. The fathers of Vatican II, like their Tridentine predecessors, accordingly emphasised the importance of retaining Latin as the liturgical language of the Church, declaring that "The use of the Latin tongue is to be maintained in the Latin rites,

except where some special law obtains” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 36. §1). The reasons for retaining Latin are very well expressed in the introduction to the St. John’s Missal for Every Day (C. Goodliffe Neale Ltd, Birmingham 1963) “By so using Latin she [the Church] avoids all the inconvenience that would arise in the use of the various modern languages which are constantly increasing and changing their vocabulary...To change the formulae of prayers according as changes took place in the languages would be opening the door to unceasing changes and even to heresy, for the worst errors may arise from the use of words and phrases that are not fixed in an exact and unchanging manner. If the use of the vulgar tongue were everywhere allowed, the Church would be obliged to bring her liturgical formularies in conformity with all the dialects spoken throughout the world, and to exercise a ceaseless vigilance over them...The use of the Latin language affords a guarantee of unity to the Catholic liturgy”. Unfortunately in the post-conciliar period little attention has been paid either to the decrees of the Council or warnings such as that quoted above, and the result has been the almost total disappearance of Latin from our churches and its replacement with translations into the vernacular whose orthodoxy no less than whose literary merit have been a constant source of disagreement and dissension ever since.

Since it was the clearly expressed wish of the Council Fathers that the liturgy should continue to be normally celebrated in Latin, how did it come about that the new liturgy which emerged from the post-conciliar reform is almost always celebrated in the vernacular, and that the plainsong and polyphonic music which has been associated with the Latin texts from time immemorial, and which the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy called “a treasure of inestimable value” (para 112) and decreed should be “maintained and cherished with the greatest care” (para 114) has virtually disappeared?

Before answering this question, it is necessary to make an important distinction. We have become so used to associating Latin with the Old Roman Rite and English (or the relevant vernacular tongue) with the Novus Ordo that the nature of the rite which is being celebrated and the language in which it is celebrated have become, in the minds of most Catholics, inextricably confused. I have even met quite well educated people who think that the Novus Ordo is nothing more than a translation into English of the Old Rite. But in fact the question of the rite and that of the language in which it is celebrated are completely distinct. It is quite possible (though not lawful) to celebrate the Old Roman Rite in English, and it is equally possible (though very unusual) to celebrate the Novus Ordo in Latin. Saying the new Mass in Latin, though actively discouraged, is not forbidden, as many people seem to think. In fact, the official texts of the Novus Ordo are all Latin texts, and what we hear in our churches is a translation of these texts approved by the local bishops’ conferences.

Incidentally I refer to the rite in use prior to the post-Conciliar liturgical reforms as the “Old Roman Rite”, and not as the “Tridentine Rite”, as it is sometimes known, because the latter is a complete misnomer. In fact the latest additions to the Old Roman Rite, the offertory prayers, were made no less than three hundred years before the Council of Trent, and most of the prayers and readings in the rite are very much older than that. Apart from a few additions such as the penitential rite, the Creed and the offertory prayers, the ordinary of the Mass in the Old Roman Rite (and indeed many of the propers for feast days) remained fundamentally the same from the time of Gregory the Great (c.600) till the reforms of the mid-twentieth century. Moreover, of the three aforementioned “medieval additions”, the penitential rite and the Creed have been retained in the Novus Ordo, and although the offertory prayers have been removed they have been replaced by two prayers based on the Jewish Berakah blessings which have never previously figured in the Church’s liturgy. So whatever the merits of the post-Conciliar reforms, it is not helpful to an enlightened discussion of the subject to pretend that they represent a return from “the Tridentine Mass” to earlier liturgical forms.

Why then have Latin, and the great treasury of liturgical music associated with it, disappeared from our churches? The reason lies in the way in which the post-conciliar reformers have interpreted paragraph 14 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which states that a “full, active participation on the part of the whole people is something that deserves the utmost attention when the reformation and fostering of the sacred Liturgy are under consideration, because this active taking part is the first, indeed it is the necessary source from which the faithful may be expected to draw the true Christian spirit. Therefore, by proper education it is to be zealously sought after by the shepherds of souls in all their pastoral work.”

This is a very strong statement (and it is a sad reflection on the way in which the wishes of the Council Fathers have been implemented in practice that the average massgoer in this country today knows significantly less about the theology of the Mass than did his counterpart of thirty years ago). A great deal of ink has been expended in discussing what is meant by “active participation” (“*actuosa participatio*” in Latin), and I do not propose to add to it, except to comment that clearly the Council Fathers saw no conflict between an active participation by the faithful in the Mass and its continuing to be normally celebrated in Latin. The two principles were evidently to be reconciled “by proper education”.

The implementation of the Constitution was however handed over to committees of academic liturgical experts (the so-called “*periti*”), most of whom had their own ideas as to what constituted good liturgy, which frequently went a lot further than the Council Fathers had envisaged. And to them active participation by the laity meant either praying out loud, or at least listening to the priest doing so. The notion that a congregation praying silently with the priest in the traditional manner, either in Latin or using the English translation in their missals, is participating in just as active a manner as if they were praying or singing aloud, never seems to have occurred to them. Nor apparently did the fact that it is quite possible to pray or sing aloud without taking any interest at all in what is being said or sung. Making a noise is all, it seems.

It was the bishops’ conferences however, rather than the “*periti*”, which decided that, if the laity were to pray out loud and understand the readings and the prayers reserved to the priest (who now no longer “celebrated Mass” but merely “presided at the Eucharist”) the whole of the liturgy must be conducted in their own native language. This was of course something which the bishops decided on their own initiative. They could have asked the laity for their own opinion on the subject, had it occurred to them to do so, but in fact they never did. It does not seem to have suggested itself to them that the laity, who of course comprise the overwhelming majority of Christ’s Mystical Body, might have anything constructive to contribute on this matter. Vatican II may have emphasised the role of the laity in the Church, but old clerical attitudes die hard. I remember listening to a lecture from a priest who was enthusing about the wide consultation undertaken before the new lectionary was introduced. I asked him how many of those consulted belonged to the laity. He seemed surprised by the question. The answer, of course, was “none”. And so the high altars were pulled down, the reredos demolished, the altar rails thrown away, the statues pulverised, the physical fabric of Catholic Christian worship dissipated and a brand new, wholly unfamiliar liturgy introduced without our ever being asked for our opinion on what was happening. We were only the laity; we could not be trusted to know what was good for us. That had to be left to the *periti*, the academics with a wholly theoretical approach to Liturgy.

At one time there may have been good reason for the traditional condescension of the clergy towards the laity. Up to the time of the Renaissance they constituted virtually the only educated branch of society (not even excluding the aristocracy). But this has been changing

for the last five hundred years, to the point where it has ceased to contain even the remotest vestige of truth. Yet the ecclesiastical authorities can still make the most profound and radical alterations, both to our liturgy and to the setting in which it is conducted, to the extent of making many of us feel like strangers in our own churches, without considering it either necessary or desirable to ask us for our opinion about what they are doing, or even provide us with any proper explanation of why they are doing it. And so the Council's idea of providing a "proper education" in the liturgy for laymen was quietly dropped in favour of a vernacular liturgy that made no demands on them at all.

One argument which is sometimes put forward in favour of a vernacular liturgy in our own country is that English is a language in no way inferior to Latin and it is equally possible to compose good liturgy in English as it is in Latin. Anyone acquainted with the Anglican First and Second Books of Common Prayer will be hard put to deny the truth of this. However, there are sound reasons against it. Firstly, it was the wish of the Council Fathers, whilst not entirely ruling out the use of the vernacular in special circumstances, that the liturgy of the Church should normally be celebrated in Latin, and the decisions of the Second Vatican Council, like those of other general councils, are intended to be obeyed, not ignored. Secondly, no such English liturgy actually exists; notwithstanding the undoubted literary quality of the two Books of Common Prayer, the doctrines expressed therein are contrary to those held and taught by the Catholic Church. Thirdly, English is a living language and the meaning of English words and phrases changes constantly, even over a period as short as twenty or thirty years. Latin by contrast is a dead language; the meaning of its words and phrases is fixed forever and it is therefore a far more appropriate medium for the expression of the unchanging doctrines of the Church than any vernacular tongue could possibly be. Fourthly, the celebration of the liturgy in the same language by millions of Catholics all over the world, coming from many different ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, is a wonderful expression of the spiritual unity of the Body of Christ, as well as possessing the practical advantage of enabling Catholics living, working or holidaying far from home to participate in any Mass celebrated anywhere. In the age of mass travel, a universal language for the liturgy is, if anything, more important now than it has ever been before.

And here I must make it clear that, although most of the liturgical extracts in the succeeding chapters will, for obvious reasons, be taken from the Old (or Traditional) Rite of Mass, it is no part of my purpose to advocate or disparage one rite of Mass as compared to another. I cannot however help but remark that those who are most eager for the suppression of the Old Roman Rite on the grounds that it is "divisive" are usually the very same people who have welcomed with enthusiasm the replacement of the Latin of the Mass by literally hundreds of different languages, the majority of them completely unintelligible to anyone not born within at most a few hundred miles of the place where the Mass in question is being celebrated. It is hard to imagine anything more divisive than this (although happily not all ecclesiastical authorities are as rigid as those in the Basilica of St. Francis at Assisi, who during the millennial year prevented me from attending Mass there on the grounds that the Mass in question was not in English).

In what, then, might the "proper education" in the liturgy which the Council Fathers called for consist? The example which comes most readily to mind is that of the orthodox Jews, who celebrate their liturgy in Biblical Hebrew. Orthodox Jews quite rightly take their liturgy very seriously indeed; there is none of the attitude of "anything goes" which pervades certain sections of the Catholic clergy. And there is no desire among them for the vernacular; the fact that their liturgy is in Hebrew is regarded as part of what being a devout Jew is all about. But nobody actually speaks Biblical Hebrew, not even an orthodox Jew; it is as dead a language as Latin. Even in the time of Christ, Aramaic was the language of the ordinary people of

Judaea. However every orthodox Jew learns sufficient Hebrew to enable him to take an active part in the Synagogue services. It is part of the preparation which all Jewish boys are required to undertake for their Bar Mitzvah. Latin is much easier for an English speaker than is Biblical Hebrew. There is no reason at all therefore why Catholics should not learn enough of it to take an active part in the Mass, as part of their preparation for First Communion or Confirmation. Either the idea never occurred to the reformers, or perhaps they thought it was beyond the intelligence of the laity.

It must be said that there is no real substitute for learning Latin properly. This of course is true of any language. Some people have a gift for languages, and pick them up easily; for others it represents a hard slog (personally I belong to the hard slog party). But it is possible, I believe, to learn to read liturgical Latin, at least that of the prayers of the Mass, without the effort needed to read Cicero, Vergil or Horace fluently. It is always better to do this with the help of a teacher rather than try to do so from a book. But it is better to do so from a book than not to make the effort at all. It is far more rewarding, both intellectually and, I believe, spiritually, to pray the prayers of the Mass in the same language as the priest, than to read them simultaneously in translation, however good the translation may be. This does not mean, I hasten to add, that it is not possible to participate fully in a Latin Mass without having any familiarity with the Latin language, provided that one has a proper understanding of the theology of the Mass and is familiar with what is happening at the altar at any given time. I do believe however that some knowledge of the language can assist us greatly to attain both of these objectives

For those who wish to acquire the ability to read liturgical Latin fluently, and can spare the time and energy that this demands, there is a paperback book entitled "A Primer of Ecclesiastical Latin" by John F. Collins, (Catholic University of America Press 1985), which aims to teach you how to do so in about twelve months of study. There is also a Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Latin by Leo F. Stelten (Hendrickson Publishers Inc. 1995). These are both American publications but they are available in the UK. In addition there is an Association for Latin Liturgy publication entitled "A New Approach to Latin for the Mass" by Louise Riley-Smith and Christopher Francis, but this is primarily intended for priests who wish to celebrate the New Rite in Latin and are not conversant with the language (it is no longer generally taught in diocesan seminaries). For those who do not have the requisite time at their disposal, or perhaps the inclination to spend what leisure time they have in this particular way, I hope that a careful reading of what follows will serve as a useful introduction to the Latin of the liturgy, enable you to find your way around at least the Ordinary of the Mass, and perhaps stimulate you to take your studies further.

Chapter I Pronunciation and Grammar

Firstly, then, a few words about pronunciation. The easiest way to learn this is to go regularly to a Latin Mass, in which case you will pick it up without any effort at all. Regrettably however, most people in this country have only limited opportunities to hear a Latin Mass, either in the Old or the New Rite. Fortunately, the standard pronunciation of liturgical Latin is not at all difficult to familiarise yourself with even if you seldom get the chance to hear it spoken.

The pronunciation of liturgical Latin is very similar to modern Italian. In fact, if you are familiar with modern Italian pronunciation, you can probably skip the next bit altogether.

Most consonants are pronounced in exactly the same way as in English. The exceptions are c, g, j and t. C and g are pronounced as “ch” and “j” where they occur before e or i, otherwise as in English “cat” and “got”. So “principio” is pronounced “princhipio” and “gentes” is pronounced “jentes”. J is always pronounced as “y”. So “Judas” and “judica” are pronounced “Yudas” and “yudica” respectively. T is normally pronounced as in English but becomes “ts” before “ia”, “io” and “iu”. So “licentia” is pronounced “lichentsia” and “initium” is pronounced “initsium”. That is really all there is to it.

The vowels are a little more tricky, because they have long and short forms. The latter are easier because with the exception of u they are all pronounced as in English, “fat”, “met”, “bit” and “hot”. The short form of u however is pronounced as in “pull”, not as in “cut”. The long forms of the vowels a, e, i, o and u are pronounced respectively “ar” as in “father”, “ay” as in “day”, “ee” as in “queen”, “ow” as in “show” and “oo” as in “room”.

Y and Z are not really Latin letters at all. They are rare and occur only in words borrowed from Greek, like “mysterium” and “baptizo”. Y is pronounced as a short “i”, in other words exactly as in the English word “mystery”. Z is usually pronounced as “ds”, i.e. “baptidso”. Strictly I think it should always be pronounced this way, but you will sometimes hear it pronounced as a straight “z” when it is the first letter in a word, e.g. “Zacharias”.

Vowels occurring together are usually pronounced separately. So “Deus” is “dayoos” and “eadem” is “ayadem”. There are however a few diphthongs, “ae” pronounced “ay”, “au” pronounced “ow” as in “cow” and “eu” pronounced “yew”. “Ae” is by far the most common of these. “Oe”, which is pronounced “oi” is occasionally found in words borrowed from Greek, but you will hardly ever see it apart from the word “poena”, meaning pain or punishment. If you have a very old missal however you may find the words “caelum” (heaven) and “penitentia” (repentance) misspelled as “coelum” and “poenitentia”, but these spellings, though at one time quite common, are not correct.

Here is the beginning of the Creed, with phonetic pronunciation alongside to illustrate the above rules;

Credo in unum Deum,
Patrem omnipotentem,
Factorem caeli et terrae,
Visibilium omnium et invisibilium;
Et in unum Dominum Jesum
Christum,

Craydow in oonum Dayum,
Partrem omneepowtentem,
factorem chaylee et terray,
Veeseebileeoom omneeoom et inveeseebileeoom;
et in oonum Dominum Yaysum Cristum,

Filium Dei unigenitum,	feeleeum Dayee oonijenitum,
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula;	et ex Partray nartum antay omneear saycoolar;
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,	Dayum day Dayow, loomen day loomeenay,
Deum verum de Deo vero,	Dayum verum day Dayow verow,
Genitum non factum,	jenitum non factum,
Consubstantialem Patri	Consubstantseearlem Partree,
Per quem omnia facta sunt.	per quem omneear factor sunt.

You will note from the above that Latin, unlike modern English, does not have a silent “e” as the final syllable of any word. “Lumine” is a three syllable, not a two syllable word.

The stress accent in Latin is most often found on the last syllable but one (penultimate) of a word containing more than one syllable, though it quite often falls on the last but two (pre-penultimate), especially where the penultimate contains the letter “i” (e.g. “Te igitur clementissime Pater, per Jesum Christum Dóminum nostrum” at the beginning of the Canon). However in most missals the stress accent is marked when the word in question contains more than two syllables, (though I would emphasise that this is done for convenience of pronunciation only, since the Latin language does not have accents). I will follow this practice.

So much for pronunciation and stress, now for some comments on the nature of the language itself.

Probably the most important difference between Latin and English, and the one which causes most difficulty to the student, is that Latin is an inflected language, whereas modern English is not. Most words in Latin contain two parts; the first part of the word gives us its meaning, the second part the role which the word plays in the grammar of the sentence. In English, on the other hand, the role that a word plays in the sentence which contains it is indicated by its position in that sentence.

Take the simple sentence “dog bites man”. In Latin, keeping the same word order as in English, this would be “canis mordet hóminem”. If we reverse the word order in English to “man bites dog” we change the meaning completely. It is the man, not the dog, who is now the aggressor. In Latin, however, so long as we do not change the word endings, we can change the order of the words as much as we like; the sentence will still mean the same. So “canis hóminem mordet”, “hóminem mordet canis”, “mordet hóminem canis”, “mordet canis hóminem” and “hóminem canis mordet” all mean “dog bites man”. If we want to say “man bites dog” in Latin we must change the endings of the relevant words. “Homo mordet canem” means “man bites dog”, and so do “canem mordet homo”, “mordet homo canem”, “mordet canem homo”, etc. In these sentences the “can-” and the “hom-” parts of the words give the meaning “dog” and “man” respectively. In our first sentence (“dog bites man”) the ending “-is” in the case of the dog and “-em” in that of the man establish that these words are the subject and object of the sentence respectively. Likewise in our second sentence (“man bites dog”) the ending “-o” in the case of the man and “-em” in the case of the dog establish that these words are respectively the subject and object of that sentence. This means that in reading Latin we must look very carefully at the ending of the words if we are to understand the sentence in question. This is something which we are not very much used to doing, which is why it is, at first, difficult for a modern English speaker. However, back in Anglo-Saxon times English was an inflected language, and there is still a trace of this in our personal pronouns. “I” and “me” are respectively nominative (subject) and accusative (object), as are “she” and “her”, “he” and “him”, “we” and “us”, “they” and “them” and “who” and “whom”. “Whose”, “his”, “her”, “its”, “our” and “their” are all genitives, meaning respectively “of whom”, “of him”, “of her”, “of it”, “of us” and “of them”. (Unfortunately most English speaking people don’t seem to understand this, which is why we keep coming across

solecisms like “between you and I”, “it’s” and “who’s”.) We also still vary some of our verb endings to indicate person and tense (e.g. “I sing”, “she sings”, “we sang”).

I said that in Latin a sentence would still mean the same whatever the order of the words. This does not however mean that the words in a Latin sentence can be arranged in any sort of random order. The order of words in Latin determines among other things the emphasis which each word carries. But in English the order of words determines the grammar and we have to use other devices for emphasis, such as the tone of our voice or, on the printed page, the use of italics, underlining or exclamation marks. In Latin, the most emphatic position in any sentence is the beginning and the second most emphatic position is the end. Normally the subject of any sentence (what the sentence is about) is what we want to emphasise most and the verb (what the subject does) is the next, so in Latin we usually find that the subject is at or near the beginning of the sentence and the verb is at the end. The normal way to translate “dog bites man” into Latin would therefore be “canis hóminem mordet”. But “man bites dog” is such an extraordinary event that we would probably want to emphasise that it was the dog, not the man, who got bitten, so we might well put the dog first and translate “canem mordet homo”, which emphasises first that it is the dog who is at the receiving end of this particular bite and secondly that it is the man who is administering it.

The word order in Latin may also be varied for other reasons, of which the most important is style. Varying the word order can impart a rhythm and resonance, particularly in the spoken language, to what is being said. This is of particular importance in the liturgy, which, we should remember, was originally designed to be sung or spoken and not read, in an age when the majority of the congregation would have found reading difficult or impossible. And Roman poets varied their word order in order to accommodate the expression of their thoughts and feelings to the demands of the diverse rhythmic schemes in which Latin poetry of the classical period was written (rhyme as distinct from rhythm is never used in poetry of the classical period and its appearance in liturgical hymns is an indication of later composition). All this makes Latin a more flexible language than English but it also presents a difficulty for the learner since we often find words in places where we do not expect them, particularly in liturgical hymns. However, in narrative passages such as the readings from the Old and New Testament, which are taken from St. Jerome’s translation known as the Vulgate, the word order is generally much closer to that with which English speakers are familiar than is that found in the classical Roman prose writers, and these passages are correspondingly easier to read.

Going back to our specimen Latin sentence, another important point should be noted. Latin has no definite or indefinite articles (unlike Greek which has a definite but no indefinite article, or English which has both). So “canis hóminem mordet” can in theory mean “the dog bites the man”, “a dog bites the man”, “the dog bites a man” or “a dog bites a man”. This sounds very confusing, but in practice it is almost always clear from the context which article is required when translating from Latin into English. There are three articles in the Hail Mary, for example, but nobody would dream of translating “Dominus tecum” as “*a* Lord is with thee”, “benedictus fructus ventris tui” as “blessed is *a* fruit of thy womb” or “nunc et in hora mortis nostrae” as “now and at *an* hour of our death”. We would know instinctively that “the” is the correct translation in all three instances, even if we were unfamiliar with the prayer.

“Homo” and “canis” are in what we call the “nominative case” and “hóminem” and “canem” in the “accusative case”. The subject of a Latin sentence is always in the nominative and the object is usually in the accusative. There are also other cases, for instance the possessive case known as the genitive. Latin has no word for “of”, possession being indicated by changing

the ending of the word for the possessor. So for example in the sentence “*introibo ad altare Dei*”, meaning “I will go to the altar of God” the word *Dei*, which is the genitive case of *Deus*, means “of God”. Note also that Latin has only one word for “I will go”, namely “*introibo*”, since the future of a verb is indicated by changing the ending, in this case of the verb “*introire*”, and the ending also makes clear whether the subject is “I”, “you”, “he/she”, “we” or “they”. This makes Latin, by contrast to English, a very economical language.

