

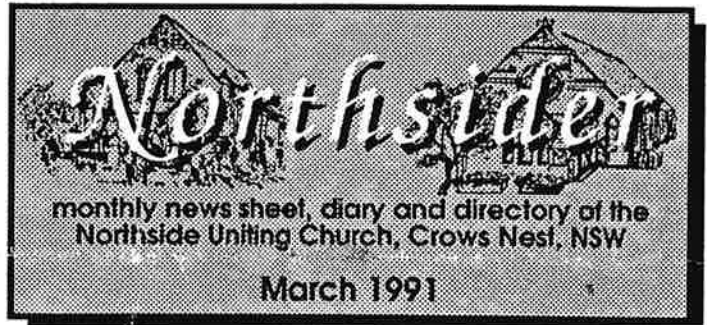
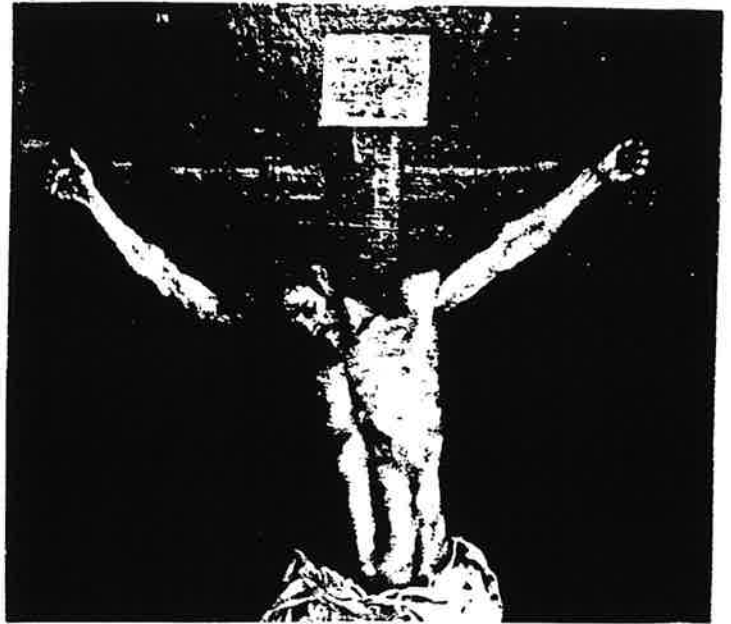
A Silver Crucifix upon My Desk

Each day you wait for me,
your arms
raised as if to dive into my element,
your bowed, athletic body
broken into the ways of earth. Someone
has shrunk you
to a child's doll that I might understand
all that it is to be a man:
a simple cross
where two worlds meet, a man
caught there
and punished by the storm between two worlds,
a sword thrust into my desk
that tells me
with each new morning that the world
will not escape
the world that we have made.
By evening
I no longer look your way, but watch
your shadow
steal towards my hand, I hear you talk
in the clock's dialect
and my pen
becomes an ancient nail. How often
have I turned from you,
how often
have I tried to shrink you down
and wear you round my neck,
as safe
as any of the stars you made.
You stand
amongst the things of this world,
old letters, photos,
an ashtray and a wallet, the things
that come and go, but you
I cannot move.

Once,
I put you behind me, and all day
I felt your long, torn look
upon my back. So you returned
to watch me
answer letters, light my pipe,
and place my books
beneath your feet. Each year
I grow
towards your age,
a face moving towards a mirror,
I measure
myself against you, a child
beside his father,
but I go up and down, while you
remain
always above me, poised
with arms outstretched, ready
to dive
into this cold ocean
with its lost treasure,
its gorgeous fish, all blind as jewels,
gliding through the darkness.

- Kevin Hart

from *Anthology of Australian Religious Poetry*
selected by Les A. Murray
(Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1986)



Your Servant Witness

The sermon preached by Mr Basil Rebera on the occasion of the induction of the Rev Tom Plaizier into Northside Uniting Church on 11 January 1991.

The Book of Exodus contains the account of the enslavement of the Hebrew people in Egypt, their liberation under the leadership of Moses, their arrival at Mt Sinai and the giving of the Law which was to govern their faith and way of life.

In our reading this evening from Exodus, it is once again a critical time for the Hebrew people and their leader Moses. They are commanded by God to leave Sinai, a place they have become familiar with, and move towards their destination.

