

CHURCH LATIN AND YOUR MISSAL

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*Diamond's*  
LITURGICAL LATIN

by

WILFRID DIAMOND

A SIMPLE METHOD OF LEARNING  
THE LATIN OF THE MISSAL  
FOR PRIVATE STUDY AND AS A  
CLASS TEXT IN HIGH SCHOOLS,  
NOVITIATES AND STUDY CLUBS.



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**HOC OPUSCULUM ACCIPIAT MARIA, QUAM FECIT  
INGENITUS, IN QUA SE CELAVIT UNIGENITUS,  
QUAM OBUMBRAVIT SANCTUS SPIRITUS. AMEN.**



## FOREWORD

OF Church Latin Father Ronald Knox once wrote that "it was not meant to mystify; it was meant to express, not to conceal the emotions and aspirations of the universal Church." Wilfrid Diamond's apostolate has been to give to as many people as he could reach the meaning of the Mass and the Breviary through a correspondence course which he conceived and carried through as a hobby. Several years ago the editor of *America*, the national Jesuit weekly, asked the writer of this Foreword to interview Mr. Diamond. When I learned that Mr. Diamond's mimeographed lessons had taught Church Latin to more than 400 individuals in the United States and over fifteen foreign countries, that it had been used in over fifty high schools, when I saw testimonials from Carmelite nuns, seminarians, Marist Brothers, doctors, housewives and other lay people, a book seemed to be in order. This is the book.

Wilfrid Diamond began his work to meet a need. A group of Brooklyn laymen who gather together weekly to say the Breviary appealed to him to help them get a better understanding of the official prayer of the Church. From the lessons he gave orally, founded on a good understanding in Latin at the English Jesuit college of Stonyhurst, Mr. Diamond widened his scope of influence by mail. At a personal sacrifice of time and money, he corrected all the exercises himself. Obviously, this cannot be done in conjunction with the text book, but practice with the exercises and correction of mistakes are fundamental principles of success in this course. The questions and repetitions at the end of each exercise are designed to fix the matter in the student's mind. The vocabularies for practice are taken directly from the Liturgy and not from Cæsar or Cicero. This is a book to be used and not merely read.

Here is the testimony of a convert who studied Latin at long-range under Mr. Diamond and who, in company with his non-Catholic wife, closes each day by the recitation of Compline:

"Many years ago when I discovered the psalms, they made such an impression on me that I got down on my

knees and kissed the book in my hands. Then, I did not know that the One, True Church had evaluated them centuries before to such an extent that her priests daily read or sing them in choir or privately. The concept of prayer throughout them seemed so sublime and majestic, and so far above the petty petitions which I ignorantly supposed represented the Catholic idea of prayer!"

It is in the hope that many will discover this lofty concept of prayer in the Mass and Breviary that we wish God's blessing on Wilfrid Diamond's book.

ALFRED BARRETT, S.J.

NEW YORK,  
MAY 1, 1941.

## FOR WHOM THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN

Teachers and Students in Catholic High Schools and Colleges, in classes on the Liturgy and the study of the Missal.

Members of Religious Order Novitiates and Sisters in general using the Missal and reading the Office of the Blessed Virgin.

Seminarians engaged in Catechetical work.

Members of Study Clubs concerned with the Liturgy and the Missal.

For all Catholics using the Missal and interested in the whole Liturgical Movement.

## WHY LEARN *LITURGICAL* LATIN

Liturgical Latin is herein taken to mean the Latin we find in the official text books of the Church (The Bible and the Liturgy) as well as in the works of those Christian writers of the West who have undertaken to expound or defend Christian beliefs. It is the mother tongue of the Church, the language in which she couches all her official prayers and pronouncements.

In view of this dignity, Liturgical Latin should be understood by as great a proportion of the faithful as possible. For the better we understand the language of the Church, the more fully do we participate in her public acts of worship, especially that of the Holy Mass. True, mere participation by devout presence at Mass fulfills our individual obligations, but a fuller participation, through complete comprehension of the language of the Mass, is certainly to be desired.