There are two other cases which you need to know about, the dative and the ablative. Dative means “giving” and the dative case is used for exactly that. For example, prayers in which we are asking for some grace or blessing usually start with some such expression as “*Da nobis, quæsumus, Dómine...*”, meaning “Give to us, we ask, O Lord...”. *Nobis* here is the dative case of “*nos*”, the Latin for “us”. Just as there is no word in Latin for “of”, so there is no word for “to”; the use of the genitive or the dative case says it all. We must however be careful to distinguish the act of giving from that of moving. In English we say “I give money to beggars” and “I will go to the altar of God”, using the same preposition “to” for both actions, though they are logically quite distinct. We are not giving anything to the altar of God, but moving towards it, and in Latin we do not use the dative case, but the accusative, preceded by the preposition “*ad*”. But in “*Glória Patri et Fílio et Spíritui Sancto*”, for example, we are giving glory to the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, so they are all in the dative case.

The ablative case is normally used after a preposition such as “*cum*”, “*ab*”, “*de*”, “*in*”, “*ex*” or “*pro*” meaning respectively “with”, “by”, “from”, “in”, “out of” and “on behalf of”. So in the phrase “*Spera in Deo*” (“Hope in God”) the word “*Deo*” is the ablative of “*Deus*”. And in the prayer which the celebrant says at High Mass when blessing the incense, “*Ab illo benedicáris, in cuius honóre cremáberis*” (“By him may you be blessed, in whose honour you will be burned”) “*illo*” and “*honóre*” are both ablative, while “*cuius*” (“whose”) is genitive. Note also the extreme verbal economy of Latin, which expresses “may you be blessed” and “you will be burned” by a single word in each instance.

Unfortunately it is not always easy to tell from the ending of a noun which case it is in. It can vary depending on whether the noun is masculine, feminine or neuter, singular or plural. Nouns are also classified into groups (known to grammarians as declensions), and the case endings can vary with the group into which a particular noun falls. But the accusative case almost always ends in the letter “m” when the noun is singular, so looking out for words ending in “m” will identify most of the accusative singular nouns or adjectives in a passage. Most other words ending in “m” will be genitive plurals. For example, the Creed in Latin has 43 words ending in “m”, of which 35 are accusative singulars. Five of the remaining eight are genitive plurals (“*visibílium*”, “*ómnium*”, “*invisibílium*”, “*peccatórum*” and “*mortuórum*”). The three odd men out are “*étiam*”, “*íterum*” and “*secúndum*”, the first two of which are adverbs meaning “also” and “again” respectively and the third a preposition meaning “according to”. The only accusative singulars in the Creed which do not end in “m” are “*lumen*” and “*baptísma*”, and the latter is abnormal anyway, being actually a latinised Greek word.

It is usually quite easy to distinguish between accusative singulars and genitive plurals, since the former will usually end in “-um”, “-am” or “-em”, whereas the latter end in “-orum” “-arum” or “-ium”. So in the prayer “*Animæ eórum et ánimæ ómnium fidélium defunctorum per misericórdiam Dei requiescant in pace*” (May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace) the words “*eórum*” (“their” = “of them”), “*ómnium*”, “*fidélium*” and “*defunctorum*” are all genitive plurals, “*Dei*” is genitive singular and “*pace*” is ablative singular following the preposition “*in*”. “*Misericórdiam*” is accusative singular, because the preposition “*per*” (“through”), like “*ad*”,

is always followed by the accusative case. Note too that the absence of any definite or indefinite article in Latin does not create any ambiguity in the meaning. And finally the pious wish that the souls of the faithful departed may rest in peace is expressed by changing the ending of the verb; “*requiescunt*” would mean “they are resting” and by changing it to “*requiescant*” we express the wish “may they rest”.

You may be wondering why, when I said that the preposition “in” was followed by the ablative case, when we come to the Creed we find it followed by the accusative (or rather a large number of accusatives!). The answer is really the same as that in the case of the word “to”, which as we saw can be followed in Latin either by a simple dative or by “ad” and the accusative, depending on exactly what we mean by “to” in any given sentence. Just like “to”, we use “in” in English in more than one sense. I live in Britain and I believe in God, but not in the same way. The former is a matter of location, the latter of faith. Latin uses “in” for both meanings, but distinguishes between them by using a different case. So “in Britain” would be “in Britannia” (ablative), but “in God” is “in Deum” (accusative).

Unfortunately the other cases are more difficult to recognise, because the word endings depend upon into which declension a given noun falls. However, almost all nouns or adjectives which end in “-ibus” will be dative or ablative plurals, and most nouns or adjectives ending in “-is” will be too. So in the phrase “*pro ómnibus fidélibus cristiánis vivis atque defúntis*” (on behalf of all faithful Christians living and dead) all the words (except of course “pro” and “atque”) are in the ablative, following the preposition “pro”. There is however a group of words which end in “-is” in the nominative singular, so one has to be a bit careful in applying the latter principle.

I suggest that at this stage you read through the Creed in Latin. With a little help from the vocabulary you should now be able to understand it perfectly, though the phrase “*qui ex Patre Filióque procedit*” perhaps needs a little further explanation. We might have expected “*qui ex Patre et Fílio procedit*”, and this would have been perfectly good Latin; indeed “*qui cum Patre et Fílio*” occurs in the very next clause. However, an alternative way to express “and” in Latin is to add “-que” to the end of the *next* word. This sounds very odd to an English speaker but it is in fact quite common in Latin and is not too hard to spot once you get used to the idea. You will also have noticed from the prayer quoted in the last paragraph that Latin has another word for “and”, namely “atque”, though this does not occur in the Creed. Which one is used in any given instance is all a question of literary style.

Chapter II The Preface

I said in the last chapter that in Latin word order is often varied for the sake of style. However, the Creed is not a good example of this since its structure is very straightforward, just a plain statement “I believe” followed by a series of doctrines, in a similar format, which we are required to believe as being necessary for salvation. It acquired this format because it originated as the profession of faith made by a candidate prior to his or her baptism at the Easter Vigil (which is why it starts off “I believe” and not “We believe”), and although it is now a standard part of the Mass in both the Old and the New Rites it was not in fact formally incorporated into the Roman Rite until the eleventh century, which is comparatively recent by liturgical standards.

What I want to consider in this chapter is the Preface which, by contrast to the Creed, has been part of the Mass since apostolic times, since it is actually the first part of the Eucharistic Prayer.

The word “Preface” is something of a misnomer because it has come to mean an introduction to a piece of writing of which it does not strictly form an integral part, rather like the overture to an opera. Our Preface is not this sort of thing at all. It is an integral, though variable, part of the Eucharistic Prayer, or Canon, itself. In the course of time, however, it became separated from the rest of the Prayer, particularly when the Sanctus was incorporated into the Prayer, probably around the year 500. The Sanctus, being a hymn, was given to the choir rather than to the priest to sing. So the Preface, being separated from the rest of the Prayer partly because of the intervention of the choir and partly because it remained variable after the rest of the Prayer became fixed, was increasingly regarded as merely the introduction to the Canon rather than part of the Canon itself. The result was that when the Canon came to be said silently rather than sung aloud, the Preface was excluded and has continued to be sung, or said, aloud by the celebrant down to the present day. It also had the interesting consequence that when the Protestant reformers in the sixteenth century were composing their new liturgies, which involved the elimination or truncation of the Canon to remove all reference to the sacrificial nature of the Mass, they kept the Preface and Sanctus, not realising that they were actually part of the Canon.

Unfortunately modern congregations have acquired the habit of remaining seated during the Preface in the Old Rite, as if it were part of the Offertory, which it is not. They should in fact either stand or kneel, from the “Dóminus vobiscum” onwards. In this respect, at least, the practice of standing during the Preface in the New Rite is an improvement on the old.

At one time there were a huge number of different Prefaces in the Roman Rite. The oldest known Roman Mass book, the Leonine Sacramentary, which reflects the Roman Rite as it existed before about the year 500, has about 270, and it must have had considerably more originally, since the masses for the whole of the period from January to the middle of April are missing from the only surviving manuscript of this book. But when St. Gregory the Great revised the rite around the year 600, he included only fourteen. Some have been added since, such as the Prefaces for the feasts of the Sacred Heart and of Christ the King, but even so the 1962 Roman Missal contains only about twenty. By contrast, there are around 80 in the new Missal of Paul VI, though only a few of them seem to be in regular use.

Here then is the Preface of the Holy Trinity, which is proper to the ordinary Sundays in the Old Rite, and for this reason is the one likely to be most familiar to the average massgoer. It first appears in the so-called “Old Gelasian” Sacramentary, which represents the Roman Rite as it was immediately before the Gregorian liturgical reform, as the Preface for the first

Sunday after Pentecost, later to become Trinity Sunday, so, for at least 1,500 years, it has been the proper Preface for this day. I have divided it into 20 lines, numbered for reference purposes, and I have also marked most of the stress accents.

1. Vere dignum et iustum est, aequum et salutáre
2. nos tibi semper et ubíque grátias ágere
3. Dómine sancte, Pater omnípotens, aetérne Déus
4. qui cum unigénito Fílio tuo et Spírítu Sáncto
5. únus es Déus
6. únus es Dóminus
7. non in uníus singularitáte persónae
8. sed in uníus Trinitáte substántiae.
9. Quod enim de tua glória, revelánte te, crédimus
10. hoc de Fílio túo
11. hoc de Spírítu Sáncto
12. sine differentia discretiónis sentímus
13. ut in confessióne verae sempiternaéque Deitátis
14. et in persónis proprietas
15. et in esséntia únitas
16. et in maiestáte adorétur aequálitas
17. quam laudant ángeli átque archángeli
18. Chérubim quóque et Séraphim
19. qui non cessant clamáre quotidie
20. una vóce dicéntes...

Even at a glance the symmetry between many of the lines in this Preface is obvious; compare lines 5 and 6, lines 7 and 8, lines 10 and 11, and lines 14, 15 and 16. But underlying this symmetry there is a more subtle rhythm. If you look at the stress accents of the last two or three words of each line, you will see that the endings of lines 2, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 all have the same rhythmic pattern; and lines 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 20 do so as well. In other words, 17 out of the 20 lines in the Preface end in one or other of only two rhythmic patterns. It is this, together with the resonance of its language, which gives this magnificent Preface its intensely poetic quality. Ideally it should always be sung to the distinctive plainsong tone, which Mozart is reputed to have said he would rather have composed than all his works put together. For it is surely not through science or philosophy, but through the music and poetry of the Sacred Liturgy, that the ordinary man can best approach the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

There are other similarly beautiful Prefaces in the old missal; my own favourites are that for Christmas, which was composed by St. Gregory himself, and that for the Mass of the Dead, which surprisingly dates only from the early part of the twentieth century, though it is partly based on an old text. However, I now want to set out the Preface of the Blessed Trinity again, this time in the same word order as we would use in English, side by side with a literal translation. The change in word order destroys the poetry of course, and the translation is stylistically awful, but the idea is to enable you to work through the Preface and understand the meaning of each word in it. I have put in square brackets those words which we have to use in English to make the meaning clear, but which are not needed in Latin.

Est vere dignum et iustum,
aequum et salutare
Nos agere gratias tibi

[It] is truly worthy and just
right and salutary
[for] us [to] give thanks [to] you

semper et ubique	always and everywhere
sancte Domine, omnipotens Pater, aeternae Deus	holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God
qui cum tuo unigenito Filio	who with your only-begotten Son
et Sancto Spiritu	and [the] Holy Spirit
es unus Deus	are one God
es unus Dominus	are one Lord
non in singularitate unius personae	not in [the] singularity [of] one person
sed in Trinitate unius substantiae.	but in [the] Trinity [of] one substance,
enim quod credimus de tua gloria	for what [we] believe about your glory
Te revelante	[as a result of] you revealing [it],
hoc de tuo Filio	this [too] about your Son
hoc de Sancto Spiritu	this [too] about [the] Holy Spirit
sentimus sine differentia discretionis	[we] understand without [any] difference [of] discernment
Ut in confessione	so [that] in [the] acknowledgement
Verae sempiternae-que Deitatis	[of] [the] true and eternal Godhead
et proprietates in personis	[the] separateness in persons
et unitas in essentia	and [the] unity in essence
et aequalitas in maiestate adoretur	and [the] equality in majesty [may be] adored
Quam Angeli atque Archangeli laudant	which [the] Angels and Archangels praise
Cherubim et Seraphim quoque	[the] Cherubim and Seraphim also
Qui non cessant clamare quotidie	who [do] not cease [to] cry [out] every day
Dicentes una voce	Proclaiming [with] one voice

Two small points to note: the link word “et” can be used in Latin not only between two or more words which are to be joined, but also *before* the first of them; so we have “et in personis proprietates, et in essentia unitas, et in maiestate adoretur aequalitas”. It isn’t strictly necessary in this case, but it has been done purely for the sake of literary style. And secondly you will note that the word “enim”, meaning “for”, *never* comes first in a Latin sentence; this is an invariable rule which is never broken.

Once you have completed the exercise suggested above, you might like to try your skill at another magnificent Preface, that of St. Gregory for Christmas mentioned above. It is probably a little more difficult than the Preface of the Blessed Trinity, but it is a good deal shorter, and it will serve to illustrate one or two fresh points concerning the language. The first three lines are identical to those of the Preface of the Blessed Trinity, and the last five form a standard ending which is found in many prefaces.

- 1 1. Vere dignum et iustum est, aequum et salutare
- 2 2. Nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere
- 2 3. Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, aeternae Deus
- 3 4. quia per Incarnati Verbi mysterium
- 4 5. nova mentis nostrae oculis lux tuae claritatis infulsit
- 6 6. ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus
- 5 7. per Hunc in invisibilem amorem rapiamur
- 6 8. Et ideo cum Angelis et Archangelis
- 9 9. cum Thronis et Dominationibus
- 10 10. cumque omnia militia caelestis exercitus
- 7 11. hymnum tuae gloriae canimus
- 8 12. sine fine dicentes

A rough translation of lines 4 to 7 would go as follows:

4. because through the mystery of the Incarnate Word
5. the new light of your radiance has shone upon the eyes of our mind
6. so that whilst we visibly recognise God
7. through Him (literally through “This”) we are brought to the love of things invisible

Lines 4, 6 and 7 are relatively straightforward, bearing in mind that the verbs in lines 6 and 7 (*cognoscimus* and *rapiámur*) occur in their normal Latin position, namely at the end. Line 5 is the only one that requires some serious disentangling. The English word order would be “nova lux tuae claritátis infúlsit óculis nostrae mentis”. The Latin word order at first sight looks random but it is not. The verb (*infúlsit*) is naturally at the end. There are two genitives, “nostrae mentis” and “tuae claritátis”. The former is placed before the noun to which it relates. This is quite common and you will see that it also occurs in lines 4 (“Incarnáti Vérbi mystérium”) and 7 (“invisibílium amórem”). We do exactly the same thing in English with many of our genitives, except that we normally indicate their nature by an apostrophe (“the Nag’s Head”, “the widow’s mite” etc.), whereas Latin indicates it by changing the word ending. It wouldn’t be very elegant perhaps in English but we could at a pinch keep the Latin word order by translating “the Incarnate Word’s mystery” and “our mind’s eyes”. What makes it a bit difficult, however, is partly the Latin practice of sometimes putting the adjective after the noun (so we have “mentis nostrae” rather than “nostrae mentis”, though of course we occasionally do this too in English, as in “things invisible” or “life eternal”), but in particular of placing the entire phrase “mentis nostrae óculis” between the adjective (“nova”) and the noun which it qualifies (“lux”). This may be confusing to us but it is rigorously logical, because both the adjective “nova” and the phrase “mentis nostrae óculis” qualify “lux”. It is in other words both a light which is new and a light which is directed towards the eyes of our mind; it is, in the Latin word order, a “new towards-our-mind’s-eyes light”.

Lines 8 to 12 are not too difficult, because the word order is very similar to English, only the verbs “canimus” and “dicentes” occurring as usual at the end. “And therefore with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominations, and with the whole host of the heavenly army, we sing a hymn to thy glory, saying without end...”

Finally, the Preface for Easter, which is also very short (as Roman Rite prefaces tend to be; Gallican Rite prefaces can be enormous!). It is one of the oldest known prefaces in the Roman liturgy, being quoted in a letter of St. Paulinus of Nola who died in 431. It starts and finishes in a way which will already be familiar.

1. Vere dignum et iustum est, aequum et salutáre
2. te quidem, Dómine, omni témpore
3. sed in hoc potíssimum gloriósius praedicáre
4. cum Pascha nostrum immolátus est Christus.
5. Ipse enim verus est agnus qui ábstulit peccáta mundi
6. qui mortem nostram moriéndo destrúxit
7. et vitam resurgéndo reparávit.
8. Et ídeo cum Ángelis et Archángelis
9. cum Thronis et Dominatió nibus
10. cumque omni milítia caeléstis exércitus
11. hymnum glóriae tuae cánimus
12. sine fine dicétes

Keeping as far as possible to the Latin word order, a literal translation of lines 1 to 7 would be:

Truly worthy and just it is, right and salutary, to praise (praedicare) you indeed, O Lord, at every time, but at this time (in hoc) especially (potissimum) more gloriously, when our Paschal victim, Christ, is sacrificed (immolatus est). For he (ipse) is the true lamb who has taken away the sins of the world, who by dying (moriendo) has destroyed our death, and by rising (resurgendo) has restored [our] life.

There are two variations to this Preface; at the Easter Vigil “in hoc potissimum” becomes “in hac potissimum nocte” (especially on this night), and on Easter Sunday itself “in hac potissimum die” (especially on this day).

Note particularly the two words “moriendo” and “resurgendo”. These are both what we call in English “verbal nouns”, in other words they are grammatically speaking nouns which are derived from verbs. In Latin they are known as “gerunds”, which means exactly the same thing. In English these verbal nouns end in “-ing” (e.g. “seeing is believing”), and in Latin you can recognise them easily because they all have the letters “nd” immediately before the variable ending. In the Easter preface they are ablatives (“by dying”, “by rising”). Both the nominative and the accusative case of gerunds end in “-um”, viz. “moriendum” and “resurgendum”, and they are always of neuter gender.

A well known phrase which includes two gerunds is “lex orandi, lex credendi”, meaning literally “the law of praying is the law of believing” (note that Latin uses four words to express this idea, English nine!). Both the gerunds in this phrase are of course in the genitive case.

If you feel really bold you could now try your hand, with the help of the vocabulary, at translating some of the other prefaces. I suggest you start with the Lenten Preface, which is the shortest of all, and then go on to the Preface of the Holy Cross, which is longer but still very short, a beautiful Preface which manages, as so often in the Old Roman Rite, to express the most profound theological ideas about our redemption in a few perfectly balanced phrases.

Chapter III The Canon Part 1

The time has come to have a look at the very heart of the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Canon or, as it is more commonly known since the post-Conciliar reform, the Eucharistic Prayer (though this is an ancient, not a new name for it). It is of course the central part of the three parts of the Mass which together form the Eucharist proper, the Offertory, the Eucharistic Prayer and the Communion. The rule that it is the exclusive prerogative of the celebrant to say it has been invariable from the earliest times; in fact in ancient documents it is often referred to simply as “Prex”, *the Prayer par excellence*.

The Old Roman Rite contains only one Eucharistic Prayer, the so-called Roman Canon, but in the first few centuries there were many more; indeed at the very beginning of the Church’s history it was not unknown for the celebrant to indulge in a certain amount of extemporisation, subject of course to the requirements of orthodoxy. The Roman Canon seems to have been composed at about the time of the changeover from a Greek to a Latin liturgy, shortly after 360 AD. The fact that its first appearance is in the *De Sacramentis* of St. Ambrose has led some scholars to believe that it originated in Milan, from where it made its way to Rome, but there is no proof of this and it could just as easily have happened the other way round. However that may be, it soon became the only Eucharistic Prayer used in the West.

The Roman Canon is rather long, and we need therefore to break it up into sections and look at each of them in turn. It is important, however, to remember that it remains one prayer, not a series of prayers. This was sometimes forgotten in the past, with the result that the words “Per Christum Dóminum nostrum” were added at certain points. These additions were removed in the new missal of Paul VI, which otherwise made few changes to the Canon. This was at the personal insistence of the Pope, who refused to let the reformers hack it about in the way that some of them wanted. He told them that if they didn’t like the Roman Canon they had better compose some alternative Eucharistic Prayers instead, which is what they finished up doing.

There are a number of elements which are found in all Eucharistic Prayers, both East and West. First of all there is the dialogue between priest and people, following the Prayer over the Offerings (this is its Roman name; the alternative, Secret Prayer, is Gallican in origin). Then comes the Preface, in which God is thanked for the miracles of creation and redemption, and which varies with the season of the Church’s year or the feast day. The Sanctus is not original to the Eucharistic prayer but was inserted after the Preface in the Roman Rite around the year 500, followed by a brief passage called the Post-Sanctus which forms a link with the next element, the Epiklesis (or more strictly the Consecration Epiklesis), in which the power of God is invoked to transform the bread and wine on the altar into the Body and Blood of Christ (in the Eastern rites the invocation is specifically to the Holy Spirit, and this has now been imported into the Roman Rite in the alternative Eucharistic Prayers contained in the new missal). The narrative of Christ’s institution of the Holy Eucharist, which incorporates the Words of Consecration, follows. His command to “do this in memory of Me” is then observed in the Anamnesis, in which His Passion, Resurrection and Ascension are recalled. This is usually followed by a petition (sometimes called the Communion Epiklesis) that those present will obtain the spiritual benefits of the communion which they are about to make. The Prayer ends with a doxology in praise of the Blessed Trinity, and final “Amen”, which was originally said by all the people present, but later came to be said by the server on their behalf. St. Augustine tells us that the Christians of Hippo in the fourth century

said this “Amen” so loudly that the noise they made shook all the pagan temples to their foundations!

The Roman Canon contains all these elements, although (in common with other Eucharistic Prayers) it has been expanded to contain petitions for the Church and for Christians, both living and dead, as well as a commemoration of the saints (actually two such commemorations in the case of the Roman Canon). It was also extensively revised and partly rewritten by St. Gregory the Great. What I want to do is to consider first those elements which are original to the Canon, and then the later elements, rather than simply start at the beginning and go through to the end.

