

Understanding the Mass

Welcome message

Each week, we are explaining the different parts of the Mass - what is in the church, what we use in the Mass, and why (and how) we celebrate Mass the way we do.

*Today our topic is the **Welcome message**.*

Over the past few weeks, we have explored the things that we see when we enter the church, as we sit down in one of the **pews** before Mass begins. And we've explored some of the people who help prepare the church for Mass. We are now nearly ready to explore the **parts of the Mass**.

As we sit getting ready for Mass to begin, you may hear a **welcome message** being read out. The welcome message is not part of Mass, and it can change, so you may hear different messages depending on which church you go to.

At our Chess Valley parishes, we use several different welcome messages, which means you won't always hear the same message every week.



The welcome message always starts with "a special welcome to anyone here who is new, visiting, or returning to Mass after a while away". Our readers mention these people because we want everyone to feel welcome at Mass, and most of all those who may not be familiar with our parish community.

If you are at Our Lady Help of Christians in Rickmansworth, you will hear the reader "extend the same welcome to anyone joining via livestream". Some people are not able to physically come to Mass - often because they are too sick to leave their homes. We want to make sure that these people also feel welcome and included in our celebration of Mass.

Then comes the part of the welcome that changes. You may hear a request for grown-ups to "have your mobile phones switched off or on silent". You may hear the invitation "if you are not Catholic or are unable to receive Holy Communion, please know that you are welcome to come forward for a blessing". You may hear a message about the Act of Spiritual Communion for those on live stream. Or you may hear an invitation "if you have small children, please bring them to the front of the church so they can see what is happening". All these messages are meant to help everyone feel welcome.

Which welcome message did you hear at Mass today? _____