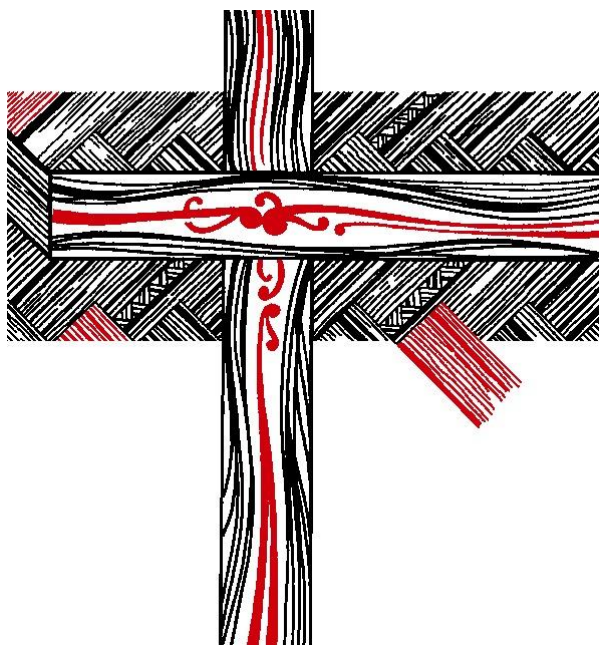


## PREPARATION (pages 404-405, or 456, or 476-478)

The early part of the Eucharistic liturgy is all about preparation. However familiar we may be with the routines of worship, and however much emphasis we place on grace, we should never be familiar with God. However unpopular the concept might be in the twenty-first century, God is not our mate, but the Holy Creator who scatters the heavens far and wide.



For this reason, as we prepare to hear God's voice, we should kneel. Anglican and Roman Catholic churches have developed a bad habit of glancing

across at the numbers attending Protestant churches, noticing that the worshippers don't kneel, and so chucking out kneelers, replacing pews with arm chairs. We haven't quite done the latter, but kneeling has slipped dangerously out of fashion, and many liturgical leaders will say 'please sit to pray.'

This is wrong. I don't mean that we have to kneel if we are physically infirm or in pain (flagellation is so last millennium): just that we should if we are able. Our bums are not the normal place to encounter an awesome God, a judging God, the God of the bloodied Cross.

So the liturgy begins by getting our perspective right, clearing the wax out of our spiritual ears by seeking God's help so that we may hear God's voice: 'Almighty God ... cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit' (p. 404; pages 456 and 476 do not lead on to this rite of cleansing in quite the traditional way, but see p. 458 or 478).



## 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