The Epiklesis

Because of the additions made to the Canon over the course of time, this now starts quite a long way after the Sanctus. It is the section beginning “Quam oblatiónem tu Deus...”. The celebrant asks God to bless and approve the offering so that it may become the Body and Blood of Christ. The Latin text is not too difficult. In the previous section the priest has referred to the offering (“Hanc ígitur oblatiónem...”), and the relative pronoun “Quam “ picks up this reference and links it to what follows. “Quáesumus” is the main verb (“we ask”), and what we ask is that God would be pleased to make (“fácere dignéris”) the offering blessed, approved, ratified, worthy and acceptable (“benedíctam, adscríptam, ratam, ratióabilem acceptábilemque”), so that it may become (“ut fiat”) for us (“nobis”) the Body and Blood of His most beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ. “Oblatiónem”, being the object of “fácere”, is of course in the accusative case and so naturally are all the adjectives which qualify it (you will remember that the accusative singular of nouns and adjectives almost always ends in “m”). We have already come across, in the Preface, the use of the suffix “-que” to mean “and” when added to the last noun or adjective in a series. A new point to note, however, is that the superlative (“most beloved”) is usually formed in Latin by adding “-íssimus” to the adjective, so “diléctus” becomes “dilectíssimus” (in the genitive case here, of course).

The Institution Narrative and Words of Consecration

These should be relatively easy to follow, with the help of the vocabulary, since the word order is very similar to that of English. Again you will note the use of the suffix “-que” (I said it was common in Latin!) in “benedíxit, fregit deditque” (“He blessed, broke and gave”), and there is yet another Latin word for “and”, in the phrase “in sanctas ac venerábiles manus suas”, which we have not met with before. Another point to note in this phrase that although Latin has several different words for “and” (“et”, “atque”, “ac” and “-que”) it hasn’t got one at all for “into”, but simply uses “in” with the accusative instead of the ablative case. You will also remember that “enim”, meaning “for” never comes first in a sentence, so we have “Hoc est enim Corpus meum”, *not* “Enim hoc est Corpus meum”. “Postquam cenátum est” is a peculiar impersonal way of saying “after they had finished supper” (literally, “when it had been supped”). You won’t meet it very often, though, because it is not common (except perhaps in the phrase “factum est”). The “et” in “accípiens et hunc praeclárum cálicem” means “also”.

There is one new grammatical construction which needs briefly explaining (I will go into it in more detail when we come to look at the grammar of the Latin verb). It is “Elevátis óculis in caelum”. This is normally translated as “having lifted up His eyes to heaven” (the word “His” is omitted in the Latin since it is clear whose eyes are meant – Latin doesn’t usually waste words when they are not necessary to the sense!). Literally however it means “His eyes having been lifted up to heaven”. “Having lifted” is grammatically an active past participle.

Latin however has no active past participle and must use a passive one instead, hence the rather more awkward “His eyes having been lifted up” instead of the simpler “having lifted up His eyes”. And since “eyes” is neither the subject nor the object of the main verbs (“benedíxit”, “fregit” and “dedit”) it cannot go into either the nominative or the accusative case, so Latin chooses the ablative for it instead (though don’t ask me why the ablative rather than the genitive or dative, or why the Romans never got round to inventing an active past participle!). “Elevátis” then must be ablative also since its case has to agree with that of “óculis”. This type of construction (known as “the ablative absolute”) is extremely common in Latin.

The Anamnesis

This begins with the word “Unde”, which means “therefore”, or more exactly “in consequence of the foregoing” and is an absolutely pivotal word in the syntax (and the theology too). What it indicates is that what the priest is about to do (recall Christ’s Passion, Death and Resurrection) is done in obedience to His command to “do this in memory of Me”, with which the Words of Consecration ended. It is therefore completely destructive of the sense to insert anything in between, as the New Rite has done with its Acclamation of the People, leaving the word “Unde” logically adrift. It is not surprising that ICEL (and other vernacular versions) have simply omitted the word in translation.

The anamnesis in the Roman Canon is one long sentence, which takes some sorting out. There are two subjects, “nos servi tui” and “plebs tua sancta”. The former refers specifically to the ministers, the latter to the laity, thus including everyone present. The verb “offérimus” (“we offer”) is quite a long way down, separated by two sets of genitives. One set depends on “mémores”; we are mindful “tam beátae passiónis, necnon et ab ínferis resurrectiónis, sed et in caelos gloriósa ascensiónis” (“of the so blessed passion, likewise also the resurrection from infernal regions, but also the glorious ascension into the heavens”). The other set of genitives tells us Whose passion, resurrection and ascension are being commemorated, “eiusdem Christi Fílii tui, Dómini nostri” (“of the same Christ Thy Son, Our Lord”). The object of the sentence, i.e. what we are offering, is “hóstiam puram, hóstiam sanctam, hóstiam immaculátam, Panem sanctum vitae aetérnae et Cálicem salútis perpétuae” (“a pure victim, a holy victim, an immaculate victim, the holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation”). We also acknowledge that the elements of the sacrifice which is being offered come “de tuis donis ac datis” (“from Thy gifts and presents”) And in between the verb and the object is a dative, indicating to Whom the offering is made, “praeclárae maiestáti tuae” (“to Thy supreme majesty”).

Note that this anamnesis incorporates some of the features of Latin style which we have met elsewhere. The possessive genitives “eiusdem Christi Fílii tui, Dómini nostri” come not after but before the words to which they relate, i.e. “passiónis”, “resurrectiónis” and “ascensiónis” (you will remember the Christmas preface of St. Gregory, “Incarnáti Verbi mystérium” and “nova mentis nostrae óculis lux”). So in this passage does an ablative (“ab ínferis resurrectiónis”) and a prepositional clause (“in caelos...ascensiónis”, “His heavenwards ascension”, as we might say in English). And most of the adjectives come after the nouns which they qualify (“plebs tua sancta”, hóstiam puram” etc., “panem sanctum”, “vitae aetérnae”), although in this passage we do find a couple in the preceding position viz. “tam beátae passiónis” and “praeclárae maiestáti”. “Passiónis tam beátae” and “maiestáti praeclárae” would have been equally good Latin; the difference is down to the personal preference of the author. Finally, there are other instances of “et” meaning “also”, in “sed et” (which occurs twice in this passage), and in “necnon et”.

The anamnesis is followed by a short petition asking God to approve the present sacrifice, just as He approved the sacrifices which in the Old Testament prefigured the Eucharist. It starts “Supra quae” (“Upon which things” i.e. upon the “hóstia” mentioned at the end of the previous paragraph) “propítio ac seréno vultu” (ablatives, “with a propitious and favourable countenance”) “respícere dignéris” (“Thou wouldst deign to look”, the verb coming in the usual place at the end of the clause), “et accépta habere” (“and to treat as acceptable”) “sícuti accépta habére dignátus es” (“just as Thou didst deign to treat as acceptable”). There follow the examples of Old Testament sacrifices which God treated as acceptable, “the gifts of Thy just servant Abel, the sacrifice of our Patriarch Abraham, and that which Thy high priest (“summus sacérdos tuus”) Melchisedech offered to Thee, a holy sacrifice, an immaculate victim”. The word “accépta” is the accusative neuter plural of the adjective “accéptus”. It is accusative because it is the object of “habére”, and neuter because the nouns to which it relates (“múnera” and “sacrificium”) are neuter.

The Communion Epiklesis

The celebrant prays “Súpplíces te rogámus” (literally “suppliants we ask thee”) that God should command (“iube”, the imperative form of “iubére”, meaning to order) that the elements of the sacrifice (the word used is simply “haec”, meaning “these”, i.e. the offerings present on the altar) “perférri per manus sancti ángeli tui in sublíme altáre tuum”, (“be carried by the hands of Thy holy angel to Thy high altar – note “in” with the accusative in the sense of movement towards) “in conspéctu divínae maiestátis tuae” (“in the sight of Thy Divine Majesty” – note “in” with the ablative in the sense of “within”). The purpose of this petition is so that “as many of us as shall receive the sacred Body and Blood of Thy Son from participating in this sacrifice will be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace”. Note that the genitive “altáris” in the phrase “ex hac altáris participatióne” (literally “from this participation of the altar”) comes, as so often in Latin, before the noun to which it relates, as does “Fílii tui”, and that the verbs “sumpsérimus” and “repleámur” come at the end of their respective clauses. Both verbs are in the first person plural, thus including the whole congregation in the petition. “Omni benedictióne caeléstí et grátia” is ablative; it could have been “cum omni benedictióne caeléstí et grátia”, but the word for “with” is understood (for another instance see “propítio ac seréno vultu” in the preceding paragraph, where “cum” is likewise omitted). “Quotquot” is rather an odd word; it means “as many as”; in this instance, because the verbs are in the first person plural, “as many of us as”. Latin doesn’t need to insert a word for “of us” because the fact that the verbs are in the first person plural makes this perfectly clear.

The Doxology

This begins with “Per ipsum...” and is quite straightforward, “through Him, and with Him, and in Him, there is to Thee God the Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory, through all the centuries of centuries. Amen”. Note that the preposition “per” is followed by the accusative case, whereas “cum” and “in” are followed by the ablative, so the ending of the word “ipse” (meaning literally “himself”), changes to “ipsum” and then to “ipso”. “Per ómnia saécula saeculórum” is usually rendered as “world without end”, which is a fair enough translation, but it is an idiomatic, and rather colloquial, Latin way of expressing this idea. “Sáecula” is of course accusative since it follows “per”, and “saeculórum” is genitive plural (which, you will remember, usually ends in “orum”, “arum” or “ium”).

Chapter IV The Canon Part 2

In the last chapter we looked at those elements in the Roman Canon which form what one might call its core. In this chapter we will consider the elements which were added later, though in fact it was not that much later, probably in the course of the fifth century. We know that the Canon was edited by Gregory the Great in the late sixth century, though all that we can be sure about this revision is that it was he who added the words “diésque nostros in tua pace dispónas, atque ab aetérna damnatióne nos éripi, et in electórum tuórum iúbeas grege numerári”. Following the Gregorian revision the Canon has remained virtually unchanged until our own day.

The non-core elements of the Canon consist basically in a series of petitions for the living and the dead, and two commemorations of saints. The structure is quite symmetrical; the petition for the living (starting with one specifically for the Church) and one of the commemorations of saints come between the Sanctus and the Consecration Epiklesis, the prayer for the dead and the second commemoration of the saints come after the Communion Epiklesis and before the Doxology.

The petition for the welfare of the Church consists in one very long sentence, from “Te igitur...” to “...cultóribus”. The subject of this sentence is “súpplices”, “[we] suppliants”, i.e. the priest and people. There are two main verbs “rogámus ac pétimus”, which both mean much the same thing, “we ask”. This duplication is a stylistic feature of the Canon, which occurs in numerous places; other examples are “haec dona, haec múnera”, “salútis et incolumitátis”, “donis ac datis”, “hóstiam puram, hóstiam sanctam” and “partem áliquam et societátem”. There are others too, but I will leave you to find these for yourself.

The object of the verbs is “Te..., clementíssime Pater”, “Thee, most merciful Father”. “Igitur” means “therefore” and, like “étiam”, is a word which never comes first in a Latin sentence. We ask the Father, naturally, “per Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum Dóminum nostrum”, and what we ask for is found in the subordinate clause starting with “uti accépta hábeas et benedícas”, “that [thou mayest] accept and bless”. There is a triple object, each introduced with the word “haec”; “these gifts, these offerings, these holy unblemished sacrifices”. We have already met the expression “accépta hábeas” (literally “treat as accepted” or “keep accepted”) in the Anamnesis (see last chapter); it is an idiomatic phrase which is usually translated into modern English simply as “accept”, though this does not quite bring out the subtlety of the Latin. Note too that there is no Latin word for “may”; the idea of petition is expressed by putting the verb into the subjunctive (more about this in the next chapter).

Having asked God to accept our offerings the priest, on our behalf, says why we are making them, in a long relative clause introduced by “quae tibi offérimus” (“which we offer to thee”). We offer them firstly (“in primis”) for “thy holy Catholic Church, which thou mayest condescend (“dignéris”) to keep in peace, guard, unite and direct, throughout the whole world (“toto orbe terrárum”)”. The name of the currently reigning Pope is then mentioned, followed by that of the local bishop, and finally the petition is extended to all true believers (“ómnibus orthodoxis”) and teachers (“cultóribus”) of the Catholic and Apostolic faith. Grammatically, “fámulo tuo Papa nostro”, “Antístite nostro”, “ómnibus orthodoxis” and “cultóribus” are all in the ablative case, following “una cum” (“together with”). You will also note that, as we have seen in other instances, the genitives “cathólicae et apostólicae fidei” come before “cultóribus”, not after it as they would in English.

After praying for all faithful Christians, we turn to those individuals whom we wish to pray for individually, introduced by the word “Meménto”, which is an imperative, “Remember”. God is asked to remember those of His servants, (“famulórum famularúmque tuárum”) who are then mentioned by name. Notice again how economical Latin is; in English we have to say “both male and female servants”, but Latin says it simply by a variation in the word ending (both nouns are in the genitive, as we might say “be mindful of”). Note too that the word for “thy” (“tuárum”), which of course applies to both nouns, is feminine, because the noun closest to it is feminine. All of which just goes to show that inclusive language is not an invention of the twentieth century.

Following the mention of the names the petition is then concluded by a grammatically somewhat confusing petition for everyone present at the Mass and for others not present for whom the congregation wish to pray. It starts off reasonably enough with “et ómnium circumstántium, quorum tibi fides cógnita est et nota devótio, pro quibus tibi offérimus...” (“and of all present, whose faith is familiar to Thee and whose devotion [is] known, for whom we offer to Thee...”). One might expect it then to conclude with “hoc sacrificium laudis” (“this sacrifice of praise”). Instead however there is an awkward shift from the first person (“offérimus”) to the third (“ófferunt”), and the prayer then continues in the third person. The literal meaning is “for whom we offer to Thee, or who [themselves] offer to Thee this sacrifice of praise, for themselves and all [who are] theirs, for the redemption of their souls, for the hope of their salvation and safety, and [who] offer their prayers to Thee, eternal God, living and true”.

The awkwardness arises from the fact that the words “pro quibus tibi offérimus, vel” are a post-Gregorian addition. Everywhere else in the Canon we find the simple first person plural; the celebrant offers the sacrifice on behalf of all those present, which of course includes himself. But the original reading here was “and of all present, whose faith is familiar to Thee and whose devotion [is] known, who offer to Thee...”, in other words the whole of this petition was originally in the third person only. It was evidently felt that the use of the third person here rather than the first might be taken as suggesting that *only* the congregation were offering the sacrifice, hence the addition was made to make it clear that it included the celebrant also. If this seems excessively pedantic to us, it must be said in fairness to the interpolator that the Latin word “circumstántium”, though it is usually translated as “those present”, literally means “those standing around”. It is also possible, though not certain, that the petition originally referred only to those present at the Mass in question, and has been extended later to include persons not present.

The next section of the prayer starts with two present participles (“communicating [with] and venerating the memory of...”) which are followed first by a reference to Our Lady and St. Joseph (the latter a very recent addition), and a list of twenty four apostles and martyrs. At first this appears to be an arbitrary list of names, but on closer inspection it turns out to be anything but. It is divided into two sections. First we have the twelve apostles (with the substitution of Paul for Judas), then a further twelve saints of the Roman Church, which is itself divided into two groups of six. The first subgroup consists in six bishops (five of them Popes), and the second in two deacons and four laymen, the latter comprising two soldiers and two doctors. It is therefore a representative selection of all grades within the Church. Whatever our status in the Church, we are all called to and capable of holiness. The names are naturally all in the genitive case, following “memóriam”. The list ends with a reference to “all Thy saints, to whose merits and prayers grant that in all [things] we may be defended by the help of Thy protection”.

At this point in the Old Rite the bell is rung. This is surely not the best place, since what follows immediately is the conclusion of the foregoing petitions, beginning “ígitur” (“therefore”). The rubric to ring it at this point dates only from the sixteenth century; before that the rubric simply prescribed that a bell to warn the people of the approaching Consecration should be rung, but did not specify when. In the Novus Ordo the bell is rung (if at all) immediately before the Epiklesis. One would have to be a truly diehard traditionalist not to accept this at least as a change for the better. The original conclusion was simply “Hanc ígitur oblatiónem servitútis nostrae, sed et cunctae famíliae tuae, quaésumus, Dómine, ut placátus accípias”. You will by now easily recognise the expression “quaésumus, Dómine, ut...”, meaning of course “we ask, O Lord, that...” “Placátus accípias” means literally “being pleased you may accept” or, as we would say, “you may be pleased to accept”. The object is “hanc oblatiónem” (remember that the accusative singular in Latin normally ends in “-am”, “-em” or “-um”), and the remaining words are genitives “this sacrifice of our servanthood and of all Thy household”. The remaining words, asking that God may order our days in His peace, and that we may be rescued (“éripí” literally means “snatched”) from eternal damnation and numbered in the flock of His chosen ones, were added by St. Gregory the Great.

Between the Communion Epiklesis and the Doxology come the commemoration of the dead and a second commemoration of saints. The former starts with exactly the same phrase as in that of the living, but after the names it continues “qui nos praecessérunt cum signo fidei, et dórmunt in somno pacis” (“who have preceded us with the sign of faith, and sleep in the sleep of peace”). There is then a pause for more names, if required, and the commemoration concludes with “to these, O Lord, and to all [those] resting in Christ, we pray that Thou wouldst grant a place of coolness, light and peace”. “Quiescéntibus” is the dative plural of the present participle “quiéscens”, meaning “resting”. “Deprecámur”, coming as so often in Latin at the end, means “we pray” and “ut indúlgeas” means “that Thou wouldst grant”. At first sight it seems strange that we should pray that the dead should be granted a place of coolness, and some missals translate the word, oddly, as “refreshment”, which has acquired a totally different (and completely inappropriate) meaning in English. But of course the Canon was composed in Italy, where a cool place is indeed something to be highly desired, in the height of the Mediterranean summer. The word has also a secondary meaning, that of “consolation”. And there may well be an implicit reference to Psalm 65.12 “Transívimus per ignem et aquam, et eduxísti nos in refrigeríum” (“We have passed through fire and water, and Thou hast brought us into a cool place”). So it is in fact a wholly appropriate word to use in the context of the Holy Souls.

There follows the second commemoration of saints in the Canon. The grammatical structure is fairly simple. The main verb (in the subjunctive) is “dignéris”, which means, as you will surely remember, “mayest Thou condescend”. What we ask God to condescend to do is “donáre partem áliquam et societátem cum tuis sanctis Apóstolis et Martíribus” (“to give some share and fellowship with Thy holy apostles and martyrs”) to us sinners, Thy servants (“nobis peccatóribus fámulis tuis”). A select list of saints then follows, which however arbitrary it may look is in fact as carefully chosen as the first. At the head of the list is John (probably the Baptist is meant since the Evangelist has been mentioned already in the first list), and he is followed by seven men and seven women. The men saints are headed by the first martyr, St. Stephen. There follow two apostles who were later recruits to the original twelve, and four martyrs of the Roman Church (Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch but he was martyred at Rome). Alexander and Marcellinus were priests, Peter (not the Apostle) was a layman, so once again we have in order, apostles, clergy, laity. The women saints include three Romans (Felicity, Agnes and Cecilia), one African (Perpetua), two Sicilians (Agatha and Lucy) and one from the East (Anastasia), so in this second list are represented women as

well as men and the provinces as well as Rome. The list ends with a reference to all the saints, in the same phrase as the first list though this time it is, like the names, in the dative after “cum” rather than the genitive after “memória”. The commemoration ends with a request, introduced by the ubiquitous “quaesumus”, that God should admit us into their company “non aestimator meriti, sed veniae....largitor” (“not [as] judge of our desert, but [as] dispenser of mercy”).

The Doxology begins at “Per ipsum...” but it is linked to the commemoration of saints by a brief relative clause “per quem haec omnia, Domine, semper bona creas, sanctificas, vivificas, benedicias et praestas nobis” (“through Whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create, sanctify, give life to, bless and bestow upon us all these good [things]”). What exactly are the “haec omnia... bona” referred to at this point? “All these good things” would be a most inappropriate way of referring to the body and blood of Christ, present on the altar under the appearance of bread and wine, but there is nothing else which obviously fits the bill. The answer seems to be that at one time, when few people outside the towns used money, it was the custom of the faithful to present at the Offertory not only the bread and wine to be consecrated by the celebrant but gifts in kind for the maintenance of the ministers, particularly in the form of food and drink. These would have remained in the sanctuary until Mass was over, and these words constitute a formula of blessing for them (it is perhaps relevant that in the Old Rite the oil of Chrism is blessed at precisely this point in the Maundy Thursday Mass). As a result of the deep respect in which the traditional text of the Canon had come to be held these words were retained even after the use of money became universal and the offerings in kind of the faithful were replaced by the collection of money with which we are familiar today.

Chapter V More Grammar

So far we have looked in detail at the Creed, because it is grammatically the easiest text in the Mass, and the Eucharistic Prayer (Preface, Sanctus and Canon), because it is the most important. Before going further however I need to say something in rather more detail about the Latin verb.

There is no doubt about it, Latin verbs are difficult. The difficulty arises from the fact that Latin, as we have already seen, is an inflected language and therefore the person, number, tense and mood of a verb are expressed by changes in the word endings. There are also four different types of verb in Latin (known to the grammarians as conjugations) and the word endings can vary considerably depending on which conjugation the verb in question belongs to. For example, the future of the verb “laváre” (“to wash”) is “lavábo”, which is the first word in the prayer which the priest says as he washes his hands. Similarly, the future of the verb “circumdáre” (“to go round”) is “circumdábo”, which you will find a little later in the same prayer. However, if you look at the end of the prayer you will find the word “benedicám”, which is the future of the verb “benedícere”, not, as we might have expected, “benedicébo”. The reason for this kind of variation, which has caused untold grief to countless generations of unfortunate schoolboys, is because “laváre” and “circumdáre” belong to the first conjugation and “benedícere” to the third.

