

# The New Church Newsletter

## Hurstville Society

### April 2011

#### A Message of Love

*Rev Don Rose explores the Lord's final words on the cross and their message of love.*

One of the first things to know about the crucifixion is that it is something the Lord knew would happen. He not only knew it would happen but He told the disciples several times that it would happen. He told them that He would be taken and treated cruelly and mocked, and finally be put to death and that He would rise again. This was something the disciples found hard to understand.

Picture them approaching the city of Jerusalem and being told again what would happen. "Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him" (Mark 10:32).

He said "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered . . . and they will . . . kill Him. And the third day He will rise again" (Mark 10:33,34)

The disciples were told that He would lay down His life. "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 1:18). The thought of His being killed was so terrible to the disciples that they could not believe that it would happen. And it was even more terrible when it actually did happen and the Lord suffered those things - being mocked, and cruelly treated and nailed to a cross to die.

The feelings that the Lord experienced are far beyond our imagining because He was not only suffering as to His body. He was being attacked by terrible forces from hell. He fought against those forces from His love of protecting the human race.

Think most of all of this - of His love for the human race - as you consider some of the things the Lord said while He was on the cross. Looking at the story in all four Gospels, one finds that the Lord spoke seven times while on the cross.

Listen to these words and remember His love. The first words were these: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." Isn't it amazing that His concern at that terrible moment was not for Himself, but for those who were harming Him! The Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church tells us that "He prayed on the cross for His enemies, and thus for all in the whole world" (Heavenly Secrets 1690).

The Lord's thought was for the whole human race and for each individual and the next thing He said on the cross was spoken to one man - to one of the thieves who was crucified with Him. The thief had said, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." Earlier in His life, He had said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (John 12:32). The Heavenly Doctrine says that the Lord "wills to save everyone and to draw him with mighty power to heaven, that is to Himself" (Heavenly Secrets 1038).

The third thing the Lord said on the cross showed His concern for Mary who was His mother. We read "When Jesus therefore saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, Woman, behold your son! Then He said to the disciple, Behold your mother! And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home" (John 19:26).

Another thing the Lord said on the cross was "I thirst". Although He was truly thirsty, there was more to it than that. In the past He had told His disciples that His food was to do the work He came on earth to accomplish: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work" (John 4:34). The Heavenly Doctrine says "Because He came into the world to save humankind, He said 'I thirst', which means that from Divine love He willed and desired the salvation of the human race" (Apocalypse Explained 386:30). To accomplish the salvation of the human race was the Lord's one task in His life. It was the cup He came on earth to drink, and the part that was very hard was a bitter cup. It was so bitter that He had prayed that He would not have to drink it: "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). But despite the bitterness, the Lord did each and every thing He came on earth to do. And when on the cross He said, "It is finished" (John 19:30) that great work of His was done.

The accomplishment of this great work brought a wonderful peace. That is why when He had risen from the tomb in which His body had been laid, He greeted His disciples with the words, "Peace to you" (see Luke 24:36; John 20:21,26). And in the Heavenly Doctrine, we are told that "when the Lord had united His Human to the Divine Itself, He had peace, for then the combats had ceased, and all things in the heavens and hells had been reduced to order; and thus not only He had peace, but the angels in the heavens and people on earth also had peace and salvation" (Heavenly Secrets 10730:2).

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## **General Church Assembly, June 23-26**

The Executive Planning Committee for the General Church Assembly, June 23-26, 2011 in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, has been working tirelessly to finalize all the details needed for registration. They are confident that registration should be available online [www.gcassembly.org](http://www.gcassembly.org) before March 18. The print registration piece will go out by mail with the next issue of *Around The New Church*, in early April (packaged together in a cost-saving strategy). Please make plans to attend the Assembly with your friends and family. It is happening and it's going to be great! More than 48 different workshops and presentations will be offered, with another 15 or more activities running in the afternoons. Stay tuned!

Footnote: There will be an attendee from the Hurstville Society with **Angela Heldon** travelling to the USA in June sponsored by her Grandpa **Norman Heldon**. Among other things she is expecting to renew acquaintances from her trip last year to Kenya.

## **The new *New Church Life***

The new bimonthly *New Church Life* is in print and has been mailed to subscribers. It has an exciting new look, inviting and expanded content and new editors - Bruce Henderson as managing editor and the Rev. Walter Orthwein as spiritual editor. If you aren't a subscriber but would like to see this new issue, you can read it online at:

<http://www.newchurch.org/materials/publications/nc-life/index.html>

If you are already getting the Life, you will be reminded when your subscription is due. If you would like to subscribe, please contact Kristine Medley, General Church Administrative Assistant at [Kristine.Medley@newchurch.org](mailto:Kristine.Medley@newchurch.org) or 267-502-4901.

For new subscribers, if you sign up now, you can get *New Church Life* at the old rate of just \$16 a year. Starting July 1 the price - which has been unchanged for many years - will increase to \$30. Issues of *New Church Life* will always be available online.

## **Pause: Make Space for God**

This program which ran weekly for seven weeks proved to be a great success and opinions expressed at the final evening indicated there was a desire to do this again later in the year, possibly doing a new series, one we missed or even redoing the Journey program we did previously. Factors contributing to the success of this series were the good participation of those who attended, a welcoming environment holding the sessions at **Huiling Sun Cooper's** home and especially the gentle guidance by **Kerry Lockhart** who got the balance just right to keep things moving each week. Also not to be forgotten is the effort of **Margaret Heldon** who planned the services for each Sunday to match the week's theme. The final session was preceded by a most enjoyable meal prepared by **Patricia Walsh** and **Huiling**.