In this situation, Moses recalls with conviction that God knows him intimately and that God has confidence in him. What could be more affirming of a man called and challenged to serve and lead a people as they resume their pilgrimage than to be assured by God that he is intimately known and is held in high favour by God. The more traditional way of translating the Hebrew would be to say that he is held firmly in God's grace. Moses then asks to be instructed by God so that he may know God, and knowing God to serve God faithfully vindicating God's commitment to him and the grace in which he is held. Moses then puts this affirmation and God's commitment to him within its proper framework and context by acknowledging that it is to the people whom God has chosen that God is supremely and ultimately committed.

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Northside Parish

The Uniting Church in Australia

serving the suburbs of
Crow's Nest, Milsons Point, North Sydney,
St Leonards, Waverton and Wollstonecraft
with churches at
Shirley Road (& Nicholson Street), Crow's Nest
and 6 Holtermann Street, Crow's Nest.

Worship Services:

SUNDAY (with Sunday School)

(Holy Communion is celebrated on the first
Sunday of the month and on major festival days)
9.00 am 6 Holtermann Street
10.30 am cnr Shirley Rd & Nicholson St

Last Thursday

2.30 pm James Milson Home

1st & 3rd Wednesday

10.15 am Georgian House

Groups:

Home Group

SUN 7.30 pm 1st & 2nd 19 Lithgow St
3rd & 4th 1 Eastview St
(John Lee/Linda McDonald... 438 2626
or Allan/Judith Watts... 439 1861)

Shirley Road Women's Fellowship

2nd Wed 1.30 pm Shirley Road
(Margaret Sangster... 439 2602)

Holtermann Street Women's Fellowship

4th Wed 10.00 am Georgian House
(Mavis Thornton... 955 8540)

PARISH

Office: 10 Holtermann Street
(PO Box 419, Crow's Nest 2065)
Phones 439 6033, 439 6015

Minister:

Rev Tom Plaizier
11 Lamont Street, CROWS NEST
Phone Office... 439 6015
Residence... 436 4291

Administrator:

Bruce Watters
Office (Mo, Th)... 439 6033
Residence... 955 7593

PARISH COUNCIL

Secretary: Erica Wyllie... 419 6170
Treasurer: Rob Fisher... 439 4858

PARISH ELDERS COUNCIL

3rd Wed 7.00 pm Parish Office
Secretary: Margaret Sangster... 439 2602

SHIRLEY ROAD CONGREGATION

Secretary Margaret Sangster... 439 2602

HOLTERMANN STREET CONGREGATION

Secretary Bruce Watters... 955 7593

Northsider is published monthly except January.
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Phone 957 5367 or 960 9268) by the second
Sunday of the month preceding.

News from Holtermann Street

- Our thoughts have been with Shirley Colless on the death of her mother just before Christmas. A sad time more acute at the festive season yet we know that Christmas is the time of rebirth and this brings new hope of our life everlasting.
- Clarry d'Cruz has had major surgery in Baulkham Hills Hospital very recently. We hope his recovery to full health will be very soon. A very wonderful occasion happened the Sunday before Clarry went to hospital. Clarry's favourite hymn is *Amazing Grace*. He had requested it two years ago when he had his bypass operation. This Sunday he did not ask for it, yet at morning tea when we were remembering him, it was said, "We should have had *Amazing Grace* today." Judith Turner immediately said, "I'll play it." She was at the organ in half a minute, others said, "We'll need hymn books" and in a minute the whole congregation was singing. It was so spontaneous and sincere, an occasion lots of us will not forget easily. Our support still goes to Clarry and Arlene - he assures us he will back very soon.
- One wintry morning when Jean Glasse had the Opportunity Shop opened last year, a man came in whom Jean had not seen before. He made enquiries of "Helping Hand" then opened his wallet and gave Jean \$100. "This is for the help

given to me," he said, "by Helping Hand five years ago." One never knows how our deeds help others.

- Our Fellowship each fourth Wednesday of the month went very well in 1990. Held at Georgian House, where many residents partake of morning tea with us, then hear good speakers, choirs, and people with their own talents to tell their stories. Then at Christmas we have Pat Wooldridge who plays and sings, together with carols and our Christmas festivities. Why not come and join us, and help make the morning more enjoyable for all?
- We have a bus trip each second Tuesday afternoon, using the Council bus and driver, for which we are very grateful. We always have a good afternoon, the weather is always kind, to Bobbin Head, West Head, Manly Dam, and many other delightful places of which we should be very thankful over this side of the Harbour. Last year we had three full days. One to Wollongong/Thirroul, lunch at Thirroul Uniting Church. One at Gosford and surrounds and lunch at Kin-cumber Uniting Church. And the last to Palm Beach, then a launch trip to Patonga and Bobbin Head and a salad lunch prepared by the driver while we came on in the launch. Ask any Fellowship member about these, the day trips are so popular, first in gets a seat!