Yes, Latin verbs are difficult. That’s the bad news. The good news is that I have included in the Vocabulary all the forms occurring in the text of the Mass which are likely to present a problem. So if you are not sure to what tense, number, person or mood of the verb a particular word belongs, the vocabulary should tell you (but if you really want to learn, try to work it out yourself first). I could leave it at that, but I would like to say a little more about the Latin verb, because there are one or two rules which should help you to identify which part of the verb you are faced with.

Firstly, then, the four conjugations are expressed in terms of their infinitives, which end in “-áre”, “-ére”, “-ere” and “-íre” (the difference between the second and third is that in the former the accent falls on the penultimate syllable of the word and in the latter on the pre-penultimate). Examples of each are “adunáre” (“to unite”), “habére” (“to hold”), “régere” (“to rule”) and “custodíre” (“to guard”). All of these words you will find in the Canon. In the vocabulary I have included the infinitives of all the verbs which figure in the Ordinary of the Mass, even if the infinitive itself does not appear. The passive infinitive is like the active but the final “-e” becomes “-i”, except for verbs like “régere”, which becomes “regi”, not “régéri”.

Secondly, the imperative of each verb is just the infinitive with the final “-re” lopped off. So in Psalm 42 which the priest recites at the foot of the altar before the commencement of Mass proper, we find “Iúdica” (from “iudicáre”), “discérne” (from “discérnere”), “érue” (from “erúere”), “emítte” (from “emíttere”) and “spera” (from “speráre”). There are however one or two irregular forms which occur in the Mass; “meménto” meaning “remember”, and “aufer” meaning “take away”.

Thirdly, in the active voice the third person singular *always* ends in “-t” and the third person plural in “-nt”, no matter what the tense or conjugation. Moreover, there are hardly any other words in Latin which end in “-t” and no other words at all which end in “-nt” *except* a verb in the third person singular and plural respectively. So if you find a word which ends in “-t” you

have almost certainly got an active verb in the third person singular, and if you find a word which ends in “-nt” you have definitely got an active verb in the third person plural.

Fourthly, in the passive voice the third person singular always (except in the compound past tenses) ends in “-tur” and the third person plural in “-ntur”, so if you find a word which ends in one or other of these ways you will have a passive verb in the third person singular or plural, as the case may be.

Fifthly, in the active voice the first person plural ends in “-mus” and in the passive in “-mur”. So in the Gloria we find “Laudámus te, benedícimus te, adorámus te, glorificámus te, grátias ágimus tibi...”, and of course the word “offérimus” which occurs over and over again in the Mass. But there are other words in Latin which end in “-mus” (see for example “altíssimus” towards the end of the Gloria) so this is a good guide rather than a foolproof method of identifying a first person plural.

Next, a word about the subjunctive mood. This has various uses in Latin, but the principal one (and in the Mass almost the only one) is to express a hope or a wish. So when the priest wishes to say “We pray” he says “Orámus”, but when he wants to say “Let us pray” he says “Orémus”. Since our hopes and wishes figure very frequently in the prayers of the Mass, the subjunctive occurs very often in its texts. I can give only a few examples by way of illustration. Before reading the gospel the priest or deacon prays “Dóminus sit in corde meo et in lábiis meis, ut digne et competéter annúntiem Evangélium suum” (“May the Lord be in my heart and on my lips, so that I may worthily and competently proclaim His Gospel”). There are two wishes expressed here; “may the Lord be in my heart” and “that I may worthily proclaim...His Gospel”, so both verbs (“sit” and “annúntiem”) are in the subjunctive. In a passage which we have already considered, from the first commemoration of saints in the Canon, the priest prays “quorum méritis precibúsq;ue concédas, ut in ómnibus protectiónis tuae muniámur auxílio” (“to whose merits and prayers grant that in all [things] we may be defended by the help of Thy protection”). Here again both verbs asking that God may grant something (“concédas”) and specifying what we want him to grant (“muniámur”) are in the subjunctive. And after the Confiteor the server says “Misereátur tui omnípotens Deus et, dimíssis peccátis tuis, perdúcat te in vitam aetérnam” (“May God have mercy on you and, having forgiven your sins, bring you to life eternal”). Both verbs (“misereátur” and “perdúcat”) are naturally in the subjunctive.

The phrase “dimíssis peccátis tuis” introduces another point which we have met briefly before when talking about the Words of Consecration (remember “elevátis óculis in caelum”?) I mentioned then that the Romans never got round to inventing an active past participle and so they had to use a passive one in its place. So instead of saying “having lifted up His eyes to heaven” they have to say “His eyes having been lifted up to heaven”. We have here another example of the same thing. We would say “having forgiven your sins”, but since we can’t do that in Latin, we have to say “your sins having been forgiven”. The other point to note is that since “peccátis” is neither the subject nor the object of any verb, and does not come after any preposition, there is no obvious case that it can go into. But it has to go into one or another, so as a matter of convention it goes into the ablative, and “dimíssis” and “tuis” follow suit. This type of construction is known to grammarians as the “ablative absolute”, i.e. the ablative which is grammatically on its own and not attached to any other part of the sentence.

Latin does have an active present participle, which is also found in the ablative absolute where it is neither the subject or the object of a verb. A good example is in the Preface for the Ascension, where it says that after His Resurrection Christ appeared to His disciples “et, ipsis

cernéntibus, est elevátus in caelum” (literally, “and, them looking on, He was raised to heaven” – we would say of course “while they looked on”). There is another in the Preface for feasts of Our Lady, “virginitátis glória permanénte”. Present participles are formed from the infinitive by substituting “-ns” for the final “-re”. Cases other than the nominative can be identified by looking out for the letters “-nt-” before the word ending (e.g. the foregoing examples and “Communicántes et memóriam venerántes”, which we have already met in the Canon).

One final, but important, point about the Latin verb. There are a whole series of verbs in Latin which are passive in form but active in meaning (they are known as deponent verbs, though the name is not important). I would like to be able to say that they are rare and that you will not meet them very often, but in fact they are common and you will. *Confítéri* (to confess), *dignári* (to condescend), *ingredíri* (to enter), *laetári* (to rejoice), *loqui* (to speak), *mereári* (to deserve), *miseréri* (to have mercy), *pati* (to suffer), *precári* (to pray) and *sequi* (to follow) are all deponent verbs which figure in the text of the Mass. The main thing however is to remember that they are active in meaning, and not be puzzled because they are translated by active verbs in English.

What I would suggest that you do at this stage, as an exercise, is to go very carefully through the whole text of the Canon, trying to work out not only what each word means but what part it plays in the sentence in which it is found. If you get stuck the vocabulary will help. I expect that this will be a fairly difficult, and lengthy, exercise, but a rewarding one, and, if you persevere to the end, you will have learned a great deal about the language of the Mass and be in an excellent position to go on to the rest of the Mass texts. You will find words in the latter which you have not met before, certainly, but you should not find any more grammatical complexities than you have already met with and mastered.

Chapter VI

The Mass of the Catechumens

We have now reached the point where it should be possible in the next few chapters to take the remaining texts of the Mass in order, starting with the prayers at the foot of the altar and ending with the beginning of the Gospel according to St. John, which closes the Old Rite Mass. With the knowledge of basic Latin grammar which you will have acquired by a careful reading of the preceding chapters and a study of the texts which we have so far analysed, you should be well equipped to tackle the remaining texts, with the help of the vocabulary whenever you come across unfamiliar words. I do not propose therefore to analyse these texts in as much detail as hitherto, but simply to attempt to guide you through them, dealing with possible points of difficulty as we go.

The first part of the Mass, sometimes known as the “Mass of the Catechumens” because it was originally the only part of the Mass which those who had not yet been baptised were permitted to attend, can be divided into three distinct sections. Firstly, there are the prayers at the foot of the altar, consisting in an introductory psalm (Psalm 42, vv. 1-5) and a penitential rite. Then come the Introit, Kyrie, and Gloria. The third part begins with the Collect and continues with a series of scriptural readings followed by a sermon or homily and concludes, on Sundays and major feasts, with the Creed. We will look at these in the order in which they occur.

The prayers at the foot of the altar are not strictly part of the Mass at all. They originated as prayers said in the sacristy by way of preparation for the ministers who were about to take part in the celebration. Later the practice arose of saying them during the procession to the altar. This was fine in cathedrals but in the humble parish church the distance from sacristy to altar was not great enough to enable them to be completed in time, so they finished up being recited at the foot of the altar instead. The fact that they are not strictly part of the Mass liturgy is clear at a High Mass or a Missa Cantata, where Mass begins with the singing of the Introit by the choir, while the ministers and servers recite these preparatory prayers in a low voice, inaudible to everyone in the congregation apart from those who happen to be sitting in the first few rows. Their status is also apparent from the fact that they are always recited and never sung. However, in the Novus Ordo the penitential rite has been incorporated into the Mass liturgy itself, an innovation which has attracted a considerable amount of criticism, and not only from traditionalists.

Grammatically the psalm is interesting for the number of different forms of the Latin verb which it exhibits. The imperative is prominent; we have “Iúdica” (“Judge”), “discérne” (“distinguish”), “érue” (“save”), “emítte” (“send forth”) and “spera” (“hope”); the first three of these are addressed to God, the last to the listener. Normally when addressing God we would tend either to add some such word as “quaésumus” (“we beseech”), or use the subjunctive, which in Latin is a more humble and courteous way of asking God for a favour, but here St. Jerome was translating from the Hebrew psalmist, who uses more direct language. The psalm also includes a number of future tenses, “introíbo” (“I will enter”) and “confitébor” (“I will acknowledge”). The latter is one of those deponent verbs which we mentioned in the last chapter, which are grammatically passive in Latin but are translated by an active verb in English. In this instance it is followed by objects in the dative case (“tibi” and “illi”); normally it takes a direct object in the accusative case, as indeed it does in English, and it is only in the Vulgate translation of the psalms that it is ever found in Latin with an object in the dative, the reason being that St. Jerome was following a Hebrew idiom. “Repulisti”, “deduxérunt” and “adduxérunt” are all perfect (i.e. past) tenses. The remaining

verbs are in the present tense; “incédo”, “laetíficat”, “contúrbas” and finally “es”, which is the second person singular of the irregular verb “esse” (“to be”).

The penitential rite which follows consists first in a general confession by the priest to the people, to which the server, speaking throughout the rite on behalf of the congregation, replies with a prayer begging God’s mercy for his (i.e. the priest’s) sins. The server then makes a similar confession on behalf of the people to the priest, to which the latter replies with a prayer begging God’s mercy for their sins. He proceeds to ask God’s pardon on behalf of all present, including himself, and the rite concludes with a brief dialogue between priest and server, and two prayers for forgiveness recited silently by the priest as he goes up to the altar to begin the Mass.

Each confession begins with the word “Confiteor” which is followed by a succession of proper names in the dative, indicating the persons to whom confession or acknowledgement of sin is made; God himself of course, Our Lady, St. Michael, St. John the Baptist, Ss. Peter and Paul, and all the saints. At this point the language of each confession differs; the priest confesses “et vobis, fratres” (“and to you, brothers”, i.e. to all those present except of course himself), the server “et tibi, pater” (“and to you, father”). In the second part of each confession the priest (or server) asks the saints mentioned in the first part (now all in the accusative case, as objects of “precor”) to pray for him (“oráre pro me”). Again the language is adapted; the priest asks “vos, fratres” (“you, brothers”) to pray for him, the server “te, pater” (“you, father”). There is the same distinction in the response which each makes after the other’s confession; the server says “Misereátur *tui* omnipotens Deus...et dimíssis peccátis *tuis*, perdúcat *te*...”, and the priest “Misereátur *vestri*... et dimíssis peccátis *vestris*, perdúcat *vos*...”. “Dimíssis peccátis tuis” (or “vestris”) is an ablative absolute of the past participle, “your sins having been forgiven”; as previously explained, it is impossible to say “having forgiven your sins” in Latin since it does not have an active past participle. In conclusion the priest prays inclusively that God will grant “indulgence, absolution and remission of *our* sins”.

The brief dialogue which follows consists mainly in quotations from the psalms; again the psalmist uses the imperative (“osténde”, “da” and “exáudi”). In the first of the two prayers which the celebrant says as he goes up to the altar, “Aufer” (“Take away”) is an imperative, but it is here followed by the humble “quaésumus”. The priest then says why he desires our sins to be taken away, “ut mereámur” (subjunctive) to enter into the Holy of Holies. The second prayer asks that our sins be forgiven through the merits of those saints whose relics are here (i.e. in the altar), “quorum reliquiae hic sunt”, and of all the saints.

Mass then begins with the Introit, literally meaning “he goes in” (it is the opposite of “Exit”, meaning “he goes out”, so logically we should put “Introit” rather than “Entrance” on the door by which we enter a room!). There follows a brief excursion into Greek, in the Kyrie. Contrary to what many people think, this is not penitential in nature. At one time a litany was sung at this point (as it still is in the Eastern rites), and the “Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison” was simply an opening request to God, in His mercy, to grant the favours prayed for. The litany still sung at the Easter Vigil is introduced in exactly this way. The litany in the Mass was suppressed by St. Gregory the Great, but he retained this vestige of it. In the Novus Ordo it has either been done away with altogether or incorporated into the penitential rite, at the choice of the celebrant.

On Sundays and feast days, the Gloria now follows. The Gloria is, with the exception of the Creed, probably the simplest text, grammatically speaking, in the Ordinary of the Mass. It falls naturally into three sections. First, the words used by the angels to announce the birth of

Christ to the shepherds of Bethlehem, which are well known to everyone and require no elucidation. It has however frequently been a source of puzzlement as to why Catholics and Protestants seem to have different translations (“to men of goodwill” and “goodwill to men” respectively). The reason is that the oldest and best manuscripts, followed by St. Jerome in the Vulgate, have “to men of goodwill”. However, at a very early stage in the manuscript tradition some careless scribe omitted the final letter from the Greek word “eudókiás”, thereby transforming it from a genitive (“of goodwill”) to a nominative (“goodwill”). Since the result still made grammatical sense the error was not spotted and subsequent copyists perpetuated it, thereby giving rise to a whole family of manuscripts which contain the error. It was this group of manuscripts that the translators of the Authorised Version used, and so the mistake passed into the English Protestant tradition.

After the angelic announcement there is a passage of praise to God the Father and God the Son, beginning with a series of verbs in the first person plural (which end, you will recall from the previous chapter, in “-mus”); “we praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we glorify Thee, we render thanks to Thee on account of Thy great glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty, O Lord the Son the only-begotten, Jesus Christ, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father”. The word order, apart from “grátias ágimus” and “Rex caeléstis” is virtually identical to English and presents no difficulties. Why do we *thank* God for His glory? Because God has made the whole universe for His own honour and glory, so without it neither we nor anything else would exist. By mistranslating this as “*We praise* you for your glory”, the authors of the English text of the Novus Ordo appear to have entirely missed the point (not that this is their only, or even their worst, mistake. In their translation they apply the words “Laudámus te, benedicimus te, adorámus te, glorificámus te, grátias ágimus tibi” to God the Father alone, instead of to both the Father and the Son).

The Gloria ends with a series of petitions. Christ is addressed as “Qui tollis peccáta mundi” (“[Thou] Who takest away the sins of the world”) and as “qui sedes ad dexteram Patris” (“[Thou] Who dost sit at the right [hand] of the Father”) and is asked to “have mercy on us” (“miserére” is the imperative of the deponent verb, “miseréri”) and to “receive our prayer” (another imperative, “súscipe”). Finally we say why we have every confidence in addressing our petitions to Him, “Quóniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dóminus, tu solus Altíssimus, Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spíritu, in glória Dei Patris”).

The priest then introduces the Collect by turning to the people and greeting them with “Dóminus vobíscum” (one of many times in the Mass). “Vobíscum” is a funny word; we would have expected “cum vobis” for “with you”. However, when “cum” occurs with a first or second personal pronoun the two words are reversed and run together as a single word. So as well as “vobíscum” you will find “mecum”, “tecum” and “nobíscum” (the third person “with him”, however, is “cum illo”). There is no particular reason for this; it is just an idiomatic usage, the kind of thing which occurs in all languages. The word “sit” (“may [He] be”) is of course understood.

After the Collect comes the Epistle (or alternative Old Testament reading), and the Gradual and Alleluia (or Tract in Lent). The Gradual and Alleluia (or Tract) appear at first sight to be a single chant but in fact they are two. The most ancient Mass liturgies had two or more readings before the Gospel, with a psalm between each of them. Since this psalm was introduced from the altar steps, it became known as the Gradual (“gradus” means “step”). The two pre-Gospel readings were reduced to one at a very early date, and the Gradual psalm, in a shortened form, was thereafter sung immediately prior to the Alleluia. The traditional number of pre-Gospel readings, however, survived on a few days in the liturgical year, notably the Ember days and one or two of the Lenten ferias, and in particular on Good Friday. On these

days each of the readings is preceded by its own Collect, with a separate Gradual between them. The Novus Ordo restored the ancient arrangement, but only for Sundays and solemnities, and paradoxically abolished it on those very days (except for Good Friday) on which it had survived. Apart from the Easter Vigil, which represents something of a special case since the Old Testament readings are not strictly part of the Mass, Good Friday is now the only day in the official calendar on which the tradition of more than one pre-Gospel reading has survived intact since the earliest times (though the actual readings themselves were changed in the post-Vatican II reform).

The deacon, as a preparation for singing the Gospel, then says the prayer “Munda cor meum” and requests a blessing from the celebrant, which the latter gives in the prayer “Dóminus sit in corde tuo”. The words are adapted for the purposes of Low Mass, where there is no deacon and the Gospel is read by the celebrant, an indication that High Mass was the original form of the Mass liturgy, and Low Mass a development from it. There are two main verbs in the first prayer, both in the imperative, “munda” and “dignáre” (another deponent verb). “Cleanse my heart and my lips, almighty God” and “thus condescend to cleanse me by Thy gracious mercy”. Each petition has a subsidiary clause attached to it; the first is a relative clause referring to the cleansing of the lips of the prophet Isaiah with a burning coal (“cálculo igníto”), the second gives the reason for the prayer, “that I may have the strength (“váleam”, subjunctive of “valére”) to proclaim (“nuntiáre”) Thy holy Gospel worthily”. The blessing itself we have considered in the previous chapter, when talking about the use of the subjunctive.

Chapter VII The Offertory

Between the Creed and the Eucharistic Prayer comes that part of the Mass known as the Offertory, beginning with the Offertory verse (originally a complete psalm) and ending with the Orate Fratres and the Secret Prayer, or, to give it its Roman name, the Prayer over the Offerings (“Super Oblata”). In the 1962 Missal there are no less than eleven prayers (or seven at a Low Mass), all to be said silently by the celebrant, in between. Some of these prayers are quite short, others are rather longer.

Most of these prayers entered the Ordinary of the Mass at a relatively recent date. Originally the Offertory was the time when the congregation brought forward their offerings, bread and wine for the sacrifice of course, but also other commodities for the maintenance of the clergy or for distribution to the poor. These were received by the deacon, who set aside as much bread and wine as was required for communion and placed it on the altar. While this was going on, the choir sang a psalm, appropriate to the feast or feria. Afterwards the celebrant recited or sang the Secret (out loud at that time). There are still traces of the primitive practice in the text of many of the Secret Prayers. That for the fifth Sunday after Pentecost, for example, asks God to accept the “oblata famulorum famularumque tuarum” (“the offerings of thy servants, male and female”), and that for the Nativity of St. John the Baptist begins “Tua, Dómine, munéribus altaria cumulamus” (“We pile Thine altars high with gifts, Lord”).

In the course of time however the practice whereby the faithful brought their gifts up to the sanctuary individually was replaced by a collection of money, taken up while they remained in their places, and the Prayer over the Offerings became literally the Secret Prayer. The only surviving trace of the primitive action is now the offering by the server to the celebrant of the wine which is to be consecrated later. The Offertory Psalm was reduced to the present Offertory Verse, and the present offertory prayers were introduced. They are in the main non-Roman in origin. They began in the tenth century in the area north of the Alps, and gradually spread southwards. By 1571 they were already well established in the Roman rite, and were consequently included in the consolidation of the Tridentine Rite in St. Pius V’s Missal of that year, whence of course they have descended to the 1962 Missal, which is the standard for the celebration of the Old Rite today.

The present action can be divided into three parts. First the celebrant offers the bread and the wine separately to God, with prayers for their acceptance by Him, and consequent benefits for those present and for all Christians. Then he blesses incense and censes first the bread and wine and then the altar. Finally he washes his hands and offers up a prayer addressed to the Blessed Trinity, and invoking the intercession of all the saints.

The first prayer is quite long but structurally fairly simple. The priest elevates the unconsecrated bread and asks God to receive it, describing it, by way of anticipation, as “this immaculate victim” (“Súscipe, sancte Pater, ómnipotens aetérne Deus, hanc immaculatam hóstiam”). There follows a relative clause explaining on whose behalf it is offered (“for my innumerable sins, and offences, and omissions, and for all those present, but also for all faithful Christians, living and dead”) and why it is offered (“so that it may profit me and them to salvation into eternal life”). “Súscipe” is of course an imperative. We have come across “et” meaning “also” before, in the Canon. The persons on whose behalf the offering is made are in the ablative, following the preposition “pro”. “Proficiat” is subjunctive, coming after “ut”. “Vitam aetérnam” is accusative, not ablative, because “in” here means “into” (motion towards), not “in” (location). All of this we have met before in other contexts.

The second prayer, which accompanies the pouring of a drop of water into the chalice, is interesting because it was not composed for this purpose. It is in fact, oddly, an adaptation of a collect for Christmas Day, found in the oldest surviving liturgical book, the Leonine Sacramentary. If you remove the words “per huius aquae et vinae mysterium” (“through the mystery of this water and wine”) from the text you will see how the prayer read originally, and how appropriate it was in the context of Christmas. If you compare it with other collects in the Roman Missal, you will also see that it has the classic structure of the Roman collect, of which I hope to say more in a later chapter. Who it was who had the bright idea of adapting this particular prayer for the purpose of the offertory, history does not record. “Mirabiliter” is an adverb, “wonderfully”, and “mirabilius” is its comparative, “[even] more wonderfully”. The Creation is a wonderful work of God, the Redemption an even greater one. “Fieri” is the infinitive of an irregular verb, meaning “to become” (its subjunctive, “fiat”, meaning “let it become” is very common in the liturgy).

