



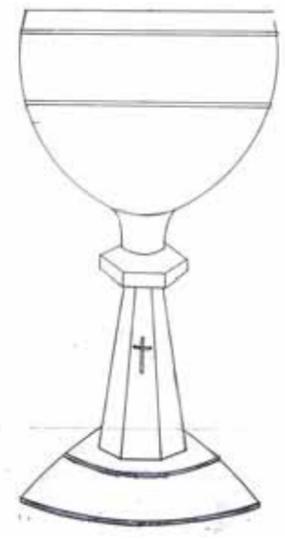
The exceptional decorative and jewellery work on the vessels



The completed monstrance with Pope Benedict XVI



Sister Dorothy Woodward's design for the inner ring of the monstrance



Original design drawing for one of the two vessels by Sister Dorothy Woodward

## Tomorrow's antiques

Since its beginnings in 1911, W J Sanders has had many design challenges, including those from architects and designers working on briefs supplied by religious orders. The most recent and very exciting commission was that for the 2008 World Catholic Youth Day (WYD). W J Sanders silversmiths was involved in making the monstrance and the vessels used during the WYD ceremonies conducted by Pope Benedict XVI.

The designs are uniquely Australian and a worldwide television audience viewed the finished pieces.

Historian Ken Cavill's comprehensive history of W J Sanders published in the *Australiana* magazine in 1984 includes the following statement. 'W. J. Sanders' production of church plate in silver and gold has been noteworthy. Many fine examples of their ecclesiastical work – chalices, ciboria, tabernacles and monstrances – are found in places of worship throughout Australia and New Zealand.'

This is the story of creating the 2008 WYD pieces.

### The designer

The work of Sister Dorothy Woodward is found in schools and chapels though out the Hunter Valley and beyond. A prolific artist and designer, her mediums are stained glass windows and paintings. For WYD she was asked to design the precious vessels: chalice, paten, ciborium and monstrance for the mass to be celebrated by Pope Benedict at Randwick Racecourse Sydney. The only brief was that her designs were to represent Australia in a distinctive way. Sister Dorothy had never worked in metal so the challenge W J Sanders had to meet was to recreate the beauty and harmony of her drawings in metal.

### The silversmith's interpretation

There were two key silversmith decisions. Firstly, that all the vessels and the monstrance were to be in Australian sterling silver mined from Broken Hill; and secondly, that the Australian floral designs would be cast and then set onto the various pieces to create a three-dimensional effect.

Translating and retaining the key elements of a design from paper to metal presents certain challenges. An experienced and creative silversmith can actually enhance the original design while keeping in mind the various limitations of working with precious metals. Illustrated is a photograph taken during

production of the vessel with the original design drawings shows the silversmith's interpretation of the chalice and ciborium.

### Crafting

Sourcing high quality spinning silver in Australia is difficult. Our suppliers worked late into the night refining .08 mm and 1 mm sheets of 950 grade Australian silver. Their efforts resulted in sheets that were perfect for the silversmith to work.

Every silver component had to be shaped, each requiring a pattern. These were drawn up and then wooden chucks were made. The bowls were spun with the use of heat (annealing). After each component was finished they were silver-soldered together, with each solder joint cleaned to remove any visible traces.

Hours of machine hand polishing ensured not a scratch or mark remained on any surface. The pieces were given polished and matt finishes achieved through using different grade mops. Each piece was then silver-plated and where appropriate, such as the inside of the bowls, 24 ct gold plated. It was at this point the vessels were ready for decoration.

### The adornment

A renowned Australian jeweller interpreted Sr Dorothy Woodward's *Australiana* designs for the chalice, ciborium and communion plate. The floral designs were wax carved and then cast in contrasting rose gold and yellow gold. The gum nut flowers were set with white and cognac Argyle diamonds, and the crosses were inset with rows of white diamonds. Once completed, the designs were then applied onto the objects.

To create the decorative elements for the inner ring of the monstrance, W J Sanders jeweller Ken Joyce first made wax models before casting in sterling silver, after which they were 24 ct gold plated. Small white diamonds were set into the gum nuts. Australian fauna on the outer ring was sword pierced and hand engraved by the company's engraver. The base and the stem are in heavy gauge sterling silver giving the monstrance stability.

The monstrance and the vessels will continue to be used and have joined many other historic ecclesiastical pieces kept at St Mary's Cathedral Sydney. They are close to the silver Baptismal font made over 80 years ago by two earlier W J Sanders silversmiths ■

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The vessels prior to decoration



The exceptional decorative and jewellery work on the vessels



Silver Baptismal font for St Mary's Cathedral Sydney in production over 80 years ago by earlier W J Sanders silversmiths



Completed monstrance with W J Sanders silversmiths (left) Keith King and Matthew Mulligan