THE WORK CONTINUES: INTERCESSION

(See pages 413-418, 462-466, 482-485. Other forms, especially from the Janet Nelson volume *Let Us Pray*, will often be used. A summary prayer, in English or te reo, and/or the Lord's Prayer will usually conclude these symbolic or representative prayers).
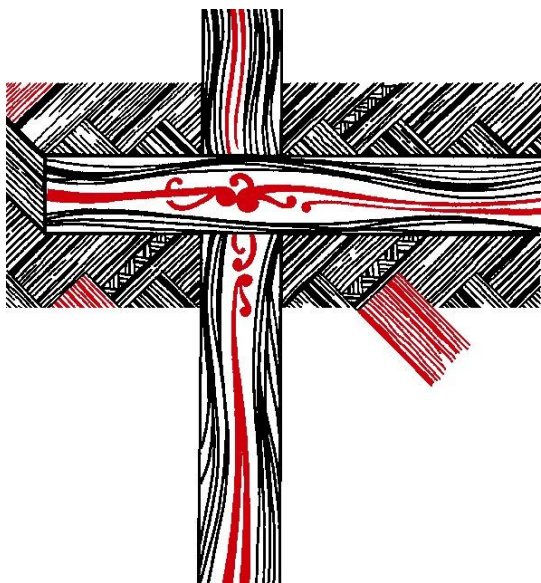
Having broken open the word and acknowledged and reaffirmed our belief, what can we do but pray, holding before the God in whom we believe our hopes and fears for the world around us? Intercession is a part of our work as a priestly people of God. In the Hebrew Covenant the priest offered the prayers of the people.

In the new relationship with God through Jesus we are all priests: as priests we must pray, and so we do. We pray for God's world, God's Church, for the community in which God has called us to live, for our loved ones and those in special need, and with thanks for the lives of and hope of resurrection for 'those who have died in the faith of Christ and those whose faith is known to God alone.'

Intercessions are not a shopping list. They are a symbolic and *representative* liturgical act, 'naming' in the presence of God each area of God's concern, not each specific concern of ours. We name them not to change God's mind, but to participate in God's redeeming love. It may be *our* hearts, not God's, that are changed in the act of praying, so that we in turn set about 'doing' God's reign. In keeping with the liturgical pattern of praying 'with one voice', the Intercessions should be introduced ('let us pray for the Church and the world…') and concluded (see an example of options on pages 464-465) by the presiding priest, who stands before the judgement of God for his or her care for the people whose souls' 'cure' has been entrusted to them.

Sometimes when some other form of response to God's command to Mission is going on the Intercessions can be omitted. A baptism or a commissioning, for example, is also a response to hearing God's Word and seeking to do God's will, and in order to get home by lunch time we make alterations to the liturgy!

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