With the offering of the chalice, the fact that these prayers entered the liturgy in a piecemeal fashion becomes evident. Whereas the offering of the host is couched in the first person singular (the priest alone), that of the chalice is in the first person plural (everyone present), an anomaly which could hardly have occurred if both these prayers had been composed at the same time and in the same place. “Deprecantes” is a present participle (note the “-nt-“ before the ending), meaning “imploring”. The wine is offered “pro nostra et totius mundi salute” (genitive *before* the noun again) and the prayer ends with a nice little rhetorical flourish, “cum odore suavitatis ascendat” (“may it ascend” [subjunctive] “with an odour of sweetness”).

The next prayer continues in the first person plural, this time the subjunctive since it is a request. “Suscipiamur” (“may we be received”) “in spiritu humilitatis et in animo contrito” (“in a spirit of humility and in a contrite [frame of] mind”), “and may our sacrifice in Thy sight today be such that it may please Thee, Lord God”. Note that, as in some modern European languages, the Latin idiom is “may it please *to* Thee”, i.e. the verb “placere” is followed by the dative case (“tibi”), not the accusative (“te”).

Then comes a sort of mini-epiklesis, again by way of anticipation, in which the celebrant calls on the Holy Spirit to bless the sacrifice. Both verbs (“veni” and “benedic”) are in the imperative; the latter is an irregular formation, since we should have expected “benedice” from “benedicere”.

At High Mass or in a Missa Cantata the celebrant now blesses incense and then takes the thurible and censens the offerings and altar. There are four prayers for this, one for the blessing of the incense, the second for the censuring of the offerings, the third for the censuring of the altar and the fourth when the thurible is returned to the deacon. God is asked to bless the incense through the intercession of Blessed Michael the Archangel “stantis a dextris altaris incensi, et omnium electorum suorum” (“standing at the right hand of the altar of incense, and of all his chosen ones”). “Stantis” is a present participle (note the “-nt-” again), in the genitive to agree with “beati Michaelis archangeli”, and “dextris” (unusually, in the plural) stands, as we have seen before, for “right hand”. (The reference, by the way, is to Apocalypse 8, 3-5.) The rather unusual expression “electorum suorum” seems to refer to St. Michael’s traditional role in the Last Judgement, as the archangel who conducts the souls of the blessed to heaven, as we can see him doing in innumerable medieval doom paintings.

The second of these four prayers is brief and to the point and requires no explanation. The third, however, represents part of a psalm. I often find these difficult, because the Hebrew idiom is so different from the Latin. St. Jerome’s translation of the psalms, like the rest of his

work, is a literary masterpiece, which preserves much of the Hebrew idiom while rendering the text into splendidly rhythmical Latin prose. It is not, however, easy to turn into good English, and can occasionally be quite difficult to understand. The general sense is however always clear. In the present case the psalmist asks God to direct his prayer, like incense, in His sight. The subject is “*oratio mea*” and the verb, “*dirigatur*” is passive subjunctive, (“may [it] be directed”). This is followed by a very terse phrase, “*elevatio manuum meorum sacrificium vespertinum*” (literally “the raising of my hands an evening sacrifice”). It is a highly concise and idiomatic way of asking that his prayer may be found acceptable. In the next verse he asks that God may protect him from committing sins of speech. “*Pone*” is imperative, “*custodiam*” and “*ostium*” are its objects, in the accusative naturally, “*ori*” and “*labiis*” are dative, and “*circumstantiae*” is genitive after “*ostium*”, making specific what kind of “gate” he means. A literal translation would be “Place, Lord, a guard to my mouth, and a gate of enclosure to my lips” (we would say “a guard on my mouth, and a gate enclosing my lips”). Finally, the psalmist tells us why he wants God to do this “*ut non declinet cor meum in verba malitiae, ad excusandas excusationes in peccatis*” (“so that my heart may not stoop to words of malice, to making excuses for sin”). “*Excusandas excusationes*” is a peculiar construction (known as a gerundive) which I won’t explain in detail because it occurs only twice in the Ordinary of the Mass (the other example is “*ad medelam percipiendam*” in the priest’s prayer before communion). The gerundive is a verbal adjective, corresponding to the gerund, which you will remember is a verbal noun. In English, present participles, gerunds and gerundives are all formed the same way (by adding “-ing” to the end of the verb), so we tend to think of them as all being the same, though grammatically they are really quite distinct.

The thurible is then returned to the deacon with a short and simple prayer which requires no elucidation. During the incensation of the ministers, servers and congregation the celebrant washes his hands, while reciting silently part of another psalm, in which the psalmist describes his love for the house of God, and asks God in consequence to preserve him from falling in with the wicked. This ritual washing is a very ancient part of the liturgy. It is first mentioned by St. Cyril of Jerusalem in 348 AD. Refuting the suggestion that the washing is a purely practical, rather than a symbolic, action, he says “we did not come into church covered in dirt”! The psalm which accompanies it is quite long and I will not go through it in detail, just mention one or two points which you might have difficulty with. “*Locum habitationis gloriae tuae*” contains a double genitive, “the place of dwelling of Thy glory” (or, as we would say, “Thy glorious dwelling place”). “*Ne perdas*” is a construction that we have not met with so far. It is a negative imperative (“do not lose”), which in Latin is formed by the use of the word “*ne*” followed by the subjunctive. There is another good example in the Pater Noster, “*ne nos inducas in tentationem*”, (“do not lead us into temptation”). Latin has another way of expressing a negative imperative, which is to use the word “*noli*” followed by the infinitive. It doesn’t occur at all in the Ordinary but it does sometimes in the Proper; for instance in the Gradual for the Fourth Sunday of Advent we find “*Veni, Domine, et noli tardare*” (“Come, Lord, and do not delay”). “*Dextera eorum replata est muneribus*” means “their right hand” (literally “the right hand of them”) “is full of bribes”. The word “*munus*” (of which “*muneribus*” is the ablative plural) normally means simply “gift”, as it does for example in the passage from the Secret Prayer for the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, quoted above, but sometimes, as here, it has the more sinister connotation of “bribe”. The verb “*ingrediri*”, from which comes “*ingressus sum*” is deponent, and therefore though passive in form is active in meaning. Literally the sentence translates as “But I have entered in my innocence”; we would probably say something like “But I have always walked in virtue”. “*Autem*”, meaning “but” or “however”, is one of those words like “*enim*” and “*igitur*” which can never come first in a Latin sentence.

Returning to the centre of the altar, the celebrant bows low and recites silently a further prayer, addressed to the Blessed Trinity, asking God to accept the sacrifice which he is about to make in memory of the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Our Lord, and in honour of the saints, mentioning by name “beátae Maríae semper Vírginis, et beáti Ioánnis Baptístae, et sanctórum Apostolórum Petri et Pauli, et istórum, et ómnium sanctórum”. “Istórum” means “of these”, in other words those saints whose relics are contained in the altar. He concludes “so that to them it may be of advantage for [their] honour, to us however for [our] salvation, and [that] they may condescend to intercede for us in heaven, whose memory we recall on earth”. Note that here, as quite often in the liturgy, Latin uses the plural “caelis” and “terris” where we would use the singular. “Memóriam ágere”, meaning literally “to make the memory” is a standard way of saying “to remember”, as “grátias ágere” (which we met in the Gloria, and in the exhortation “Grátias agámus Dómino Deo nostro”) is of saying “to thank”.

The priest then turns to the people and, addressing them as “fratres”, asks them to pray “that my and your sacrifice may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty”. “Fiat” you will recognise as the present subjunctive of the irregular verb, “fieri”, which we met earlier in the Christmas collect from the Leonine Sacramentary. “Fratres”, though masculine, naturally includes everyone in the congregation (as we have already seen in the Confíteor). The standard ICEL translation, used in Novus Ordo Masses, is “brethren”. This does not satisfy some priests, who prefer to say “my brothers and sisters”. Whether they know it or not (I suspect many of them don’t), some of the medieval texts, including the one used in our own Sarum rite, do in fact read “fratres et soróres”. As I think I said before, inclusive language is far from being a twentieth century discovery.

Finally, the server replies to the celebrant’s request on behalf of the congregation. Neither the grammar nor the vocabulary of his response should by now cause you any difficulty; the only new word is “utilitátem”, which is the accusative of “utilitas”, meaning “benefit”.

Chapter VIII The Communion Rite

After the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer (considered in Chapters III and IV), the Communion Rite begins with the Pater Noster, which is introduced by a brief exhortation. “Móniti” and “formáti” are the nominative plural of the past participle passives of “monére” and “formáre” respectively, literally “having been advised” by saving precepts and “having been formed” by divine institution, we make bold (“audémus”) to say the Lord’s Prayer.

St. Gregory was responsible for the position of the Pater Noster immediately after the Eucharistic Prayer, so that, he tells us, the Lord’s Prayer may be said over the Lord’s own Body. The prayer itself is so well known that I do not need to go into it in detail. The first half consists in three petitions, all in the subjunctive, that God’s name be hallowed, that His kingdom may come and that His will be done. We have already met “fiat” in the “Oráte fratres”, meaning “may it become” or, in the present context, “may it happen”. The second half contains another four petitions, this time all for our own benefit. The verbs in this section are by contrast in the imperative, “da”, “dimítte” and “líbera”. “Débita” is grammatically the neuter plural of the past participle passive of the verb “debére”, meaning “the things which are owed”, in other words our sins, which are expressed metaphorically as liabilities towards God, which we are asking Him to cancel (see the parable in Matthew 18: 23-35). It serves as both the expressed object of “dimítte” and the implied object of “dimíttimus”. As we saw in the last chapter, “ne nos indúcas” is a negative imperative.

The Pater Noster is followed by the embolism, said silently except on Good Friday. Embolism comes from a Greek word meaning something inserted or added, because this prayer is an extension of the last petition of the Lord’s Prayer. It begins “Líbera nos, Dómine, ab ómnibus malis, praetéritis, présentibus et futuris” (“Deliver us, Lord, from all evils, past, present and future”). How can God free us from past evils? There are several possible explanations (not necessarily mutually exclusive). The reference may be to our sins, or those of our forefathers, the burden of guilt for which, and the consequences of which, continue to exist in the present. Or it may be a reference to the fact that since God exists outside time, it makes perfectly good sense to pray for delivery from evils which would have happened had it not been for our present prayer.

The embolism continues with a petition for peace. It begins with a construction we have met once or twice before, the ablative absolute, which as you know consists in a participle, present or past, and a noun or pronoun, in the ablative case (e.g. “elevátis óculis”, from the Canon, or “glória permanénte”, from the preface for feasts of Our Lady). Here we have the present participle, “intercedénte beáta et gloriósa semper vírgine María, cum beátis Apóstolis tuis Petro et Paulo, et Andréa, et ómnibus sanctis”, literally “the blessed and glorious ever Virgin Mary interceding” etc., followed by an imperative “da propítius pacem in diébus nostris”, and an explanation of what we understand by peace “ut ope misericórdiae túae adiúti, et a peccáto simus semper líberi et ab omni perturbátione secúri”. “Adiúti”, “líberi” and “secúri” are all nominative plural, agreeing with the subject of the verb; “in order that, assisted by the help of Thy mercy, we may be both always free from sin and secure from all disturbance”. You will remember, I am sure, that where we have two clauses both introduced by “et”, as here, the first “et” translates as “both”.

The Old Roman Rite embolism is extremely ancient, dating from before the time of Gregory the Great. However the liturgical reformers rewrote it, removing the appeal for the intercession of Our Lady and the saints, on the grounds that such an appeal was inappropriate,

coming so soon after the similar appeal in the Canon. St. Gregory clearly did not think it inappropriate, nor did St. Pius V, but Bugnini and his colleagues did, so out it went.

The embolism concludes with a doxology, during which the “fractio”, or breaking of the consecrated Host, takes place. When ordinary bread was used for communion, it was necessary to break it into small pieces, and this requirement is the origin of the fractio. It is now purely symbolic, representing the breaking of Christ’s Body on the Cross. It concludes with the priest breaking off a small portion of the Host which he drops into the chalice, praying that the mingling and consecration of the Body and Blood of Christ may become (“fiat” again) for us who receive it a source of eternal life. A literal translation of the Latin would be “may become to us receiving [it] towards eternal life”. You will of course recognise “accipiéntibus”, like “intercedénte” in the previous paragraph, as a present participle from the “-nt-“ before the variable word ending.

The choir then sings the Agnus Dei, whose grammatical structure is simple. The second repetition ends with “dona nobis pacem”, serving as an introduction to the Pax, or Kiss of Peace. On Maundy Thursday there is no Pax, and the Agnus Dei ends with “miserére nobis”. This is because the exchange of a kiss on this one day of the year signifies not love but betrayal. The Pax consists in a prayer “Dómine Jesu Christe, qui dixísti”, and the exchange of an embrace between the ministers. Originally, of course, the embrace was a kiss and the whole congregation was involved. The men always stood on one side of the nave, the women on the other, so that there were three groups, ministers, laymen and laywomen, and the kiss was exchanged between the persons in each of these groups, but not between the groups themselves. It was not at all like the so-called sign of peace which occurs in the Novus Ordo.

The Agnus Dei was introduced at this point in the Mass by Pope Sergius I (687-701). Before that it formed the conclusion to the litany. Sergius did not however change the Easter Vigil rite, in which the Agnus Dei continued to be sung as the conclusion to the litany, and not during the Mass, for the next 1300 years, until the post-conciliar reformers removed it from the litany to the Mass, either from a dislike of what they regarded as untidiness in the liturgy, or because they thought that the idea of a Mass without an Agnus Dei would be beyond the capacity of the laity to understand.

In the prayer which follows there is yet another example of a negative imperative formed by the word “ne” and the subjunctive, namely “ne respícias” (“do not regard”). “Eam” (“her”), referring to the Church, is the object of the double infinitive “pacificáre” and “coadunáre”; Christ is asked “to pacify and to unite her, according to Thy will”, normally translated as “to grant her peace and unity” etc.

After the Pax come two prayers to prepare the celebrant for his own communion. The first, though addressed specifically to Christ, introduces the collaboration of the Blessed Trinity in the work of redemption. By now you will be expert at spotting the present participle, “cooperánte”, in the ablative absolute construction, literally “the Holy Spirit co-operating”. There are three main verbs, of which the first two are in the imperative, “líbera” and “fac” (the latter is an irregular formation from “fácere”), and “me” is the object of both; Christ is asked to “free me through this, Thy most sacred Body and Blood, from all my sins, and from all evils”, and “make me always cleave to Thy commandments”. The third verb is a negative imperative, “nunquam permíttas”; this is analogous to the use of “ne” with the subjunctive, but stronger, not just “do not allow”, but “never allow”. “Me” is also the object of “permíttas”, but this time understood rather than expressed, and “separári” is a passive infinitive. The English word order would be “nunquam permíttas [me] separári a te”.

The second prayer is really an expanded version of the *Dómine non sum dignus*. It is grammatically simple and the word order is more or less the same as in English, so you should not have too much difficulty in understanding it. The word “*prosit*”, meaning “may [it] benefit”, is from “*proesse*”, which is formed from the preposition “*pro*” (“on behalf of”) and “*esse*” (“to be”). The prayer concludes with one of only two examples of the gerundive occurring in the Ordinary of the Mass (the other being “*excúsandas excusatiónes*” in the prayer accompanying the censing of the altar). Here it has a purposive sense “for [the purpose of] attaining healing”.

The prayer which the priest says before receiving the Precious Blood is again part of a psalm. “*Retribuam*”, “*accípíam*”, “*invocábo*” and “*ero*” are all futures, in the first person singular. “*Laudans*” is the nominative of the present participle, “Praising [Him] I will invoke the Lord”.

After communion has been distributed the celebrant purifies the chalice whilst reciting two prayers. The first is very ancient, and Roman in origin; it began as a Postcommunion prayer in the Leonine Sacramentary, which you will remember is the oldest surviving Mass book (it is still in use in the Old Rite as the Postcommunion for Thursday in Passion Week). This is why, although it is now said silently by the priest alone, it is expressed in the first person plural. “*Capiámus*” is subjunctive, “may we take possession of”, and its object is the entire relative clause introduced by “*quod*”, “[that] which we have taken in our mouth”. “*Quod*” is a relative pronoun referring to a word (“*id*”, meaning “that”) which is understood rather than expressed. The second prayer is also ancient, though non-Roman in origin; it comes from the early Gallican liturgy, where it too began as a postcommunion prayer. It was introduced into the Roman Mass liturgy during the Middle Ages, though this time the original text was modified from the first person plural to the first person singular. The phrase “*adhaéreat viscéribus meis*” is a striking one; it means literally “may [it] stick to my internal organs”. My missal translates it as “may [it] cleave to every fibre of my being”, which is a fair enough rendering of the sense. It is also grammatically dubious, a double subject (“*Corpus... et Sanguis*”) followed by a singular verb. The Latin grammar in the Gallican sacramentaries is frequently atrocious, but it is usually corrected when Gallican prayers are incorporated into the Roman liturgy, so the use of the singular here is presumably deliberate; the Body and Blood of Christ are regarded as a single entity. “*Praesta*” is imperative, “grant”, followed as usual by “*ut*” and the subjunctive, expressing what the priest wants God to grant “that in me there may not remain the stain of sins, whom pure and holy sacraments have renewed”. “*Scélerum*”, the genitive plural of “*scelus*” is a dramatic word for “sins”; its meaning is nearer to “crime” or “wickedness”.

The dismissal, which follows the Postcommunion of the day, can take one of three forms. Where the Gloria has been said, the celebrant turns to the people and says “*Ite, missa est*”, to which the server, or congregation, replies “*Deo grátias*”. “*Missa*” is strictly the past participle of the verb “*mítere*”, meaning to send or to dispatch, but in colloquial Latin it became a noun equivalent to the more literary “*míssio*”, meaning “dismissal”. So this is a colloquial way of saying, “Go, this is the dismissal”. “*Missa*” is the word from which we derive “Mass”, because at quite an early date it gave its name to the entire Eucharistic celebration; the first instance of this use is in the Letters of St. Ambrose in the fourth century.

If the Gloria has not been said, the celebrant says “*Benedicámus Dómino*”, to which the people, or the server on their behalf, reply as before. And if the Mass is a Requiem, he says, without turning to the people, “*Requiescant in pace*”, to which the reply is simply “*Amen*”.

Before giving the blessing, the priest bows before the altar and recites one final prayer to the Holy Trinity, praying that “*obséqium servitútis meae pláceat tibi*” (literally “the tribute of my servanthood may please Thee”). This is followed by the imperative “*praesta*” and “*ut*” with the subjunctive verb, “grant that the sacrifice which I, unworthy, have offered in the presence” (the Latin says “in the eyes”) “of Thy majesty may be acceptable to Thee, and for me, and for all [those] for whom I have offered it, it may be, through Thy mercy, propitiatory”. “*Te miseránte*” is of course our old friend the ablative absolute with the present participle, literally “Thou being merciful”.

The celebrant then gives the blessing, and, until the mediaeval period, that was that. However, in the thirteenth century the custom began of reading the beginning of the Fourth Gospel, in which St. John, in origin a humble fisherman on the Lake of Galilee, expounds the mystery of the Incarnation in language of a sublimity seldom equalled and never surpassed. It was recited (never sung) either at the altar, as it is now, or during the procession from the altar back to the sacristy, as it was for example in our own Sarum rite. The reason for doing it seems to have been that this passage, being regarded as a kind of summary of the gospels as a whole, was often recited as part of benedictional formulae, so reading it immediately after the blessing seemed a logical thing to do.

Understanding the Latin, with the help of the vocabulary for unfamiliar words, is not too difficult. Understanding the theology, which is necessary in order to translate the passage accurately into a different language, is another matter altogether, and not one for which I am in any way competent. How should we translate “*Verbum erat apud Deum*”? It is usually rendered, as in the Jerusalem Bible for instance, “the Word was with God”, but this would be “*Verbum erat cum Deo*”, and the word used by St. John in the original text is not “*syn*” or “*meta*”, which are Greek for “with”, but “*pros*”. “*Apud*” in this context has much of the flavour of the French “*chez*”, for which there is no exact English equivalent. Ronald Knox rendered it as “God had the Word abiding with Him”, which is more cumbersome but certainly closer to the correct meaning. “*Hoc*” at the beginning of the next sentence refers of course to the Word. After telling us that everything in the universe was created by this Word, St. John goes on to say that “in Him was life, and [His] life was the light of men”. The use of the imperfect tense means that in this sentence he is thinking of the past, the earthly life of Christ, but immediately thereafter he switches to the present “the light *shines* in the darkness”, and then to the perfect “and the darkness *did not* master it”. So the darkness (literally “darknesses”) tried and failed to overcome the light, which now shines as the light for all men. “*Hóminum*” is the genitive plural of “*homo*”, which means “man” in the sense of “human being”. Latin has a different word for “adult male”, namely “*vir*”, and so does Greek, so the problem which has so exercised modern feminists did not exist in the ancient world.

In the next few verses the evangelist goes on to describe the mission of John the Baptist, explaining carefully that “he was not the light, but [he came] so that he might bear witness concerning the light”. “*Lux*” and “*lumen*” mean the same thing; in fact the Greek original uses the same word. St. Jerome has varied it in translation, purely for stylistic reasons. “That was the true light,” (imperfect tense again) “which enlightens” (present tense) “every man coming into this world”. He was in the world, indeed the world was made (“*factus est*”) by Him, but the world did not recognise Him. The message is made more emphatic by the reiterated “*mun-do*”, “*mundus*”, “*mundus*”, and by the repetition of the last phrase in the next sentence, “He came into His own (“*in própria*”), and His own people (“*sui*”) did not receive Him”. The subject of the next clause is the odd word “*quot-quot*”, meaning “whosoever”; it is odd because it does not change its ending, no matter what grammatical role it plays in any given sentence. “*Eis*” and “his” are datives, “to them” and “to these”, that is to those who received Him, and to those who believe in His name, he gave “*potestátem filios Dei fieri*”,

“the power to become sons of God”. The tenses are again worth noting; “recepérunt” and “dedit” are perfects, “credunt” is present. He *has given* the power to become children of God to those who *received* Him (i.e. during His earthly life), and to those who *now* believe in His name. The passage ends with a personal statement, “vidimus glóriam eius, glóriam quasi Unigéniti a Patre”, “we saw His glory” (literally “the glory of Him”), “the glory as of the Only-begotten from the Father”; the “we” being of course St. John and his companions, the other disciples, the eye-witnesses of the Risen Lord.