Mavis Thornton

Children's corner

How many different creatures can you spot?
COLOUR IT IN!



...Your Servant Witness
from page 1

Then Moses says to God, "don't make demands on us unless you remain committed to us and go with us. What is it that would distinguish us from all others? It is only your presence as we encounter others that would distinguish us."

There are many things about this Exodus account that are pertinent today to this church as it entrusts itself to a new minister and he entrusts himself to this parish. It affirms the church as a community called to be God's people and that God commits Godself fully to it. It affirms the minister as a person called by God and to whom God is committed, whom God knows intimately, in whom God is confident and who is held in God's grace.

It presents church and minister with the challenge that to be the people of God puts upon them the demand to move from the familiar and the comfortable and so risk encounter with the rest of the human community.

It is only where this kind of risky encounter is made that God's commitment and presence with the church is at all relevant. If a church remains anchored to what is familiar, is comfortably fenced in and shielded by its piety from an impinging world, it has all the security it needs and to what purpose would it seek a commitment to it by God and an assurance of God's presence?

If what distinguishes the people of God in the world is the presence of God with it the church must be visible to the world and make visible for the world the God to whom the world also belongs.

When we talk of God's distinguishing presence with the church, we do not mean that God is confined exclusively to the church, or that the church has exclusive rights to God, or that God is a captive possession of the church to be paraded to the world. No, God is present throughout the world and it is God who takes the church to the world. God acts through numerous agents outside the church and in numerous ways without the church to renew, trans-

form and to make God's will a reality. But it is uniquely in and through God's presence in the Church that God in Jesus Christ is explicitly identified so that the world may know that it belongs to God and that God is active in it. It is this identifiable presence in the Church that makes the Church the model for the world as it should be lived under God.

What model is appropriate to a church to which God would risk committing God's presence and what model is appropriate to its ministers in order that the church may be a model to the world. The presence of God in the church is the presence of God in Jesus Christ and the only appropriate model for the church is the model that Jesus Christ appropriated for himself for fulfilling God's purposes for him in the world.

That model is the prophetic and servant model. Neither of these is derived from the institutional cultic or political institutions of Israel, which found their embodiment in priest and monarch. The point of the synoptic gospels placing the temptations of Jesus at the beginning of his ministry was to demonstrate that confronted with the choice of imperial and invincible power and institutional authority on the one hand and prophetic and servant vulnerability on the other, he chose prophetic and servant vulnerability.

By prophetic I do not mean ecstatic or predictive, but that type of ministry represented by the great prophets of the Old Testament who had no institutional authority and therefore at great risk addressed the community, the powerful institutions of their time both to challenge injustice and oppression, corruption and idolatry in church, society and state and to bring courage, faith, hope and comfort. Where the institutions of church and state had no higher institutional authority to hold them to account, it was the prophet who was called and sent to declare that they were accountable and were being held to account by the divine authority, but ironically the prophet himself was powerless and vulnerable.

No word has been worn more threadbare in the rhetoric of humility than the word servant. It is indeed bandied around most frequently and glibly where hierarchies exist and the

higher the office the greater the claim to humble servanthood of the office. And of course the church is very prone to this. The church has never truly owned up to Jesus as servant. It cannot live with the stigma of owning up to the servant status of the one it worships and follows. With its hierarchies and dignitary status accorded to them, the church can hardly do less than project its divine leader as wonder worker and imperial monarch.

I don't think that the church that exists in cultures that are heir to the Græco-Roman ethos of supremacy have understood the distinction between being a servant and being a benefactor performing a service. And I don't think that the church that exists in cultures that are heir to the caste ethos have understood the distinction between servanthood and degrading servitude. And for both reasons the servant model is resisted.

The servant model is a most difficult one to adopt either for the church itself or for its ministers. Wherever there are leadership functions there is the tension between the authority vested in the office one holds and the challenge to be a servant divested of institutional authority. It is not that the servant is empty of authority. The true servant such as Jesus was has the most compelling kind of authority. It is authentic authority. It is the authority of example, it is the authority of powerlessness that refuses to resort to coercive power to dominate and control, it is the authority of ultimate loyalty to Christ that may result in penalty but not in submission.

The servant profile is the profile of the whole congregation. As Paul says in the reading from Ephesians, ministries are integral to the church. They do not originate outside the church.

The appointment of a minister is not to exempt others from ministry, but to enable the whole church to minister through various gifts. They are servant ministries to one another and by all to the wider community.

May the presence of God go with you and your new minister. May that presence become public through your servant witness to the community in which you have been placed by God.

