# A Thanksgiving Mass for ordinary heroes



# for Ron and for family

### Notes (v.2)

This is shared as a short mass (missa bevis) – a setting of the Kyrie and the Gloria (the latter in three sections). It is intended to be a joyful setting of the words of the sung mass, offered as an expression of thanksgiving. There should be prayers between each sung piece, possibly along the following lines:

Prayer 1 (between the *Kyrie* and the *Gloria*) linking our merciful God with our desire to praise our glorious God Prayer 2 (between the *Gloria* and the *Domine Fili/Agnus Dei*) linking our praise with our gratitude for God's gifts - including gifts of God received through the sacrifice of others (such as those of key workers and others during the pandemic) as well as our gratitude for the gift of God's son and his sacrifice

Prayer 3 (between *Domine Fili/Agnus Dei* and the *Quoniam*: linking the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, now with the Father, with the gift and sacrifices of those we have known and loved who have died and, we believe, are now with the Father in heaven, c.f. the *Quoniam*)

Why...

### a mass:

It was during the first UK lockdown of 2020 that a friend, Ron, asked when I would be producing a mass... and so, between other tasks, I set to writing.

### • a thanksgiving for ordinary heroes:

Although this was a strange and difficult period of time to live through, it also brought into focus many things to be thankful for. This included the many people who were continuing to serve the community by working in the NHS, in shops, in schools, for local councils and so on while knowing that being out in the community increased their personal exposure to the risk of infection. The weekly "clap for the NHS" (which later broadened into "a clap for heroes") gave a national focus for this expression of gratitude and kept it in the forefront of people's minds. So many were heroes, and I would want to include those who made sacrifices by self-isolating and obeying injunctions to stay at home despite deep longings to meet up with family and friends and missing out on valued experiences and activities.

Through this time, while more and more families (including our church family) were being bereaved of loved ones, restrictions and government guidance limited attendance at funerals, let alone opportunities to hold services of thanksgiving to celebrate the lives of those who had died. The "lockdowns", although limiting opportunities to comfort each other, did give plenty of time to reflect on memories of friends and family who had died and appreciate the important contributions they made to individual lives and to the wider community.

It was these two strands of thought which came together to create the idea of writing a thanksgiving mass. The intention, then, was to produce a joyful piece.

### • this style of the music:

I have long enjoyed the style of hymnody which has become known as "West Gallery" music. To me, this genre is inherently joyful and was an easy choice to work with having accepted the challenge of writing a mass. It seems to me that it is and was a music of "ordinary" people, often created and performed by amateurs which is another way in which it was a good choice for me.

It uses elements of "West Gallery" style music, including repetition of lines (especially last lines and phrases, fugues, symphony sections for the band, etc. and makes no pretense to be musically challenging or ground-breaking!

### • this style of text:

Having decided to set the words of the mass to West Gallery inspired music, there was an immediate irregularity in that West Gallery hymns and anthems are almost invariably in the vernacular. I therefore chose to use a macaronic text – using both the Latin (or Greek) and an English translation of the Latin/Greek in each section.

# Kyrie Eleison







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# Gloria























# Domine Fili, Agnus Dei















## Quoniam tu solus Sanctus







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