

## LITURGICAL ENDINGS

We need to end the liturgy (the word means 'work', and the Anglican word 'service' is as good a translation as any), and I need to gather together my ethos of liturgy.

The ending of the service is a profound liturgical statement. Amongst the most important words of our liturgy are the liturgical deacon's sending us out into the world. 'Go: take the peace Christ has given you, and take it into God's world'. This is what is being said. Go out, now, into God's world, and begin the primary work of the Church: telling out, in word and action, the Good News of Resurrection. That's why Roman and Anglo-Catholics usually call the liturgy 'Mass', from the Latin *missere*, to send. We are sent. That's why we come.

How does all this shape the way I personally 'do' and 'steer' liturgy, and how I recommend it be steered? The solemn act of Eucharist is also the leaping, dancing, hand-waving joy-filled experience of encountering God. It is a foretaste of the coming (and here now) Reign of God. It is the filling of the tanks of faith, and the restarting of the engines of faith.

Personally, I begin liturgy informally. I often focus on the trivial or incidental at the beginning of this worship: comments on sports events, weather, or events in the life of the community. These are designed to relax us all into the normality of this action, to make connections between

liturgy and life.

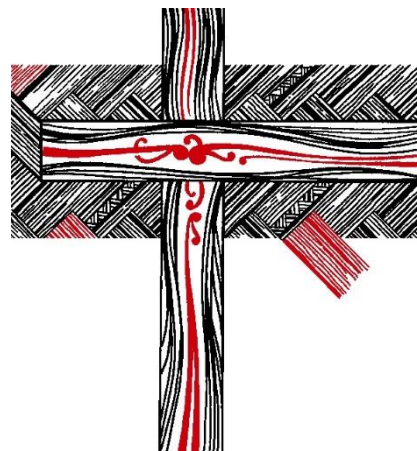
But from there the work begins: we prepare to encounter God, we break open the word,

we reflect on the 'now' of its meaning. We start the work of prayer, for which we will later offer our lives in answer. We encounter one another in the Dreaming of Peace, the-should-be-solemn exchange of our longing for the fullness of God's Reign. We celebrate, with one voice, representative moments in the Saving Acts of God in the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving. We encounter the Incarnation in bread and wine. We say 'thank you' once more in post-communion prayer, and then explore, in the notices, the work that lies before us in the week.

Then, finally, as I say before each liturgy that I lead, we go out to proclaim God's Reign to God's world, engaging in what one theologian called the Holy Saturday task of the Church.

That work should begin with the sharing of God's kai, the morning tea and good food that is every bit as important as the liturgy.

It's simple, really!



## Diocese of Dunedin

Responding to God's Call in Otago and Southland:  
Faith Communities reading the Bible, praying, living out the life of Jesus Christ