

Lesson 4

We have spent the previous lessons looking at nouns. The words left black in the previous extracts and translations were mostly—not all, but mostly—action words, known as verbs. Just like Latin nouns, Latin verbs take many different forms depending on the jobs they do in their phrases and sentences. Incidentally, we English speakers have to change word forms for our verbs much more than we have to for nouns even in our word-order language, so you are more used to conjugating (changing verb forms) than declining (changing noun forms) in your native language.

For example, we say “I jump” and “You jump” but we don’t say “He jump,” we use another ending (“s”) to say instead “He jumps.” (As another example, just like in every language, the forms of “to be” in English are slightly crazy. We have to use many different forms to express being: “I am,” “You are,” “He is,” etc.) Verbs express so much, and in Latin they have many different endings to help them do so.

A very important set of verb forms in Ecclesiastical Latin allows the speaker to be bossy, to give orders, exhort, command, and urge his hearers (and readers). We have come across two of these forms so far: **Jube!** (Graciously grant!) and **Benedicite!** (Y’all bless!) For a few more bossy Imperative verbs, we will look at the Short Lesson of Compline directly after the Blessing:

Fratres: Sobrii estote et vigilate: quia adversarius vester diabolus tamquam leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem devoret: cui resistite, fortes in fide. Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis. R. Deo gratias.

Brethren: Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, strong in faith. You however, Lord, have mercy for us. R. Thanks (be) to God.

All the Verbs:

estote = (y’all) be!	resistite = (y’all) resist!
vigilate = (y’all) keep watch!	miserere = have mercy
circuit = goes around	quaerens = seeking
devoret = he may devour	

In this lesson we will discuss the two rows of verbs above the line that all happen to end in “e” just as “**jube**” and “**benedicite**” do. These are more verbs in their forms that give the bossy or-

ders, thanks to their special endings.

Sometimes we only need to tell one person to do something—Lord, have mercy! O Lord, graciously grant! Sometimes we need to tell many or a whole group to do something—y’all, praise the Lord! Everyone keep watch!

English does not have separate forms like this for our verbs: we would say, “Be happy!” to one friend, and “be happy!” to a group of friends, just the same way. The endings for Latin verbs allow us to urge or command the one or the many, and so we use them accordingly. (“Jubila!” to one friend, or “Jubilate!” to many, for example, translating the above.)

Now practice (nunc exercēte!) some translations with the many words already seen, giving slightly different forms your best guess:

Concedat **Pater finem** quietam.

Nunc estote perfecti (perfect)!

Ecce **gloriam Spiritūs Sancti**!

Dominus omnipotens est.

Vigilate et resistite, omnes **servi Filii**.

Jube **Spiritus Sancte**

Vigilate in noctibus cum spe.