

Body Language

This is the first in a series of articles about the way we use our bodies in prayer and worship.

We're used to thinking of prayer as a spiritual activity which has no use for the body, indeed Christian teaching sometimes seems to suggest that bodies are a bit of a drawback really and that we should ignore them and concentrate on the spiritual. I say "Seems to suggest" because that approach isn't really very Christian at all.

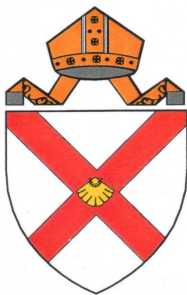
At the centre of Christian faith is the incarnation, the doctrine that says that God became part of the physical world and took a physical body. Well, if a physical body was good enough for God, it's good enough for me. The incarnation makes physical things Holy, that's why we can use physical things like bread and wine (and bodies!) to lead us to God.

My body, along with my mind and spirit is part of me so the way it feels; its movements, its posture and its gestures will affect me deeply. This effect applies just as much to prayer as to anything else I do and it's not something I have a choice about, it's just a fact. Kneeling actually helps me to feel more humble; standing can assist respect, thanksgiving and celebration. I must make sure therefore that I use my body in my prayer just as much as I use my mind and spirit.

This series of articles will reflect on some of the traditional ways we use our bodies in prayer.

Michael Camp

Poverty & Hope Appeal – Rochester Diocese



Projects supported by the appeal . . .

Kent and the Wider World - Educating the diocese

Can we really beat poverty? Does fair trade work?

Kent and the Wider World (KWW) helps people get to grips with these and many other development issues. We run workshops, training and resources for schools, youth, faith and community groups. We're working for a sustainable and just world by helping others to take action. To find out more or to arrange a workshop, contact the centre on 01622 689498 or email kww@csr.org.uk

Improving Harvests in Bolivia - New potatoes!

The community of Huichaca used to struggle to grow the potatoes they needed to feed their families. Living at a high altitude in the isolated Bolivian mountains, the community were only able to produce one crop a year. Causananchispaj (pronounced cow-san-an-chis-pak) introduced the village to a different kind of potato and now they're able to grow not just one but two harvests annually. That means twice as much food. Just one example of a small change making a big difference.

New Greenhouses in Tajikistan

How can you produce cucumbers and tomatoes in Tajikistan's freezing conditions? Simple - use a greenhouse! But buying the plastic sheeting and seeds they need is beyond many communities' means. Mehrengez organises self-help groups in villages and gives them small loans to get started. The extra income feeds families, repays the loan and ploughs more back into the group. Everyone benefits.