Chapter IX Collect, Secret & Postcommunion

The Collect, Secret and Postcommunion (as well as the Preface, which we have already considered) are not strictly part of the Ordinary of the Mass. However these prayers in the Roman Rite (particularly the Collect) tend to follow a fairly strict pattern, and although I obviously cannot deal with all of them (there are literally hundreds still in use, and even these are only a fraction of the total number composed over the centuries), I think it is worth while explaining this pattern, because it will help you, with the assistance of the English translation in your missal, to understand them.

Many of the Collects in the Old Roman Rite are to be found in the Gregorian Sacramentary, which reflects the revision of the rite by St. Gregory the Great around 600 AD. This sacramentary contains about 900 Collects, of which approximately 650 appear in other liturgical books of the period. At one time it was thought that all the remainder were composed by St. Gregory personally. However, a Benedictine monk named Henry Ashworth undertook the mammoth task of trawling through all the surviving writings of St. Gregory to identify verbal similarities with the Collects of the Gregorian Sacramentary, and thereby establish which of the Collects could be attributed with reasonable certainty to him. He detected such similarities in about 80 cases. It doesn't of course follow that these are the only Collects composed by St. Gregory, because he might have composed others which do not happen to contain expressions found in his other writings. However that may be, it seems certain that the vast majority of the Collects in the sacramentary were already in use by 600 AD. Quite a few of them have survived in the new missal of Paul VI, though often in different contexts and partially rewritten to reflect different theological perceptions.

Roman Collects have a basic quadripartite pattern. Firstly, God is invoked, sometimes simply as "Deus" or "Dómine", but frequently at somewhat greater length as for example "Omnípotens sempitérne Deus" or "Omnípotens et miséricors Deus". This is followed by a relative clause which describes some attribute of God or some action of His which is relevant to the petition which immediately follows. Then comes a petition for some grace or favour, spiritual or temporal, introduced by a phrase such as "da, quaesumus" or "concede propítius". This third section often, though not always, falls into two subsections, the first being the request, the second the reason why we are making it, or the effect we hope the granting of our request will have on us. The prayer concludes with a doxology, in one of a fixed number of standard patterns.

Let us take as an example the Collect for the feast of Corpus Christi (composed by St. Thomas Aquinas). The doxology is the one appropriate for Collects addressed to Our Lord rather than to God the Father. I have numbered the sections so that the pattern stands out clearly.

1. Deus,
2. qui nobis sub Sacraménto mirábili passiónis tuae memóriam reliquisti:
- 3a. tríbe, quaesumus, ita nos Córporis et Sánguinis tui sacra mystéria venerári,
- 3b. ut redémptionis tuae fructum in nobis iúgiter sentiámus
4. Qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre, in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus per ómnia saécula saeculórum. Amen.

This translates as:

1. God,
2. Who hast left to us under a wonderful Sacrament a memorial of Thy Passion
- 3a. grant, we beseech [Thee], that we may in such manner venerate the holy mysteries of thy Body and Blood,
- 3b. that we may constantly feel the fruit of Thy redemption within us
4. Who livest and reignest with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God
- 9 through all the ages of ages. Amen.

Incidentally there are no less than three examples in this Collect of something which we have met before, a genitive coming before the noun to which it relates, namely “passiónis tuae memóriam”, “Córporis et Sánguinis tui sacra mystéria”, and “redémptionis tuae fructum”.

A variation on the above pattern, which is quite common, is to omit the second section entirely and to place the invocation of God *after* the introductory words of the third section. The Collect for the third Mass of Christmas Day, for instance, reads “Concéde, quaésumus, omnípotens Deus, ut nos Unigéniti tui nova per carnem Nativitas líberet, quos sub peccáti iuga vetústa sérvitus tenet” (“Grant, we beseech [Thee], almighty God, that the new birth of Thine only-begotten Son in the flesh may free us, whom the old servitude holds beneath the yoke of sin”). The same pattern is found in the second Mass of Christmas and in the Mass for Ascension Day, to name but two of many other instances. Since the Collect quoted is addressed to God the Father, the doxology which concludes it is of course different from that for the Collect of Corpus Christi: “Per eúndem Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus sancti, per ómnia saécula saeculórum. Amen”.

One of the best known Collects in the missal is that for Whit Sunday, which is frequently used, in translation, as a prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Here it is, analysed into its component parts:

- 1 Deus,
- 2 qui hodiérna die corda fidélium Sancti Spíritus illustratióne docuisti:
- 3 da nobis in eódem Spíritu recta sápere, et de eius semper consolatióne gaudére
- 4 Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte eíusdem Spíritus Sancti, Deus per ómnia saécula saeculórum. Amen

A rather literal translation would be:

1. God,
2. Who on this day hast taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the
3. Holy Spirit grant to us in the same Spirit to know what is right, and to rejoice
- 10 always in His consolation.
- 4 Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with Thee lives and reigns in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, God through all the ages of ages. Amen.

“Hodiérna die” is a rather rhetorical alternative for the more usual “hódie”, which we find for example in the Pater Noster, (though “hódie” is actually a contraction of “hodiérna die”). Note too that Latin says “to know right [things]” and “to rejoice *from* His consolation”. You will also have noticed that in this collect the third section is not divided into two subsections, because the reason for our request is effectively contained in the request itself, and does not

need any further explanation. The Collect is addressed to God the Father and the doxology is similar to that for the third Mass of Christmas Day, but since it is the Holy Spirit and not Our Lord who is mentioned in the prayer, we say “the same Holy Spirit” rather than “the same Jesus Christ Our Lord”.

You can now go back to the prayer which the priest says in blessing the drop of water which he adds to the wine in the chalice at the Offertory, and see how it fits this pattern:

1. Deus,
2. qui humanae substantiae dignitatem mirabiliter condidisti et mirabilius reformasti,
- 3 da nobis [per huius aquae et vini mysterium] eius divinitatis esse consortes, qui
- 11 humanitatis nostrae fieri dignatus est particeps, Jesus Christus, Filius tuus, Dominus
- 12 noster.
4. Qui tecum vivit etc.

I have bracketed the words “per huius aquae et vini mysterium” because these were added later to turn this ancient Christmas Collect into a prayer accompanying the blessing of the water. And I’m sure you won’t have failed to spot two more examples of the “genitive before noun” word order, namely “humanae substantiae dignitatem” and “huius aquae et vini mysterium”, in the latter instance actually separating the preposition “per” from the noun to which it relates, as it did in St. Gregory’s Christmas Preface (“per incarnati Verbi mysterium”).

The Secret Prayer which concludes the Offertory (or the Prayer over the Gifts, as it was known in the old Roman sacramentaries, and again in the Novus Ordo), is less structured than the Collect. It consists in a request for the acceptance of the gifts which we offer, so that we may obtain certain specified spiritual favours. It is usually very short, and ends with one of the standard doxologies. It is normally introduced by some sort of expression as “Suscipe, quaesumus, Domine” (“Receive, we beseech Thee, O Lord”) or “Accipe, quaesumus, Domine” (“Accept,” etc.) or “Concede, quaesumus, Domine” (“Grant,” etc.). The sacrificial gifts are often referred to as “oblata munera” (“offered gifts”), sometimes shortened in a typically Latin way to simply “oblata”. Other words which you will frequently find are “offerimus” (“we offer”), “sanctifica” (“sanctify”), “oblatio” (“offering”), “dona” (“gifts”), “hostia” or “sacrificium” (both meaning “sacrifice” or “offering”). The last named word, in the plural, is frequently joined to “praesenta”, to mean “presented offerings”, for example in the Secrets for the fourth Sunday of Advent and the first Thursday, second Sunday, third Thursday and fourth Sunday in Lent.

Here is the Secret for the fifth Sunday after Easter: “Suscipe, Domine, fidelium preces cum oblationibus hostiarum, et per haec pia devotionis officia, ad caelestem gloriam transeamus” This translates as: “Receive, Lord, the prayers of the faithful with [our] sacrificial gifts, and through these dutiful services of [our] devotion, may we pass on to heavenly glory”. “Oblationibus hostiarum”, which I have translated as “sacrificial gifts”, literally means “offerings of sacrifices”. You will find it more than once in the Missal, for example in the Secret for the fourth Wednesday in Lent.

Sometimes the Secret makes reference to the feast which we are celebrating in the Mass of the day, particularly on the more important feasts, but more often than not it is a general prayer which could be used on any day of the year. As an example of the specialised Secret we may quote that for Whit Sunday: “Munera, quaesumus, Domine, oblata sanctifica, et corda nostra Spiritus illustratione emunda”. The language of this Secret is closely related to that of the Collect for the same day; the only word which you have not already met is

“emúnda”, which is an imperative from “emúndare”. It is a stronger word than “múndare”, meaning “thoroughly cleanse”, rather than just “cleanse”. Note that the expression “obláta múnera” is not only reversed but also divided by the words “quaésumus, Dómine”; this is a good example of the flexibility which Latin has, as an inflected language, to vary the word order for stylistic reasons without affecting the sense.

The Postcommunion, as the name implies, is a prayer that God may grant us the fruits of the Sacrament which we have just received. Like the Secret, it is normally expressed in very general terms, but sometimes on major feasts it will contain a reference to the feast being celebrated. Like both the Collect and the Secret, it always concludes with one of the standard doxologies. The benefits which we pray for may be expressed in spiritual or temporal terms or indeed both. Consider, for example, the Postcommunion for the third Sunday after Easter: “Sacraménta quae súmpsimus, quaésumus, Dómine, et spirituálibus nos instáurent aliméntis, et corporálibus tueántur auxiliis” (“May the sacraments which we have received, we beseech [Thee], Lord, restore us with spiritual food, and protect us with physical help”).

For the Mass of Easter Sunday, there is, as we would expect, a reference to the feast; “Spíritum nobis, Dómine, tuae caritátis infúnde, ut, quos sacraméntis paschálibus satiásti, tua fácias pietáte concórdes” (“Pour into us, Lord the spirit of Thy love, so that [those] whom Thou hast satisfied with [Thy] Paschal sacraments Thou mayest make through thy goodness one in harmony”). Most of the other major feasts (with some exceptions, such as the Ascension) have these individual Postcommunions. The generalised Secrets and Postcommunions can in theory be used on any day, and in the old sacramentaries many of them are found on quite different days from those for which they are prescribed in the Missal of St. Pius V.

All the ancient sacramentaries contain a further prayer, known as the “Orátio super Pópulum” (“Prayer over the People”), which was a sort of second Postcommunion, said immediately after the first. It eventually went out of fashion, except on the weekdays of Lent, where it survived in the Missal of St. Pius V. The post-Vatican II liturgical reformers abolished it completely, which was an odd thing to do in view of their claim that one of their principal objectives was to restore to the liturgy ancient elements which had fallen out of use during the Middle Ages.

Chapter X The Requiem Mass

The text of the Mass for the Dead in the Old Roman Rite is one of the greatest compositions of the Middle Ages. It is a sustained, eloquent and impassioned plea for mercy on the souls of the departed, expressed in language of a richness and intensity unparalleled even in the old Roman liturgy. Some of the greatest composers have been inspired by it to compose some of their finest music, the best known versions today probably being those of Mozart, Verdi and Fauré (I seem to remember that Cherubini's Requiem was also popular when I was young, though you don't seem to hear it so often now). But it is equally effective in a plainsong setting (which is naturally more practical for liturgical purposes). Its suppression by the reformers of the post-Vatican II era was an act of vandalism comparable to the demolition of Chartres Cathedral or the obliteration of Michelangelo's "Last Judgement". Fortunately, however, a liturgical rite cannot be destroyed in the same way as a building or a painting, and the Old Requiem Rite is still celebrated in this country from time to time since every Catholic in England and Wales has the right to choose it for his or her funeral. Analysing it linguistically is rather like dissecting a Beethoven symphony into its individual notes, or a Duccio Madonna into its separate brush strokes, but to appreciate it fully you need to understand the Latin, and a linguistic analysis is the only way to achieve that.

Introit

This begins with the prayer which we all know and say frequently for the souls in Purgatory, "Give to them eternal rest, Lord, and let eternal light shine on them". "Dona" is imperative ("donare" means the same as "dare"). "Luceat" is of course subjunctive, "may [it] shine". There follows a verse from Psalm 64, which translates literally as "A hymn (i.e. of praise) is appropriate to Thee, O God, in Sion, and to Thee will be paid the vow in Jerusalem; hear my prayer, to Thee all flesh will come". "Decet" is a peculiar impersonal verb, only found in the third person, meaning "it is fitting" or "it is appropriate", and it is followed by the accusative, not the dative as in English (though we do have the expression "it becomes you"). "Reddétur" is the future passive of "reddere", meaning literally "to give back"; it has the sense here of fulfilling a vow previously made. "Exáudi" is imperative, from "exaudire", which is stronger than "audire"; it means to hear fully or completely (as we say colloquially, "hear me out"). It is a similar derivation to "emúnda", which we met in the previous chapter.

Collect

This, though quite long, is in the form of a classic Roman collect (see the previous chapter). It is analysable as follows:

- 1 Deus,
2. cui próprium est miseréri semper et párcere,
- 3a. te súpplices exorámus pro ánima fámuli tui ("fámulae tuae" for a woman) N., quam hódie de hoc saeculo migráre iussísti, ut non tradas eam in manus inimíci, neque obliviscáris in finem, sed iúbeas eam a sanctis ángelis súscipi et ad pátriam paradísi perdúci;
- 3b. ut, quia in te sperávit et crédidit, non paenas inférni sustíneat, sed gáudia aetérna possídeat.
4. Per Dóminum etc.

God is described as "[He] to whom it is appropriate to have mercy always and to pardon". "Próprium" is a difficult word to translate; it means not only that it is God's (and nobody

else's) prerogative to pardon, but also that the act of pardoning is natural to Him. There is a story that the poet Heine, when he was assured by a priest on his deathbed that God would forgive his sins, replied "Of course He will, that's His job!" Although, put this way, it sounds like the height of impertinence, Heine's reputed comment is not wholly at odds with the sentiment expressed in this Collect (I wonder whether he actually had it in mind, assuming of course that the story is not apocryphal).

"Exorámus" is an intensive form of "orámus" (just as "exaúdi", in the Introit, is an intensive form of "audi"). God is said to have commanded ("iussísti") the soul of His servant for whom we pray, mentioned by his or her Christian name, "to depart from this world today" (this Collect is used on the day of death as well as on that of burial). He is asked not to give it into the hands of the enemy, nor to forget it for ever ("ut non tradas eam in manus inimíci, neque obliviscáris in finem"), but to command ("iúbeas") that it be received by holy angels and brought to the fatherland ("pátriam") of Paradise. Note that "eam" is feminine, because, although the Latin for "servant" has masculine and feminine forms, the word for soul, "ánima" is always feminine, whatever the gender of the body which it inhabits. We, of course, translate "eam" as "it", but the Latin says "her". The prayer concludes with the purpose of our request, "that because he [or she] hoped and believed in Thee, he [or she] may not suffer the pains of hell, but may possess everlasting joys".

Gradual and Tract

The beginning of the Gradual repeats that of the Introit, continuing with a verse from Psalm 111. "Erit" and "timébit" are futures, "the just man will be (i.e. remain) in eternal memory, he will not fear [anything] from evil gossip". The Tract is a prayer that the souls of the dead may be freed from the bondage of sin. "Absólve" is imperative, its object is "ánimas", and "ómnium fidélium defunctorum" are of course all genitives, "release the souls of all the faithful departed", "ab omni vínculo delictorum", "from all bondage of sins". "Delicta" is a rather poetic word for the more prosaic, and much more common, "peccáta". "Grátia tua illis succurénte" is an ablative absolute of the present participle, literally "Thy grace coming to their support", with the help of which "mereántur evádere iudícium uliónis et lucis aetérni beatúdine pérfrui", "they may deserve to escape the judgement of vengeance and enjoy the blessedness of eternal light". There are two deponent verbs in this passage, "mereántur" (subjunctive) from "meréri", and "pérfrui" (infinitive); the latter is followed in Latin by an object ("beatúdine") in the ablative, not the accusative, case.

The Dies Irae

The sequence for the Mass of the Dead has been described as the greatest hymn and one of the greatest poems ever written. Its evocation of the terror and dread of the Last Judgement, and the pathos and eloquence of its pleas for mercy through the merits of Christ's suffering and death, are unparalleled in literature, and matched in art only by Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel fresco. Unlike the latter, however, its author is unknown. It has attracted many attempts at translation, few if any of which have done it full justice, though Macaulay (at the age of twenty-four) produced a very creditable English version. He also remarked that the line "Quaerens me sedísti lassus" was the saddest line of poetry he had ever read (and he had read not only all the works of the major English poets but most of what survives of Classical Latin and Greek poetry also). Unfortunately the length of the Dies Irae and the number of unfamiliar words occurring in it makes it impractical to consider it here. Grammatically however it is fairly uncomplicated and if you have a Latin dictionary, or can get one from a friend or a library, you will find that it well repays the effort of working through it.

Offertory

The Offertory of the Mass is unusual not simply because of its length but also because it is not derived from any scriptural source, but is a remarkable piece of free composition. Like the Dies Irae, its author is unknown, and again like the Dies Irae, it contains an extraordinary wealth of metaphor. Christ, addressed as “rex glóriæ”, is asked to free the souls of all the faithful departed “de paenis inférni et de profundo lacu” and “de ore leónis” (“from the pains of hell and from the deep lake”, and “from the mouth of the lion”). There follow two negative imperatives (ne with the subjunctive, as I am sure you will remember); “ne absórbeat eas Tártarus, ne cadant in obsúrum” (“let not Tartarus” [a poetic name for Hell] “swallow them, let them not fall into the darkness”). “But may the standard bearer Saint Michael introduce them into the holy light, which once Thou didst promise to Abraham and to his seed”. “Repraeséntet” (subjunctive, of course), which I have translated as “introduce”, is the word from which we get our word “represent”; the idea is that Saint Michael acts as a sort of advocate at the judgement seat for the souls of the just. “Quam” is feminine, agreeing with “lucem”. “Olim” is the regular word for something which happened a long time ago, “once upon a time”, so to speak. “Sémini” is from “semen”, literally meaning the seed of a plant, here used metaphorically, as it is in English also, for “descendants”, in this case of course spiritual rather than physical.

“Tu súscipe” in the next section is stronger than the simple imperative “súscipe”; “do *Thou* receive [them]” (i.e. the “sacrifices and prayers of praise” which “we offer to Thee”) “on behalf of those souls, whose memory we are keeping” (literally “making”) “today”. “Quarum” (“whose”) is the genitive plural feminine of the relative pronoun, since, as explained earlier, the word “ánima” is feminine. You will recognise from the “-mus” ending that “fácimus” is the first person plural of “fácere”. “Fac” in the next sentence is the irregular imperative of the same verb, “make them, Lord, cross over from death to life”. This unique and splendid offertory then closes quietly with a repetition of “quam olim Ábrahae promisisti, et sémini eius”. This time round “quam” agrees with “vitam”, which like “lucem” is feminine, thus enabling the author subtly to link the two sections together without changing the gender of the relative pronoun.

Secret

Unusually for a Secret Prayer (but consistent with the Collect and Postcommunion of the Mass), this is quite long. It takes the form of a prayer that the merits of the present sacrifice may avail the deceased in the next life. It begins “Propitiáre”, which is the imperative of one of our old friends, the deponent verbs, and means in this context the same as “miserére”. The Lord is asked to have mercy on “the soul of Thy servant, for whom we offer to Thee the sacrifice of praise, humbly beseeching Thy majesty”. “Deprecántes” is, of course, a present participle. Our request follows; “that, through these propitiatory offerings of our devotion he (or she) may deserve to come to eternal life”. “Per haec piae placatiónis officia” is a tough nut to translate; literally it means “through these services of dutiful propitiation”, which in English is inelegant to the point of unintelligibility. It is a variation on the phrase “per haec pia devotiónis officia”, which we met in the last chapter in the Secret for the fifth Sunday after Easter, though in that case “pia” was accusative, agreeing with “officia”, rather than the genitive “piae”, agreeing with “placatiónis”. “Perveníre” is a more intense form of “veníre”, meaning literally “come through” (in this context “win through” would almost be a suitable translation).

Preface

This beautiful preface dates only from the early part of the twentieth century. Previously the common preface had been used in Masses for the Dead. What this demonstrates is that liturgical reform in itself can be beneficial, provided it enriches the liturgy rather than impoverishing it. The preface begins, after the usual opening, “In quo” (i.e. in Christ) “*spes beatae resurrectionis effulsit*”. “*Effulsit*” is a compound verb, from “*ex*” and “*fulsit*”, meaning “has shone out”; you will, I am sure, recall, from the Christmas Preface, “*nova mentis nostrae oculis lux tuae claritatis infulsit*”, where “*infulsit*” means “has shone into”. “*Moriendi*” you will recognise as a verbal noun (gerund), from the “-nd-” in the middle, “so that those whom (“*quos*”) the certain condition of dying makes sad, the same (“*eosdem*”) the promise of future immortality will comfort”. We should be glad, not saddened, at the thought of our death; “because for Thy faithful, Lord, life is changed, not taken away”. The next phrase is an ablative absolute of the past participle passive of “*dissolvere*”; the words “*terrestris huius incolatus*” are all genitives, qualifying “*domo*” (“house”). Literally, “and the house of this earthly habitation having been dissolved” (a poetic way of describing the decomposition of our bodies), “an everlasting dwelling in the heavens is made ready”. As we have seen on many previous occasions, the adjectival phrases “*terrestris huius incolatus*” and “*in caelis*” come *before* the nouns which they qualify, literally “the of-this-earthly-habitation house” and “an everlasting in-the-heavens dwelling” respectively.

