

MAKING SENSE OF THE MASS

Every time we come to Mass we both say the same old prayers (in two senses!) and read and say some words which are just for that Mass. What do the old prayers mean and why are they included in every Mass. Many of the prayers have been said every day in every part of the world for nearly 2000 years. Where do they come from? What do they mean? Why do they matter. *How* and *in what language* has changed over time, from Greek to Latin to our own languages – but the prayers themselves have remained the same. Where do they come from and how do they help us to understand they central mystery of God’s promise to us, that in the mass and in communion God is truly present for us and in us to help us in this life and to help us to accept his invitation to Eternal Life with Him in the life to come.

Deacon John will lead eight sessions across September and October – after the 7pm Mass on Thursday evenings (and after the 12 noon Mass on Fridays if there is any interest in that second programme). Each week will combine some teaching but also some prayerful sharing of what the prayers of the Mass mean to us. Do come along to listen or to take part. The first session on 2/3 September will look at how the Mass came to take the ‘shape’ it has, using a very remarkable account – the first we have— of Mass said less than 100 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the remaining sessions will take each part of the Mass in turn and explore the history, meaning and significance of the prayers. Special attention will be paid to the ‘eucharistic prayers’ said by the priest over the bread and wine so that they become the body and blood of the Risen Christ?



Each session will last one hour. Everyone is welcome, and lay ministers of holy communion are especially welcome. Please bring friends! We will meet in the bar or – if numbers require – in the Hall. And of course it is all covid-rules-dependent!

Why do we have some Greek prayers in the Mass (have you noticed?)

What are the oldest and what are newest prayers in the Mass we say every week? (the answer is from the earliest days to (except for a small number of exceptions) about the year 700).

Why do we say the word ‘peace’ seven times in the two minutes before holy communion, and what is that peace that we share?

How much of the prayers we say every single week consists of quotations from the Bible? For example where will you find ‘Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof’; or who called Jesus ‘the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world’.

Come and explore these and many other questions!