

Doesn't Anybody Knock Anymore? Anger Crashes the Workplace  
Play Ball! The Cubs' New Stadium • Sheer Spring Fashion

# PHOENIX

M A G A Z I N E

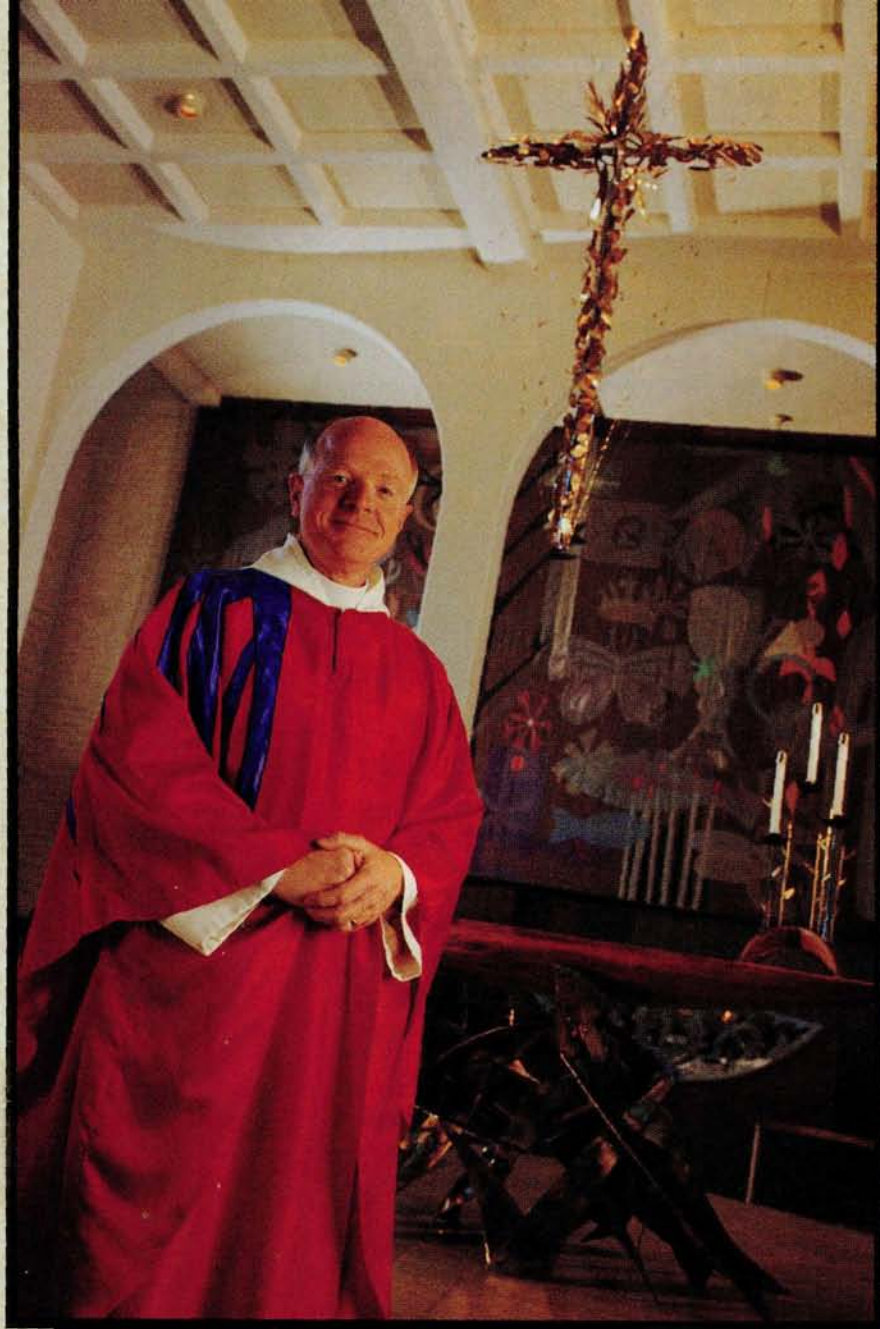
## Rating Our Religion

*Is your congregation heavenly?  
America's outspoken critic reviewed  
21 Valley worship services.*

March 1997 \$2.95



0 74470 66640 0



**Father Robert Certain, St. Barnabas on the Desert**

ment (sometimes it's in the area of how the congregations receive visitors — a more Nordstrom-like approach is recommended — or in the polish of presentation of the worship service, or some other area).

If I give a 2 rating, it's because I feel they need to devote additional attention to one or more areas.

And the 1's, in my opinion, need more help than even I can give.

**St. Barnabas on the Desert**  
**6715 N. Mockingbird Lane**  
**Scottsdale, 948-5560**

St. Barnabas on the Desert is thoroughly urban — a success story at the edge of the Scottsdale real estate

bonanza. The liberal influx of well-heeled retirees adds stability. St. Barnabas is among the largest congregations in the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Arizona, a mega-church whose panache, like that of a Brooks' Brothers wardrobe, is understated, not heralded.

When I visited one Sunday for the 11 a.m. service, every turn disclosed quality to me: the artwork, the landscape architecture of succulents, the 40-rank Cassavant pipe organ, the polish of the people (yet devoid of cliquy snobbery), the smorgasbord of ministries to those

inside and outside the parish.

St. Barnabas offers programs in grief and separation, for the unemployed, the addicted, and for those with AIDS and their families. The last was just one of the subtle signs of gay-friendliness that greatly enhanced my esteem for pastoral care here. To an inquiry about that AIDS ministry, assistant rector Gus Tuttle phoned an immediate, compassionate response.

I sense an ethos of service pushes parishioners to give back to society generous amounts of the abundance Providence has afforded them. The parish newsletter, *The St. Barnabas Messenger*, invites parishioners to forego holiday dinner parties to volunteer in local shelters.

Service was the theme of senior rector Dan Miner's sermon, "How Do We Love God?" Such platitudes have been the bane of many an Episcopal sermon — the kind that make me wonder how someone can speak for eight minutes and say absolutely nothing. Not so Dan Miner's sermon. He grabbed me with minister shoptalk: that doing Morning Prayer for him has at times been so rote an activity that he hasn't remembered the Bible passages he just completed. Love can become like that. Say you love God and hate your neighbor, and you lie. To give integrity and energy to love of God, he said, share your talents, your treasure and your heart.

St. Barnabas gives visitors a gift to keep: a paperback New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Its format and notes are excellent.

Music brought me to this special parish. Minister of Music

Dr. Curt Sather commands admiration from Valley musicians, as well as members of the congregation. His repertoire is classical, yet each Sunday St. Barnabas also offers a service with contemporary Christian music.

With a choir this good, I'd Anglicanize the service, making the liturgy more sung, less spoken. I'd also move the choir out from behind the chancel cloister, for there the choir's rich, V-8 tone seems to mysteriously fracture.

St. Barnabas delivers a catalog of courses for adult religious education. Here one can even study koine Greek.