Agnus Dei

In the Old Rite this has a special ending; instead of “*miserere nobis*” and “*dona nobis pacem*” we have “*dona eis requiem*” and “*dona eis requiem sempiternam*”. The liturgical reformers, for no very obvious reason, suppressed this and replaced it with the text used on other occasions, thus turning it from a prayer for the dead into a prayer for the living.

Communion

Simple and beautiful, too simple in fact to require any detailed analysis. “May eternal light shine upon them, Lord, with Thy saints for ever, because Thou art *pius*”. The last word has no real English equivalent (it does *not* mean “pious”!). Someone who is “pious” is someone who punctiliously observes all his obligations and scrupulously keeps all his promises. It occurs in the last verse of the Dies Irae, “*Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem*”, and, as a noun, in the prayer which the priest says in preparation for his Communion, “*pro tua pietate*”. Its nearest English equivalent, I suppose, is “conscientious”, but this is a word which is appropriate only to human beings, not to God, whereas “pious” can be applied to either. We have already come across it in the Secret, in the expressions “*per haec pia devotionis officia*”, and “*per haec piae placationis officia*”, where it refers to the services which we render to God in fulfilment of *our* obligations. What is meant when we apply it here to God is that we can trust Him absolutely to fulfil His promise to grant us eternal life (always assuming we do our part, of course).

A friend of mine who had recently attended an Old Rite Requiem for the first time in many years told me that he had forgotten how gloomy and depressing it was. He had obviously not paid much attention either to the Preface or to the Communion, to say nothing of the scriptural readings!

Postcommunion

This takes the form of a prayer that the fruits of the sacrifice will be applied to the forgiveness of any sins committed by the deceased. It is fairly simple in form: “Grant, we

beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the soul of Thy servant N., which today has departed from this world, purged by these offerings, and released from [his or her] sins, may obtain equally pardon and eternal rest”. “Migrávit” is the third person singular of the perfect (i.e. past) tense of “migráre”, the word from which we get the English “migrate”. “Purgáta” and “expedíta” (“purged” and “released”) are past participles passive, both feminine to agree with “ánima”, as previously explained. “Páriter” is an adverb meaning “likewise” or “equally” and is of course the word from which we derive “parity”.

The Absolution

This begins with an opening prayer by the celebrant, clad in a black cope. The prayer acknowledges that without the forgiveness of our sins, freely granted by God, we cannot earn salvation, and begs that God’s grace will save the deceased person from what would otherwise be the inevitable consequence of sin. “Non intres in iudícium cum servo tuo, Dómine, quia nullus apud te iustificábitur homo, nisi per te ómnium peccatórum ei tribuátur remíssio” (“Do not enter into judgment with Thy servant, Lord, because in Thy sight no man will be justified, unless through Thee the remission of all [his] sins be granted to him”). “Non intres” is a stylistic quirk; as we have seen before, in the section on the Pater Noster, as a negative imperative it should really be either “ne intres” or “noli intráre”. I have rendered “apud te” as “in Thy sight”, because, as we saw when considering the opening passage of St. John’s Gospel, the word “apud” does not have a literal translation in English. The next sentence is rather long; the English word order would be “Ergo tua iudiciális senténtia non premat eum, quem vera supplicátio cristiánae fidei comméndat tibi, sed, tua grátia succurrénte illi, mereátur evádere iudícium ultiónis, qui, dum víveret, est insignítus signáculo sanctae Trinitátis” (“Therefore let Thy judicial sentence not press [heavily upon] him, whom the true entreaty of Christian faith commends to Thee, but, [by] Thy grace supporting him, may he deserve to avoid the judgement of wrath, who, while he was living, was signed with the mark of the Holy Trinity”. We have met the phrases “grátia tua illi succurrénte” and “mereátur evádere iudícium ultiónis” before, in the Tract of the Mass, although there the persons were in the plural (“illis” and “mereántur”). “Signáculo” is the ablative of “signáculum”, a rather rare word for the more common “signum”. You will remember I am sure that the dead are described in the Canon of the Mass as those “qui nos praecessérunt cum signo fidei”.

After the opening prayer the choir sings the chant commencing “Libera me, Dómine”, which comes second only to the Dies irae in its evocation of the terrors of the Last Judgement. “Deliver me, O Lord, in that fearful (“treménda”) day, when the heavens and the earth will be shaken, when Thou shalt come to judge the ages by fire”. “Treménda” is of course the word from which we get our word “tremendous”, but the meaning in Latin is rather different. It is a gerundive, from the verb “trémere”, meaning “to tremble”, and means something at which it is appropriate to quake with fear, in this case the arrival of the Day of Judgement. We might have expected “when the heavens and the earth will be shaken” to be rendered in Latin as “quando caeli et terra movebúntur”, the last word being the straightforward future passive tense. Instead, the author has chosen to use the present tense of the verb “to be” (“sunt”) and another gerundive (“movéndi”), for the sake of effect, particularly following “treménda” in the previous clause. “Véneris” is future perfect (“Thou shalt have come”), but this tense has virtually disappeared in English; we use either the future or, colloquially, the present (“when you come”) in this context. The chant continues, “I tremble and fear, while the reckoning approaches and the wrath to come”. Prosaically “I tremble and fear” would be “tremo et timeo”, but instead of “tremo” we have the much more dramatic “tremens factus sum ego”, literally “I have become a trembler”; the image is one of increasing terror while we contemplate the fate which may befall us on the dreadful day. The tension builds up to its

climax in the next sentence, “Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae, dies magna et amara valde, dum veneris iudicare saeculum per ignem” (“That day, the day of wrath, of calamity and desolation, the great day, and bitter indeed, when Thou shalt come to judge the ages by fire”). Then, as we cower in terror at the thought of what lies in store for us, comes the familiar plea “Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis”, and the chant closes with a repeat of the first part.

After the Pater Noster, during which the coffin is sprinkled with holy water and incensed, the Collect of the Mass (“Deus, qui proprium est misereri”) is repeated, and the body is carried out to the singing of the beautiful antiphon “In Paradisum deducant te angeli”. The terrors and horrors of the Last Judgement have suddenly vanished; let those who, in their own pride and folly, have rejected the saving grace flowing from the Cross, continue to reflect upon them. Instead we are given a wonderfully consoling picture of the welcome by the assembled company of Heaven which awaits the just. It is addressed, uniquely, not to God but to the dead man or woman. “May the angels lead thee into Paradise, in thy coming may the martyrs receive thee, and may they lead thee into the holy city of Jerusalem. May the chorus of angels receive thee, and with Lazarus, formerly poor, mayst thou have eternal rest”. All the verbs, “deducant”, “suscipiant” (plural), “suscipiat” (singular), “perducant” and “habeas” are naturally in the subjunctive, expressing our pious wishes. The difference between “deducant” and “perducant” is really just one of style; in this context they both mean virtually the same thing. “Quondam” is an adverb, meaning “formerly” or “in the past”; having been received into Paradise, Lazarus is poor no more. The normal place for the verb “habeas” would be at the end of the sentence, but here the word order is varied to throw the emphasis on the word “requiem”, even to the extent of separating the adjective “aeternam” from the noun which it qualifies. The salvation of one soul, whatever his or her status on earth, is an occasion for rejoicing by the whole company of Heaven. Gloomy? Depressing? Hardly!

Appendix

For some obscure reason many missals do not contain the texts of the Absolution following the Requiem Mass. In case your missal is one of those which do not have these texts I give them in full below.

Non intres in iudicio cum servo tuo, Domine, quia nullus apud te iustificabitur homo, nisi per te omnium peccatorum ei tribuatur remissio. Non ergo eum, quaesumus, tua iudicialis sententia premat, quem tibi vera supplicatio fidei christianae commendat; sed, gratia tua illi succurrente, mereatur evadere iudicium ultionis, qui dum viveret, insignitus est signaculo sanctae Trinitatis. Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda, quando caeli movendi sunt et terra, dum veneris iudicare saeculum per ignem. Tremens factus sum ego, et timeo, dum discussio venerit, atque ventura ira; quando caeli movendi sunt et terra. Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae, dies magna et amara valde, dum veneris iudicare saeculum per ignem. Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis. Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda, quando caeli movendi sunt et terra, dum veneris iudicare saeculum per ignem.

In Paradisum deducant te angeli, in tuo adventu suscipiant te martyres, et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem. Chorus angelorum te suscipiat, et cum Lazaro quondam paupero aeternam habeas requiem.

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary of Words Found in the Ordinary of the Mass

Notes

The vocabulary contains all the words found in the Ordinary of the Mass, both High and Low, including the more commonly used prefaces (Christmas, Lent, Passiontide, Easter, Pentecost, Mass of the Dead Trinity, Mass of the Dead and feasts of Our Lady) and, where relevant, the variations in the Canon for those feasts.

For most nouns and adjectives, I have given only the nominative singular of each word, since the actual case and number in any given passage will usually be clear from the context; in some instances however I have shown other cases where consonantal changes between these and the nominative may tend to obscure the derivation. Only the masculine gender of adjectives is shown, since adjectives always follow the gender of the noun which they qualify. In the case of pronouns I have however included all the forms which appear in the text, since these are highly irregular in Latin. I have followed a similar principle with verbs, in view of the large number of forms which these can take, but with some reservation; the infinitive of every verb is given, together with any forms of future and past tenses which appear in the text, including past participles, and all subjunctives, but I have not given any forms of the present or imperative, or present participles, unless these are irregular in the case of any particular verb. I hope that this method will enable the reader to understand both the meaning of each word and its function in the structure of the sentence in which it appears.

I have not included any proper names, which are invariably similar to their English equivalents. In the case of words beginning with j (which is used instead of consonantal i in some missals) the reader should look under i (e.g. "jejunium" will be found under "iejunium").

Abbreviations Used in the Vocabulary

acc	accusative
adj	adjective
adv	adverb
conj	conjunction
exclam	exclamation
gen	genitive
interrog	interrogation
part	participle
pl	plural
prep	preposition
subj	subjunctive
verb. adj	verbal adjective
verb. noun	verbal noun

a, ab	prep	by, from
absolútio	noun	absolution
ábstulit	verb	(he) has taken away (irregular perfect tense of áfferre)
ac	conj	and
accéndat	verb	may he light (subj. of accéndere)
accéndere	verb	to light
accépit	verb	he took (perfect tense of accípere)
acceptábilis	adj	acceptable
accéptus	verb. adj	(having been) accepted (past part. of accípere)
accípere	verb	to receive, take
accípiam	verb	I will take (future tense of accípere)
accípias	verb	may you receive (subj of accípere)
ad	prep	to, towards
addúcere	verb	to lead to

adduxérunt	verb	(they) have led (perfect tense of addúcere)
adhaeréat	verb	may (it) adhere to (subj. of adhaerére)
adhaerére	verb	to adhere to
adhuc	adv	up to now
adiutórium	noun	help
adiútus	adj	assisted (past part. of adiuváre)
adiuváre	verb	to assist
admittere	verb	to admit
adóptio	noun	adoption
adoráre	verb	to adore
adorétur	verb	(it) may be adored (subj passive of adoráre)
adscribere	verb	to include, approve
adscriptus	verb. adj	approved (past part. of adscribere)
adunáre	verb	to unite
advéniat	verb	may (it) arrive (subj of adveníre)
adveníre	verb	arrive
aequálitás	noun	equality
aequus	adj	equal, right
aestimátor	noun	judge, arbitrator
aetérnus	adj	eternal
affligere	verb	to afflict
agámus	verb	let us make, let us give (subj. of ágere)
ágere	verb	to act, to do, to make, to give
agnus	noun	lamb
áliquis	adj	some
altáre	verb	altar
altíssimus	adj	most high, extremely high
altus	adj	high
amor	noun	love
angélicus	adj	angelic
ángelus	noun	angel
ánima	noun	soul
ánimus	noun	mind, disposition
annuntiáre	verb	to announce
annúntiem	verb	may I announce (subj. of annuntiáre)
ante	prep	before
antístes	noun	bishop
apostólicus	adj	apostolic
apóstolus	noun	apostle
apparére	verb	to appear
appáruit	verb	(he) appeared (perfect tense of apparére)
apud	prep	with, among
aqua	noun	water
archángelus	noun	archangel
ascéndat	verb	may it ascend (subj. of ascéndere)
ascéndere	verb	to ascend
ascéndit	verb	he ascended (perfect tense of ascéndere)
ascénsio	noun	ascension
atque	conj	and
audére	verb	to dare
aúdiam	verb	that I may hear (subj. of audíre)

audíre	verb	to hear
aufer	verb	take away (irregular imperative of aúferre)
aúferre	verb	to take away
autem	conj	however, but
auxílium	noun	help
baptísma	noun	baptism
beátus	adj	blessed
benedícam	verb	I will bless (future tense of benedícere)
benedicámus	verb	let us bless (subj. of benedícere)
benedicáris	verb	may you be blessed (subj. passive of benedícere)
benedícas	verb	may (you) bless (subj. of benedícere)
benedícat	verb	may (he) bless (subj. of benedícere)
benedícere	verb	to bless
benedíctio	noun	blessing
benedíctus	verb. adj	(having been) blessed (past part. of benedícere)
benedíxit	verb	he blessed (perfect tense of benedícere)
bíbere	verb	to drink
bonus	adj	good
caeléstis	adj	heavenly
caelum	noun	heaven
cáculus	noun	coal
cálicem	noun	(acc of calix)
calix	noun	cup, chalice
cánere	verb	to sing
cápere	verb	to take possession of
capiámus	verb	may we take possession of (subj. of cápere)
cáritas	noun	love, charity
carnem	noun	(acc of caro)
carnis	noun	(gen of caro)
caro	noun	flesh
cathólicus	adj	catholic
causa	noun	cause
celebráre	verb	to celebrate
cenáre	verb	to dine, sup
certus	adj	certain
cessáre	verb	to cease
christiánus	noun/adj	Christian
circúmdabo	verb	I will encompass (future tense of circumdáre)
circumdáre	verb	to encompass, surround
circumstántia	noun	circle
circumstáre	verb	to surround
cíthara	noun	harp
clamáre	verb	to shout, cry
clamor	noun	shout, cry
cláritas	noun	brightness, radiance
clemens	adj	merciful
cleméntia	noun	mercy
clementíssimus	adj	most merciful
coadunáre	verb	to unite into one
cogitátio	noun	thought
cógnita est	verb	has been recognised (perfect passive of cognóscere)

cognóscere	verb	to recognise
cognóvit	verb	(it) recognised (perfect tense of cognóscere)
collaudáre	verb	to praise together
commíxtio	noun	mixing
communicáre	verb	to communicate
comparáre	verb	to prepare
comparátur	verb	(it) is prepared (present passive of comparáre)
competénter	adv	competently
comprehéndere	verb	to take possession of
comprehéndérunt	verb	took possession of (perfect tense of comprehéndere)
comprímere	verb	suppress
concédas	verb	may you grant (subj of concédere)
concédere	verb	to grant, allow
concelebráre	verb	to celebrate together
concépit	verb	(she) conceived (perfect tense of concípere)
concináre	verb	to join together in singing
concípere	verb	to conceive
condemnátio	noun	condemnation
cóndere	verb	to establish, found
condidísti	verb	(thou) didst establish (perfect tense of cóndere)
condítio	noun	condition
conféssio	noun	confession
confitébor	verb	I will acknowledge (future tense of confitéri)
confitéri	verb	to confess, acknowledge
conglorificáre	verb	to glorify together
consecrátio	noun	consecration
consolári	verb	to console
consolétur	verb	(it) may console (subj of consolári)
consors	noun/adj	sharer, partner
consórtium	noun	community
conspéctus	noun	sight
constitúere	verb	to set up, establish
constituísti	verb	(thou) hast established (perfect tense of constitúere)
consubstantiális	adj	of one substance
contristáre	verb	to sadden
conturbáre	verb	to disturb
convérsus	verb. adj	having relented (past part. of convértere)
convértere	verb	to turn around, turn about
cooperári	verb	co-operate
cor	noun	heart
corporális	adj	bodily
corpus	noun	body
creáre	verb	create
crédere	verb	to believe
créderent	verb	that they might believe (subj. of crédere)
cremáberis	verb	you will be burnt (future passive tense of cremáre)
cremáre	verb	to burn
crucifigere	verb	to crucify
crucifixus est	verb	he was crucified (perfect passive tense of crucifigere)
crucis	noun	(gen of crux)
crux	noun	cross

cui	pronoun	to whom (dative of qui, quae, quod)
cuius	pronoun	whose (gen of qui, quae, quod)
culpa	noun	fault
cultor	noun	fosterer
cum	prep	with
cunctus	adj	all
custódia	noun	guard
custódíat	verb	may it guard (subj. of custodíre)
custodíre	verb	to guard
damnátio	noun	damnation
dare	verb	to give
datum	noun	gift
de	prep	about, from
débitor	noun	debtor
débitum	noun	debt
declináre	verb	to decline, stoop
declínet	verb	may it stoop (subj.of declináre)
decor	noun	beauty
dedit	verb	he gave (perfect tense of dare)
dedúcere	verb	to lead away
deduxérunt	verb	(they) have led (perfect tense of dedúcere)
defúnctus	adj	dead
Déitas	noun	Deity
deleántur	verb	may (they) be wiped out (subj. passive of delére)
delére	verb	to destroy, wipe out
delíctum	noun	crime
deprecári	verb	pray earnestly
deprecátio	noun	plea, entreaty
descéndat	verb	may it descend (subj. of descéndere)
descéndere	verb	to descend
descéndit	verb	(he) descended (perfect tense of descéndere)
destrúere	verb	to destroy
destrúxit	verb	(he) has destroyed (perfect tense of destrúere)
Deus	noun	God
devótio	noun	devotion
dexter, dextra, dextrum	adj	right (hand)
dic	verb	speak (irregular imperative of dícere)
dícere	verb	to say
dictum	noun	word, saying
dies	noun	day
differéntia	noun	difference
dignári	verb	to condescend, deign
dignátus es	verb	thou didst condescend (perfect tense of dignári)
dignátus est	verb	(he) did condescend (perfect tense of dignári)
digne	adv	worthily
dignéntur	verb	may they deign (subj. of dignári)
dignéris	verb	may you deign (subj. of dignári)
dignétur	verb	may he deign (subj. of dignári)
dígnitas	noun	worth, dignity
dilectíssimus	adj	most beloved

diléctus	verb. adj	beloved (past part. of diligere)
diléxi	verb	I have loved (perfect tense of diligere)
diligere	verb	to love
dimíssus	verb. adj	having been pardoned (past part. of dimíttre)
dimíttre	verb	to pardon, dismiss
diréctus	adj	straight, right
dirigátur	verb	may (it) be directed (subj. passive of dirígere)
dirígere	verb	to direct
discérnere	verb	to distinguish
discípulus	noun	disciple
discrétio	noun	discernment
dispónas	verb	may you dispose (subj of dispónere)
dispónere	verb	to dispose, order
dissolútus	verb. adj	having been dissolved (past part. of dissólvere)
dissólvere	verb	to dissolve
divínitas	noun	divinity
divínus	adj	divine
dixísti	verb	(thou) didst say (perfect tense of dícere)
dolósus	adj	crafty
dominatio	noun	domination
Dóminus	noun	Lord
domus	noun	house
donáre	verb	to give
donum	noun	gift
dormíre	verb	to sleep
dum	conj	while
eam	pronoun	(see under eum)
ecce	exclam	behold
ecclésia	noun	assembly, church
édere	verb	to bring forth
édidit	verb	(she) brought forth (perfect tense of édere)
éffudit	verb	(he) poured out, (she) produced (perfect tense of effúndere)
effulgére	verb	to shine out
effúlsit	verb	(it) has shone out (perfect tense of effulgére)
effúndere	verb	pour out, produce
effundétur	verb	(it) will be poured out (future passive of effúndere)
ego	pronoun	I
eis	pronoun	them (dative or ablative plural of is, ea, id)
eius	pronoun	his, her, its (gen of is, ea, id)
eiúsdem	pronoun	of the same (gen of idem, éadem, idem)
eléctus	verb. adj	(having been) chosen (past part. of elígere)
eleváre	verb	to raise
elevátio	noun	raising up
elevátus	verb. adj	(having been) raised up (past part. of eleváre)
elígere	verb	to choose
emíttre	verb	to send out
enarráre	verb	to tell
enárrem	verb	that I may tell (subj. of enarráre)
enim	conj	for
eo, ea, eo	pronoun	him, her, it (ablative of is, ea, id)
eódem	pronoun	the same (ablative of idem, éadem, idem)

eórum	pronoun	of them (gen pl of is, ea, id)
eósdem	pronoun	the same (acc pl of idem, éadem, idem)
erat	verb	(he, she, it) was (imperfect tense of esse)
erípere	verb	to snatch
erit	verb	(he, she, it) will be (future tense of esse)
ero	verb	I shall be (future tense of esse)
erúere	verb	to save
es	verb	(thou) art (present tense of esse)
esse	verb	to be
esséntia	noun	essence, being
est	verb	(he, she, it) is (present tense of esse)
et	conj	and, also
étiam	conj	even, also
eum, eam, id	pronoun	him, her, it (acc of is, ea, id)
eúmdem	pronoun	(alternative form of eúndem)
eúndem, eandem, idem	pronoun	the same (acc of idem, éadem, idem)
evangélicus	adj	of the gospel
evangélium	noun	gospel
ex	prep	from, out of
exaltátio	noun	exaltation
exaudíre	verb	to hear completely
excélsus	adj	high
excusáre	verb	to make excuses
excusátio	noun	excuse
exercítus	noun	army, host
expectáre	verb	to await, to expect
exsultáre	verb	to exult
exsultátio	verb	exultation
fac	verb	make (irregular imperative of fácere)
fácere	verb	to make, to do
faciétis	verb	you will do (future tense of fácere)
facta sunt	verb	(they) were made (perfect passive tense of fácere)
factor	noun	maker
factus	verb. adj	(having been) made (past part. of fácere)
factus (factum) est	verb	he (it) was made (perfect passive tense of fácere)
família	noun	family
fámula	noun	female servant
fámulus	noun	male servant
fecéritis	verb	you shall have done (future perfect tense of fácere)
fecit	verb	(he, she, it) made (perfect tense of fácere)
fiat	verb	may it become, may it be done (subj. of fieri)
fidélis	adj	faithful
fides	noun	faith
fíeri	verb	to become, to be made, to be done
fílius	noun	son
finis	noun	end
flamma	noun	flame
formáre	verb	to form, direct
formátus	verb. adj	(having been) directed (past part. of formáre)
fortitúdo	noun	courage, strength