Northsider • March 1991

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>9:00 <i>Holtermann Street</i> Door Rhonda & Ken Barker Vestry Florence Hind Communion Lindy Armstrong & Bruce Walters</p>	<p>Readers 9:00 3rd Lindy Armstrong 10th Shirley Colless 17th Doug Armstrong 24th Alison Croft 31st Parish Service</p>	<p>10:30 <i>Shirley Road</i> Door Linda McDonald & Allan Warts</p>	<p>THANK GOD for autumn - the colours, the boldly weather</p>	<p>O GOD, open our eyes to your presence with us.</p>	<p>PRAY for objectivity and compassion for workers in the media.</p>	<p>O GOD, be with us in our hour of darkness.</p>
<p>3rd Sunday in Lent Exodus 20.1-17 Psalm 19.7-14 1 Cor 1.22-25 John 2.13-22 Colour Violet</p> <p>PRAY that, freed from sin, we may be open to the gift of your Spirit.</p>	<p>PRAY for international co-operation to protect the environment.</p>	<p>GIVE THANKS for those who interpret the Word of God.</p>	<p>10:15 am Worship at Georgian House</p> <p>PRAY for God's comfort to the frail and lonely.</p>	<p>GIVE THANKS for the blessing of friendship.</p>	<p>PRAY for restraint in human reproduction.</p>	<p>PRAY for those who work to resolve conflict.</p>
<p>4th Sunday in Lent 2 Chron 36.14-23 Psalm 137.1-6 Ephesians 2.4-10 John 3.14-21 Colour Violet</p> <p>PRAY for humility and obedience, Jesus being our model.</p>	<p>PRAY for the gift of an open and non-judgmental mind.</p>	<p>GIVE THANKS for those who share their gift of hospitality.</p>	<p>1:30 pm Shirley Rd Fellowship</p> <p>GIVE THANKS for those who give themselves for others.</p>	<p>KEEP PRAYING for a peaceful solution to the Gulf and Middle East crises</p>	<p>PRAY for the courage to live our Christian convictions.</p>	<p>GIVE THANKS for those who blessing of new life out of death.</p>
<p>5th Sunday in Lent Jeremiah 31.31-34 Ps 51.10-17 Hebrews 5.7-10 John 12.20-33 Colour Violet</p> <p>PRAY that we may be loyal disciples.</p>	<p>GIVE THANKS for the joy of learning and pray for students.</p>	<p>CELEBRATE living.</p>	<p>10:15 am Worship at Georgian House •7.15 pm Parish Elders Council</p> <p>PRAY for all who bear responsibility for the Church and its mission.</p>	<p>GIVE THANKS for the gift of faith.</p>	<p>PRAY for families in distress.</p>	<p>GIVE THANKS for the blessing of new life out of death.</p>
<p>6th Sunday in Lent Isaiah 50.4-9a Psalm 31.9-16 Philippians 2.5-11 Mark 15.1-39 Colour Violet</p> <p>MAY we, walking in the way of the cross, find it to be the way of life.</p>	<p>Monday in Holy Week Is 42.1-9 • Ps 36-5.10 • Heb 9.11-15 • Jn 12.1-11</p> <p>LET US not wash our hands of responsibility.</p>	<p>Tuesday in Holy Week Is 49.1-7 • Ps 71.1-12 • 1 Cor 1.18-31 • Jn 12.20-36</p> <p>LET US bear the Cross for Christ.</p>	<p>Wednesday in Holy Week Is 50.4-9a • Ps 70 • Heb 12.1-3 • Jn 13.21-30 •10:00 am Holtermann St Fellowship</p> <p>LET US give ourselves to the gospel.</p>	<p>Holy Thursday Ex 12.1-14 Ps 116.12-19 1 Cor 11.23-26 Jn 13.1-5 Colour Violet</p> <p>Worship .. •7.00 pm Shirley Rd LET US break bread, remembering..</p>	<p>Good Friday Isaiah 52.13-53.12 Ps 22.1-18 Heb 4.14-16; 5.7-9 Jn 19.17-30 Colour None</p> <p>•9.00 am Parish Worship - Holtermann St LET US take our cup.</p>	<p>O GOD, be with us in our hour of darkness.</p>
<p>Easter Acts 10.34-43 Psalm 118.14-24 Colossians 3.1-4 John 20.1-18 Colour White/Parish Services •6.00 am Bells Head Res •10.30 am Shirley Rd THANKS be to God.</p>	<p>Home Group every Sunday night 7.30 pm Bible Study, prayer & share See directory on page 2 for address</p>					

*You know you are getting older when ...
 the gleam in your eye is from the sun hitting
 your bifocals!*