



LATIN for Clergy, Religious and Laypeople

in association with the LATIN MASS SOCIETY of England and Wales who are generously supporting bursaries for qualifying priests, religious and seminarians.



About the instructor

I was trained, initially, as an ancient linguist, through undergraduate and graduate degrees from the university of Oxford followed in each case by education at other universities in the UK. I specialise, among other things, in the linguistics of an Indian language which has been much studied by Jesuit scholars. This Latin course (along with my other courses) is a little different as a consequence of my wide and close familiarity with different ancient languages found across a range of geographies and traditions. Rather than learn formal grammar tables before encountering the language through its formal literary expressions in the classic texts *we do things the other way round. **From session 1 we read real Latin.***

Feedback

A religious sister writes:

I found that your style of teaching has worked well for me. By this I mean that you have managed to make me feel comfortable and I have slowly felt more and more relaxed to open up and speak in front of the group ... I have found that by the way you blend actual reading from texts, group exercises and grammar lessons, I have been able to slowly assimilate everything as we have progressed. This has worked well for me.

About the instruction

Perhaps you have struggled with Latin at school — or else you missed the opportunity to study it in the first place *or maybe you just need a brush-up*. Here (whatever your reasons for coming to the language *or coming back to it*) the emphasis is less on rote-learning tables at the beginning. Indeed tables come into the picture when they make sense in the context of authentic Latin sentences of relevance to church people. Before we try to learn too many linguistic forms, we will be encountering Latin through its literary expressions (including the Bible with its psalms and canticles that we encounter from session 1).

At the same time formal understanding is important and the route towards achieving this is mapped out and followed from the early sessions — and then throughout the course. The goal is to develop an organically arrived at sense of Latinity which will deeply imbue the reader particularly as they go on to encounter the other texts of their own individual Latin-reading career once they have moved on from the experience of my own courses.

Structure of the course

The Course is designed to be a Beginning-through-to-Mid-Level experience to meet expressly the needs of the liturgical use of Latin and of those persons who are either directly involved in such use or who care about it. There are 3 modules in **Latin for Clergy, Religious and Laypeople**: the course consists of three 4-week encounters (one module covers four weeks) with Latin to work through in the company of your classmates and the instructor. (A short break occurs between each module.) We meet twice a week, on separate days and for an hour at a time, by appointment at a time convenient to all.

First module of 4 weeks: The Canticle I always start with on day one is ‘Bless the Lord’(Canticle of Daniel) and then we move on through prayers including those previously recommended by students on the course (e.g. ‘O Sanctissima’) to develop confidence so that we move via some psalms on to, by the end of the first 4 weeks, an initial look at the Roman Canon. **Second module (4 weeks):** Roman Canon continues and we start to alternate patristic texts with rubrics (if desired). **Third module (4 weeks):** Rest of the Canon and, if time allows, additional texts from the Mass along with extra reading from the Latin Fathers.

Sign-up procedures and Examination

If you would like to be considered for a place on the next iteration of the course, beginning February 2022, please contact me at matthewjaspencer@yahoo.com.

Bursaries covering 80% of the course fee (£600 is the standard full fee before reduction) are available to clergy and religious based in England and Wales *or with strong personal ties to these territories*. (Please write for further clarification on whether this may apply to you.)

For all other clergy and religious and laypersons interested in this course, a discount of one-sixth (£100) is available for those whose participation in the course is approved, and who subsequently sign up by 15th January.

An externally moderated examination is available to those of whatever status who wish to have their level of Latin validated by an independent expert in the language. This may be of use in attesting to the competence that His Holiness Pope Francis has formally required from celebrants.

Other testimonials

*The following were listed as positives in the formal feedback submitted by previous students of this and other courses (see **below right**).*

“Matthew’s Latin experience and his fascinating choice of texts. The teaching style was also very relaxed and supportive”

“The possibility to approach the language no matter the background of the learner”

“It was a totally different approach to learning a language. Instead of throwing rules and tables at the student, the teacher plunged us into the text so we could acquire a feel for the language and the context of the words. This is a more natural and organic way to learn a new language.”

Other courses, all 4 weeks

— **Introductory Greek**

— **Augustine, Jerome, Boethius**

— **New Testament *Koine* and the Greek of the Church Fathers**

Other advanced classical and ancient Indian courses (useful for linguistic comparison with the classical languages and thereby developing skills) may be available on request if you have a need or interest in reading particular authors / groups of texts.