frángere	verb	to break
frater	noun	brother
fregit	verb	he broke (perfect tense of frángere)
fuit	verb	(he) was (perfect tense of esse)
futúrus	verb. adj	future (future part. of esse)
gaúdium	noun	joy
géneris	noun	(gen of genus)
genetríce	noun	(ablative of génetrix)
genetrícis	noun	(gen of génetrix)
génetrix	noun	mother
génitus	verb. adj	(having been) begotten (past part. of gígnere)
gens	noun	race, tribe
genus	noun	kind, race
gígnere	verb	to beget
glória	noun	glory
glorificáre	verb	to glorify
gloriósius	adv	more gloriously
gloriósus	adj	glorious
grátia	noun	grace
grátiae	noun (pl)	thanks
gratus	adj	gracious
grege	noun	(ablative of grex)
grex	noun	flock
hábeas	verb	that you may keep (subj of habére)
habére	verb	to have, to keep
habitáre	verb	to inhabit, dwell
habitátio	noun	dwelling
habitávit	verb	(it) dwelt (perfect tense of habitáre)
hanc	adj	(see under hunc)
hi, hae, haec	pronoun	these (nominative pl of hic, haec, hoc)
hic	adv	here
hic, haec, hoc	adj	this (masculine, feminine, neuter)
his	pronoun	these (dative or ablative pl of hic, haec, hoc)
hoc, hac, hoc	pronoun	this (ablative of hic, haec, hoc)
hódie	adv	today
hodiérna die	adj+noun	today
hóminem	noun	(acc of homo)
homínibus	noun	(dative or ablative pl of homo)
homo	noun	man (in sense of human being)
honor	noun	honour
hos, has, haec	pronoun	these (acc plural of hic, haec, hoc)
hóstia	noun	victim
huic	pronoun	to this (dative of hic, haec, hoc)
huius	pronoun	of this (gen of hic, haec, hoc)
humánitas	noun	humanity
humánus	adj	human
humílitas	noun	humility
hunc, hanc, hoc	pronoun	this (acc of hic, haec, hoc)
hymnus	noun	hymn
idem, eadem, idem	pronoun	the same (masculine, feminine, neuter)
ideo	conj	therefore

ieiúnum	noun	fasting
ígitur	conj	therefore
ignis	noun	fire
ignítus	adj	lighted
ille, illa, illud	pronoun	he, she, it
illi	pronoun	to him (dative of ille)
illibátus	adj	pure
illis	pronoun	for them (dative pl of ille)
illo	pronoun	(by) him (ablative of ille)
illum	pronoun	him (acc of ille)
illumináre	verb	light up
immaculátus	adj	unstained
immoláre	verb	to sacrifice
immolátus est	verb	(he) was sacrificed (perfect passive tense of immoláre)
immortálitás	noun	immortality
ímpius	adj	impious
in	prep	in, into
incarnári	verb	to be made flesh
incarnátus	adj	incarnate, made flesh (past part. of incarnári)
incédere	verb	to go about
incésum	noun	incense
incolátus	noun	residence
incolúmitas	noun	safety
inde	adv	thence, from there
indígnus	adj	unworthy
indúcas	verb	mayst thou lead (subj. of indúcere)
indúcere	verb	to lead
indúlgeas	verb	may you grant (subj. of indulgére)
indulgéntia	noun	forgiveness
indulgére	verb	to pardon, grant
ínferi	noun (pl)	lower regions, hell
ínferus	adj	lower
infúlgere	verb	shine upon
infúlsit	verb	(it) has shone upon (perfect tense of infúlgere)
ingredíri	verb	to enter
ingréssus sum	verb	I have entered (perfect tense of ingredíri)
inhaerére	verb	to adhere to
inimícus	adj/noun	enemy
iníquitas	noun	iniquity, evil
iníquus	adj	evil
inítium	noun	beginning
innocens	adj	innocent, pure
innocéntia	noun	purity, innocence
innumerábilis	adj	innumerable
innúmerus	adj	innumerable
institútio	noun	institution, beginning
intemerátus	adj	pure, undefiled
inter	prep	between
intercédere	verb	to intercede, come between
intercésio	noun	intercession
intra	prep	within

intráre	verb	to enter
intres	verb	thou mayst enter (subj. of intráre)
introíbo	verb	I will go into (future tense of introíre)
introíre	verb	to enter, to go into
invisíbilis	adj	invisible
invocábo	verb	I shall invoke (future tense of invocáre)
invocáre	verb	to invoke
ipsa	pronoun	they (nominative pl of ipsum))
ipse, ipsa, ipsum	pronoun	he, she, it
ipsis	pronoun	them (dative or ablative pl of ipse, ipsa, ipsum)
ipso, ipsa, ipso	pronoun	him, her, it (ablative of ipse, ipsa, ipsum)
ipsum, ipsam, ipsum	pronoun	him, her, it (acc of ipse, ipsa, ipsum)
íre	verb	to go
is, ea, id	pronoun	he, she, it
isdem	pronoun	(alternative form of idem)
iste, ista, istud	pronoun	that, this (masculine, feminine and neuter)
istorum	pronoun	of these (gen pl of iste)
ita	adv	thus
item	adv	again
íterum	adv	again
iúbeas	verb	may you order (subj. of iubére)
iubére	verb	to order
iudicáre	verb	to judge
iudícium	noun	judgement
iustus	adj	just
iuvéntus	noun	youth
lábium	noun	lip
laetábitur	verb	(he, she, it) will rejoice (future tense of laetári)
laetári	verb	to rejoice
laetificáre	verb	to make glad
largíri	verb	to grant, bestow
largítor	noun	giver, benefactor
laudáre	verb	to praise
laudem	noun	(acc of laus)
laudis	noun	(gen of laus)
laus	noun	praise
lavábo	verb	I will wash (future tense of laváre)
laváre	verb	to wash
líber	adj	free
liberáre	verb	to free
lignum	noun	wood
lingua	noun	tongue
locus	noun	place
locútus est	verb	he spoke (perfect tense of loqui)
loqui	verb	to speak
lucem	noun	(acc of lux)
lucére	verb	to shine
lucis	noun	(gen of lux)
lumen	noun	light
lux	noun	light
mácula	noun	stain

magnus	adj	great
maiéstas	noun	majesty
malítia	noun	wickedness
malum	noun	evil
mandátum	noun	command
manducáre	verb	to eat
manus	noun	hand
martyr	noun	martyr
máximus	adj	greatest
me	pronoun	me (acc or ablative of ego)
medéla	noun	cure
mei	pronoun	of me (gen of ego)
meménto	verb	remember (imperative of meminisse)
meminisse	verb	to remember
memor	adj	mindful
memória	noun	memory
mens	noun	mind
mente	noun	(ablative of mens)
méntibus	noun	(dative or ablative pl of mens)
mentis	noun	(gen of mens)
mereámur	verb	may we deserve (subj. of mereári)
mereári	verb	to merit, to deserve
méritum	noun	merit
meus, mea, meum	adj	my (masculine, feminine, neuter)
mihi	pronoun	to me, for me (dative of ego)
milítia	noun	company, body
mirábilis	adj	wonderful
mirábiliter	adv	wonderfully
mirábilis	adv	more wonderfully
miserátio	noun	act of mercy, compassion
misereátur	verb	may he have mercy (subj. of miseréri)
miseréri	verb	to have mercy on
misericórdia	noun	mercy
miséricors	adj	merciful
missus	verb. adj	(having been) sent, dismissed (past part. of mittere)
míttre	verb	to send, to dismiss
modus	noun	way, method
monére	verb	to advise, guide
mónitus	verb. adj	(having been) guided (past part. of monére)
mons	noun	mountain
moriéndum	verb. noun	dying (gerund of moríri)
moríri	verb	to die
mors	noun	death
mórtuus	verb. adj	dead (past part. of moríri)
multitúdo	noun	crowd
multus	adj	many
mundáre	verb	to clean
mundásti	verb	(thou) didst clean (perfect tense of mundáre)
mundus	noun	world
múnera	noun	(nominative or acc pl of munus)
múnere	noun	(ablative of munus)

munéribus	noun	(dative or ablative pl of munus)
muniámur	verb	may we be defended (subj. passive of muníre)
muníre	verb	to defend
munus	noun	gift, bribe
mutáre	verb	to change
mutátur	verb	(it) is changed (present passive of mutáre)
mystérium	noun	mystery
nasci	verb	to be born
nati sunt	verb	(they) were born (perfect tense of nasci)
natus	verb. adj	(having been) born (past part. of nasci)
ne	adv	do not
necnon	conj	in addition
negligéntia	noun	negligence
neque	conj	nor, and not
nihil	noun	nothing
nimis	adv	greatly
nobis	pronoun	to us, for us (dative of nos)
nomen	noun	name
non	adv	not
nos	pronoun	we, us
nóscere	verb	to know
noster, nostra,	adj	our (masculine, feminine and neuter)
nostrum		
notus	verb. adj	known (past part. of nóscere)
novus	adj	new
numeráre	verb	enumerate, count
nunc	adv	now
nunquam	adv	never
nuntiáre	verb	announce
ob	prep	on account of
oblátio	noun	offering, sacrifice
obséquium	noun	tribute
óbtuli	verb	I have offered (irregular perfect tense of offérre)
óbtulit	verb	(he) offered (irregular perfect tense of offérre)
obumbrátio	noun	overshadowing
óculus	noun	eye
odor	noun	smell
offénsio	noun	offence
offérre	verb	offer
omnípotens	adj	omnipotent
omnis	adj	all
opus	noun	work, help
oráre	verb	to pray
orátio	noun	prayer
orbis terrárum	noun	world
orémus	verb	let us pray (subj. of oráre)
oriebátur	verb	(it) began (imperfect tense of oriri)
oríri	verb	to begin, originate
orthodóxus	adj	orthodox
os	noun	mouth
osténdere	verb	to show

óstium	noun	gate
pacem	noun	(acc of pax)
pacificáre	verb	to make peaceful
pacis	noun	(gen of pax)
panis	noun	bread
Papa	noun	Pope
pars	noun	part, share
partem	noun	(acc of pars)
párticeps	adj	sharer
participátio	noun	participation
pássio	noun	passion, suffering
passus	verb. adj	having suffered (past part. of pati)
pater	noun	father
paterétur	verb	he was to suffer (imperfect subj. of pati)
pati	verb	to suffer
patriárcha	noun	patriarch
pax	noun	peace
peccáre	verb	to sin
peccátor	noun	sinner
peccátum	noun	sin
peccávi	verb	I have sinned (perfect tense of peccáre)
per	prep	through
percéptio	noun	partaking
percípere	verb	to perceive, attain
perdas	verb	may you lose (subj of pérdere)
pérdere	verb	to lose
perdícat	verb	may he lead (subj. of perdúcere)
perdúcere	verb	to lead
perférre	verb	to carry
perhibére	verb	to present
perhibéret	verb	he might present (subj. of perhibére)
permanéns	verb. adj	continuing (present part. of permanére)
permanére	verb	to continue
permíttas	verb	mayst thou allow (subj. of permíttere)
permíttere	verb	to allow
perpétuus	adj	everlasting
persóna	noun	person
perturbátio	noun	trouble, disturbance
pes	noun	foot
pétere	verb	to seek
piétas	noun	loving kindness
placátus	verb. adj	having been pleased (past part. of placére)
pláceat	verb	may it please (subj. of placére)
placére	verb	to please
plebs	noun	people
plenus	adj	full
pónere	verb	to place
postquam	adv	after
potáre	verb	to drink
potávi	verb	I have drunk (perfect tense of potáre)
potéstas	noun	power

potissimum	adv	especially
praecedere	verb	to go before
praecceptum	noun	precept, command
praecesserunt	verb	(they) have gone before (perfect tense of praecedere)
praeclarus	adj	outstanding, sublime
praedicare	verb	to praise
praeesse	verb	to be present
praemium	noun	reward
praeparare	verb	to prepare
praeparatus	verb. adj	having been prepared (past part. of praeparare)
praesens	verb. adj	present (present part. of praeesse)
praestare	verb	to bestow, grant
praesumere	verb	to presume
praeterire	verb	to go past
praeteritus	verb. adj	over, past (past part. of praeterire)
precari	verb	to pray
precibus	noun	(dative or ablative pl of prex)
prex	noun	prayer
pridie quam	adv	on the day before
primus	adj	first
principium	noun	beginning
pro	prep	for, on behalf of
procedere	verb	to proceed
proesse	verb	to be beneficial
proficere	verb	to be of benefit
proficiat	verb	may it benefit (subj. of proficere)
profundere	verb	to pour out, lavish
profusus	verb. adj	(having been) lavished (past part. of profundere)
promissio	noun	promise
promissus	verb. adj	(having been) promised (past part. of promittere)
promittere	verb	to promise
propheta	noun	prophet
propitiabilis	adj	propitiatory
propitius	adj	favourable
proprietas	noun	separateness
proprius	adj	one's own
propter	prep	for, on behalf of
prosit	verb	may it be beneficial (subj. of proesse)
protectio	noun	protection
proveniat	verb	may (it) result (subj. of provenire)
provenire	verb	to result
puer	noun	boy, servant
purus	adj	pure
quaerere	verb	to ask
quam	pronoun	(see under quem)
quapropter	conj	therefore
quare	interrog	why, wherefore?
quasi	adv	such as
quem, quam, quod	pronoun	whom (acc of qui, quae, quod)
qui, quae, quod	pronoun	who, which (masculine, feminine and neuter)
quia	conj	because

quibus	pronoun	whom (dative or ablative plural of qui, quae, quod)
quid	interrog	what?
quidem	adv	indeed
quiéscere	verb	to rest
quo, qua	pronoun	whom (dative or ablative singular of qui, quae, quod)
quóniam	conj	since
quoque	conj	also
quorum, quarum,	pronoun	whose (gen pl of qui, quae, quod)
quos, quas, quae	pronoun	whom (acc pl of qui, quae, quod)
quotidiánus	adj	daily
quotídie	adv	every day
quotiescúmque	adv	as often as
quotquot	pronoun	as many as
rápere	verb	to take away, carry away
rationábilis	adj	worthy
ratus	adj	ratified
recepérunt	verb	(they) received (perfect tense of recípere)
recípere	verb	to receive
réddere	verb	to render
redéptio	noun	redemption
redímere	verb	to redeem
refecérunt	verb	(they) have revived (perfect tense of refícere)
refícere	verb	to revive, renew
reformáre	verb	to reform
reformásti	verb	(thou) didst reform (perfect tense of reformáre)
refrigérium	noun	coolness
regeneráre	verb	to regenerate
régere	verb	to rule
regnáre	verb	to reign
regnum	noun	kingdom
relínquere	verb	to leave
relíquia	noun	relic
remáneat	verb	may (it) remain (subj. of remanére)
remanére	verb	to remain
remédium	noun	remedy, cure
remíssio	noun	remission, forgiveness
reparáre	verb	to restore
reparávit	verb	(he) has restored (perfect tense of reparáre)
repéllere	verb	to reject
repleámur	verb	may we be filled (subj. passive of replére)
replére	verb	to fill
repléta est	verb	has been filled (perfect passive tense of replére)
repulísti	verb	you have rejected (perfect tense of repéllere)
réquies	noun	rest
requiéscant	verb	may they rest (subj. of requiéscere)
requiéscere	verb	to rest
respícere	verb	to look upon
respícias	verb	mayst thou look upon (subj. of respícere)
resurgéndum	verb. noun	rising again (gerund of resúrgere)
resúrgere	verb	to rise again
resúrgeret	verb	(it) might rise again (imperfect subj. of resúrgere)

resurréctio	noun	resurrection, rising again
resurréxit	verb	he arose (perfect tense of resúrgere)
retribuam	verb	I shall give back (future tense of retribuere)
retribuere	verb	to return, give back
retribuit	verb	he has given back (perfect tense of retribuere)
reveláre	verb	to reveal, disclose
reverendus	adj	reverend
rex	noun	king
rogáre	verb	to ask
sacérdos	noun	priest
sacraméntum	noun	sacrament
sacrificium	noun	sacrifice
sacrosánctus	adj	most sacred
saéculum	noun	century, age
salus	noun	welfare, safety, salvation
salutáre	noun	salvation
salutáris	adj	saving
salúte	noun	(ablative of salus)
salútem	noun	(acc of salus)
salútis	noun	(gen of salus)
salvátor	noun	saviour
salvus	adj	safe
sanábitur	verb	(it) will be healed (future passive of sanáre)
sanáre	verb	to heal
sanctificáre	verb	to sanctify
sanctificátor	noun	sanctifier
sanctificétur	verb	may (it) be sanctified (subj. passive of sanctificáre)
sanctus	adj	holy
sánguinem	noun	(acc of sanguis)
sánguinis	noun	(gen of sanguis)
sanguis	noun	blood
scelus	noun	crime, sin
scriptúra	noun	writing, scripture
se	pronoun	himself, herself, itself, themselves
secúndum	prep	according to
secúrus	adj	safe, secure
sed	conj	but
sedére	verb	to sit
semper	adv	always
sempitérnus	adj	eternal
sentíre	verb	to hear, feel
separáre	verb	to separate
sepelíre	verb	to bury
sepúltus est	verb	he was buried (perfect passive of sepelíre)
sequi	verb	to follow
serénus	adj	gracious
sérvitus	noun	service
servus	noun	servant
sic	adv	thus
sicut, sicuti	conj	like, just as
signum	noun	sign

símilis	adj	alike, similar
simul	adv	at the same time
simul ac	adv	at the same time as
simus	verb	may we be (subj. of esse)
sine	prep	without
singuláritas	noun	singularity
sit	verb	may (he, she, it) be (subj. of esse)
sócietas	noun	company, friendship
sócius	adj	communal
solus	adj	alone
somnum	noun	sleep
speráre	verb	to hope
spes	noun	hope
spíritus	noun	spirit
stare	verb	to stand
stetit	verb	has stood (irregular perfect tense of stare)
suávitás	noun	sweetness
sub	pronoun	under
sublímis	adj	high, sublime
substántia	noun	substance
sui	adj	his own (nominative pl of suus)
sum	verb	I am (present tense of esse)
súmere	verb	to take up, receive
summus	adj	highest
sumpsérimus	verb	(we) shall have received (future perfect tense of súmere)
sumpsi	verb	I have received (perfect tense of súmere)
súmpsimus	verb	we have received (perfect tense of súmere)
sunt	verb	(they) are (present tense of esse)
super	prep	upon
supérnus	adj	supernal, celestial
supplex	adj/noun	suppliant
súpplices	adj/noun	(nominative pl of supplex)
súpplicis	adj/noun	(gen of supplex)
supra	prep	above, upon
sursum	adv	upwards
suscípere	verb	to receive, accept
suscipiámur	verb	may we be received (subj. passive of suscípere)
suscípiat	verb	may he receive (subj. of suscípere)
suus, sua, suum	adj	his, her, its own
tabernáculum	noun	tent, tabernacle
tam	adv	so, such
tantum	adv	only
te	pronoun	thee (acc and ablative of tu)
tectum	noun	roof
tecum	pronoun	with thee
temporális	adj	temporary, transient
tempus	noun	time
ténebrae	noun	darkness
tentátio	noun	temptation
terra	noun	land
terréstris	adj	earthly

tértius	adj	third
testaméntum	noun	testament
testimónium	noun	witness
thronus	noun	throne
tibi	pronoun	to thee (dative of tu)
tóllere	verb	to take away
tóllitur	verb	(it) is taken away (present passive of tóllere)
tótius	adj	of all (irregular gen of totus)
totus	adj	all
trémere	verb	to tremble
tribuat	verb	may he grant (subj. of tribúere)
tribúere	verb	to grant
Trínitas	noun	Trinity
tristis	adj	sad
tu	pronoun	thou
tui	pronoun	of thee (gen of tu)
tutaméntum	noun	safeguard
tuus, tua, tuum	adj	thy
ubíque	adv	everywhere
una	adv	together
unde	conj	wherefore, whence
unigénitus	adj	only begotten
únitás	noun	unity
uníus	adj	of one (irregular gen of unus)
univérsus	adj	universal
unus, una, unum	adj	one
ut, uti	conj	that, so that
utílitás	noun	benefit
valére	verb	to have strength
vel	conj	or
venerábilis	adj	venerable
veneráre	verb	to venerate
venerátio	noun	veneration
vénia	noun	pardon
véniat	verb	may it come (subj. of veníre)
veníre	verb	to come
venit	verb	he comes, he came (present or perfect tense of veníre)
ventúrus	verb. adj	coming, to come (future part. of veníre)
verbum	noun	word
vere	adv	truly
vérítas	noun	truth
verus	adj	true
vespertínus	adj	of the evening
vester, vestra, vestrum	adj	your
vestri, vestrum	pronoun	of you (gen of vos)
vidére	verb	to see
vidimus	verb	we have seen (perfect tense of vidére)
vincébat	verb	(he) was victorious (imperfect tense of víncere)
víncere	verb	to win, overcome
vincerétur	verb	(he) might be overcome (subj. passive of víncere)

vinum	noun	wine
vir	noun	man (in sense of male)
virgíñitas	noun	virginity
virgo	noun	virgin
virtus	noun	strength
víscera	noun (pl)	internal organs, inward parts
visíbilis	adj	visible
visibíliter	adv	visibly
vita	noun	life
vítium	noun	vice
vívere	verb	to live
vivificábis	verb	(thou) wilt give life (future tense of vivificáre)
vivificáre	verb	to give life
vivificásti	verb	(thou) didst give life (perfect tense of vivificáre)
vivus	adj	alive
vobis	pronoun	to you, for you (dative or ablative of vos)
vobiscum	pronoun	with you
volúntas	noun	will
vos	pronoun	you
votum	noun	vow, prayer
vox	noun	voice
vultus	noun	face