A knowledge of Classical Latin is not sufficient for this comprehension, for Liturgical Latin differs especially from Classical Latin by the constant introduction of new terms and idioms. Thus, though syntax and literary expression are essentially the same, the student of Classical Latin will be quite unfamiliar with a great many liturgical terms and expressions. As St. Augustine frankly stated to his listeners, "I often employ words that are not Latin, and I do so that you may understand me. Better that I should incur the blame of the grammarians than not be understood by the people." For Catholics then, a knowledge of Liturgical Latin is a key to the ever developing mind of the Church as expressed in her own individual language.

## UNIQUE FEATURES OF THIS BOOK

The *one* purpose of *Liturgical Latin* is to make it easy for the student to read and understand the prayers of the Church and through such understanding to achieve a mastery of the Church Latin. It considers the Latin Mass Prayers and explains their meaning by a translation of the Latin into English. To achieve its purpose fully the book incorporates the following features:

1. Rules of syntax are limited to the bare essentials.
2. Liturgical vocabulary terms and expressions are emphasized throughout.
3. Grammatical constructions are interwoven with the text so that they may be more readily grasped as a living part of the language.
4. Stress is laid upon memorizing many of the Liturgical Prayers.
5. Repetition examination questions at the end of each lesson splendidly summarize the entire content of each lesson.
- 6 The explanations of the uses of the various *cases* and *clauses* in Latin study are brief and concise.

In a word, the entire plan of the book makes possible the absorption of Latin with a minimum of effort.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The author fully realizes that considerations of time, application and individual ability make it extremely difficult to lay down any specific rules for use of this text. There are a few general rules, however, which may be followed with benefit.

1. The teacher and student are requested to keep always in mind that the purpose of the book is not the attainment of proficiency in Latin Grammar, but rather a real acquaintance with the language of the Church's Liturgy.

2. The pupil should concentrate on the points listed at the head of each lesson. The summaries of syntax and the vocabulary lists in each lesson are for reference and revision after the student has completed his Lesson Exercises.

3. It is not necessary to learn a whole lesson at one study period. On the other hand, it is not necessary to limit one's self to only one lesson at a time. The arrangement of the text takes care of either contingency. But—each lesson covers essentials and should be well mastered before passing on to the next.



4. The student should immediately begin to follow the Mass in Latin, using a Missal.\* In this way he will become more and more familiar with much of the Latin, and the meaning of the words will become clearer as he continues the study of this text.

\* Missals suitable for the purpose:

*The New Roman Missal in Latin and English.* By Rev. F. X. Lasance, Rev. Francis Augustine Walsh, O.S.B. and Rev. William R. Kelly. (Benziger Brothers, Inc., New York).

*Missale Romanum. Editio Juxta Typicam Vaticanam.* (In conformity with the latest Vatican Edition.) 1941 (Benziger Brothers, Inc., New York).



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# LESSON 1

*An introduction to the Gregorian pronunciation of Latin and the Present Indicative of the First Conjugation.*

## NOTES ON PRONUNCIATION

You must have heard the Latin of the Church pronounced in various ways, and wondered which is the correct liturgical pronunciation. The whole question hinges on the pronunciation of the vowel sounds. There are two pronunciations of Latin vowels:

1. The *Classical Pronunciation*, used mainly in the classroom.
2. The *Gregorian Pronunciation*, used mainly in the chant of the Church.

As this course is in Liturgical Latin, we will consider the *Gregorian* method of pronunciation, although the classical pronunciation is also used. The thing to avoid is mixing the two. Use one method or the other.

## THE GREGORIAN PRONUNCIATION.

### Vowels

Vowels must be enunciated as *Pure Sounds*, and must be as uniform as possible, without any distinction of long or short.

- |    |                     |   |
|----|---------------------|---|
| a. | is pronounced as in | <i>father</i> , not as in <i>pan</i> .  |
| e. | “                   | <i>they</i> , not as in <i>met</i> .    |
| i. | “                   | <i>machine</i> , not as in <i>pin</i> . |
| o. | “                   | <i>holy</i> , not as in <i>got</i> .    |
| u. | “                   | <i>rude</i> , not as in <i>put</i> .    |

The vowels always have the pure sounds given above, no matter what consonant follows the vowel. The short vowel sounds common in English are not heard in the Gregorian pronunciation of Latin. In singing there is a tendency to exaggerate the pronunciation. For example, *Dóminus vo-*