## **Concerning the Holy Supper**

by Norman Heldon

In the "Pause: Make Space for God" programme workbook there is this quote from *Secrets of Heaven* 4217: "When bread is mentioned in the Word the angels (who are with man) become aware not of material but of spiritual bread, thus instead of bread they think of the Lord who is the Bread of Life, as He himself teaches in John V1, 33, 35. And because they perceive the Lord they perceive what is from the Lord, thus His love towards the whole human race, and they then perceive at the same time man's reciprocal love to the Lord, for these two things cohere in one idea of thought and affection.

"Not unlike this are the thoughts of a person who is in a holy state when receiving the bread of the Holy Supper, for he or she then thinks not of bread but of the Lord and His mercy, and of what is of love to Him and of charity towards the neighbour, because he then thinks of repentance and amendment of life, but with variety according to the holiness in which he is, not only as to his thought but also as to his affection. From this it is clear that bread as mentioned in the Word suggests to the angels no idea of bread but the idea of love, together with innumerable things that are of love. It is the same with wine which when read of in the Word, and also when received in the Holy Supper suggests to the angels no thought of wine but of charity towards the neighbour."

Let us keep these thoughts in mind when we are receiving the Holy Supper.

## **Easter Visit of Bishop Brian and Gretchen Keith**

The big event for April is the visit over Easter of Bishop Brian Keith and his wife Gretchen who will be arriving in Sydney at 5 pm Tuesday 19th April from Perth. Thereafter his schedule will be as follows

**Dinner and Talk - Wednesday 20th April:** In the evening there will be a communal dinner after which Bishop Keith says he will discuss "anything and everything". Feedback from the society has indicated that there is a desire to know more about what is happening worldwide in the church.

Some ideas floated so far are: how the church is faring in different countries around the world; the effect on services that the central body may be able to provide in the future due to the need to run on a reduced budget; future directions and the process of choosing a new bishop. (Bishop Kline retires in 2014) And no doubt there will be things Bishop Keith would like to tell us about. There is no set agenda. Bring any questions you may have.

For the dinner which will be catered in the same manner as our regular monthly evening meals (cost \$8 per head) please advise Kerry Lockhart the Sunday before (17th) if you plan to attend.

### **Visit to Gold Coast - Thursday 21st returning midday Friday 22nd**

**Good Friday - Friday 22nd April:** This will be in the evening at 7.30 p.m. which will be a Holy Supper service.

**Easter Family Service - Sunday 24th April:** Following the service there will be a Pot Luck luncheon to give people a further opportunity to visit with the bishop and his wife. Please bring a savoury and sweet dish to share. Drinks will be provided.

## **No Church 1st Sunday of the Month**

Starting in April we will resume the practice of no church on the first Sunday of the month. So far this year we haven't done this as we have been having a weekly sermon to match the *Pause: Make Space for God* program. Despite this there will still be four services in April (due to two services with the bishop at Easter) and four services in May which is a five Sunday month. There will also be the option of attending the Roseville church on the first Sunday should you wish to do so.

## **News Notes**

At the Little Athletics State Championships at Homebush in March Patricia and Brian Walsh's grandson **James Kermond** won gold medals in the 200m & 400m under 15 events and holds the State record for both. He won silver medals for the same two events at the National Youth Championships. His mother **Cathy** will be competing in the Australian Masters Athletics championships in Brisbane over Easter.

Meanwhile **Donna Heldon** and husband **Jason** recently successfully completed the demanding Six Foot Track ultra marathon between Katoomba and Jenolan Caves in under six hours.

Our thoughts are with **Rhonda Hall** and her husband **John** who is recovering from a shoulder operation.

**Naomi** and **Nick Smith** are presently travelling in the Middle East to places like Syria and Jordan. We look forward to their safe return soon. **Michelle Heldon** who is working in London at the Science Museum has managed so far this year to fit in a week's trip to Morocco and a couple of days in the Lakes District in Northern England.

## **Birthdays**

Happy Birthday to **Donna Heldon** (5th), **Gaye Heldon** (15th), **Merv Kennedy** (17th), **Huiling Sun** (20th), **Kerry Horner**(22nd) and **David Horner** (25th)

## April 2011 Calendar of Events

**Note: All events are located at the church at 22 Dudley St, Penshurst 2222 (off Hillcrest Ave) unless otherwise stated. Contact the Hurstville New Church on (02) 9580 1589 for more information or email us at [newchurch@optusnet.com.au](mailto:newchurch@optusnet.com.au)**  
**All are welcome and refreshments are served after church each Sunday.**

<b>Sunday</b>	3rd April	<b>No Church in Hurstville</b> (Service at Roseville)
<b>Sunday</b>	10th April	10 00 a.m. Worship
<b>Sunday</b>	17th April	10 00 a.m. Worship
<b>Wednesday</b>	20th April	7 00 pm Dinner and Talk (Bishop Keith)
<b>Thursday/Fri</b>	21st & 22nd April	Visit to Gold Coast (Bishop Keith) - returning to Sydney midday Fri
<b>Friday</b>	22nd April	7 30 pm Good Friday Service (Holy Supper) (Bishop Keith)
<b>Sunday</b>	24th April	10 00 a.m. Easter Sunday Service (Bishop Keith)