

# Folio Ten

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## VII<sup>1</sup>

### The Ascension: The Climax of the Paschal Mystery<sup>2</sup>

#### *Scene: Mount of Olives, Jerusalem*

*The site of the Ascension,  
A woe-begone little hut,  
Stands, isolated at the centre  
Of a forlorn circular enclosure  
Yet still with a commanding view, overlooking Jerusalem.  
Does all this perhaps reflect  
How we presently value the Ascension  
... As an afterthought to the Resurrection?*

*It is true that the hut's Islamic Arab guardians,  
Own the site, and offer a minimal memorial  
– But, how faint, are our protestations ...  
How feeble, our efforts at re-negotiation ?  
The entire cramped space within the hut  
– Enough, perhaps, for a dozen standing adults –  
Is 'centred' on a flat rock,  
The natural top of the Mount of Olives' ridgeline!  
Two shallow, natural depressions, set into the rock,  
Could represent Christ's footprints.  
In the mind's eye,  
The numerous, milling disciples of 2000 years ago  
Contrast, starkly, with today's confined 'dozen' ...*

*For me, nevertheless,  
The wondrous splendour  
That is the Ascension,  
Still shone through!  
From this spot,  
Jesus Risen, radiant with Abba's Glory for us,  
Leads all of us,  
With all of creation,  
To the bosom of God, His Father  
– Now wondrously become  
'Our' God!  
'Our' Father!<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> This notation indicates the SEVENTH of a SEPTET of Holy Land Poems

<sup>2</sup> Holy Land Pilgrimage, October 1991. This poem is situated on the Mount of Olives, Jerusalem

*Unlike that windowless hut's 'closedness',  
Jesus' Spirit of the Ascension  
OPENS US  
– Within the divinely-human OPENESS of Christ –  
To the loving boundlessness of God, our Father!*

*The Ascension  
Is the LOCUS  
Of our very encounter with Divine Fellowship  
... Inviting us  
Into Abba's and Jesus Ascended's  
Eternal Embrace!  
In human terms, it is Jesus Ascended's very PERSON  
That is the LOCUS  
... Of every prayer,  
And of ALL communing –  
Of the Divine within the human,  
And of the human within the Divine!*

*Indeed, the Ascension is the climax  
Of the Paschal Mystery  
– Of Jesus' culminating surrender to Abba, of His Person,  
And of Abba's ultimate drawing of Jesus to Himself.  
In everyday terms,  
Every EUCHARIST  
Culminates in this Ascensional Embrace  
... Initiating, or intensifying,  
Human Fellowship with the Divine!*

*Unsurprisingly,  
This hidden Reality of the Ascension  
Is only revealed through the Spirit,  
To those with hearts of faith.*

## Jesus' Dialogue with Me<sup>4</sup>

*Jesus:*                    *Tom, I would like you to be*  
*An apostle of forgiveness*  
*Especially to those*  
*Who are blighted by a fixated love.*<sup>5</sup>

*Suffer with them,*  
*Show them my love;*  
*Touch them with compassion.*  
*Gentle them into true love*  
*... Into a forgiving love,*  
*... Into a deeply receptive love,*  
*Into a love, of course,*  
*That overflows to others, in Me.*  
*Incorporate your suffering for these others*  
*– Suffering which is ‘still wanting*  
*For My body, which is the Church’ –*<sup>6</sup>  
*Constantly, within the Eucharist.*

*Tom:*                    *Jesus, shouldn't I have my own love*  
*First strengthened*  
*... Through experiencing Your love*  
*Work its strengthening in me?*

*Jesus:*                    *Of course, Tom ...*  
*I will come to console, purify and empower you*  
*In these coming months:*  
*Leave yourself open to My love,*  
*And to My timing.*

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<sup>4</sup> Rome Tertianship, 1991. Following our return from the Holy Land to Rome and the Tertianship and on the advice of my Spiritual Director (Fr Bill Hogan CSC) to discern Jesus' DESIRES for my future, I wrote this dialogue/poem after two days of prayer.

<sup>5</sup> In my ministry to prisoners, I had already been a presence to such guys and would continue to be so

<sup>6</sup> Col 1: 24

## Brother Forgiven<sup>7</sup>

*Jesus CALLS me –  
To companion Him  
To brother Him:  
Being identified, for me, most poignantly,  
As PRISONERS  
... Young men, for the greater part ...  
Held captive  
... By their fears,  
By their loneliness,  
And by their pervasive lack of self-worth.  
Most are part victim, part offender  
– Like each of us ALL  
... Though they, perhaps, in more dramatic ways.*

*Jesus GIFTS me –  
To be brother to them  
A brother, together in weakness,  
A brother, together in failure,  
A brother, together in sin,  
But a brother FORGIVEN!*

*Jesus SENDS me  
– Brother forgiven –  
To these, my own,  
With the gift, newly received,  
And now, newly given  
– FORGIVENESS –  
ENABLING ME ...  
To carry their crosses,  
To share burdens on the WAY.  
In so doing, it happens,  
That I draw upon THEIR strength  
To carry mine!*

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<sup>7</sup> Rome Tertianship, 1991

*Thus, through wounds exposed, mutually  
– Wounds Jesus has made His OWN –*

*We are DRAWN*

*By the Spirit of Calvary,  
Into the Body of Christ.*

*HERE,*

*Both are healed, tenderly,*

*By a loving Father,*

*IN the Spirit of Jesus,*

*Who makes all whole:*

*... By His wounds, we are all healed'.<sup>8</sup>*

## Through the Sign of the Cross <sup>9</sup>

*All my blessings  
Come through the sign of the Cross.  
Christ empowers me most in my weakness.  
His deep and tender love for me  
Radiates through my whole world  
... From out of my weakness ...  
Drawing my life together, in simplicity.*

*Jesus chooses, as Lamb of God,  
To enter into the core of my sinfulness.  
It is from the heart of my darkness  
That His healing light saves me:  
The Lord of Easter Glory  
Turns what needs the sunlight of love  
Into a radiant image, of His own wondrous Light!  
O Mystery of Eternal Love  
... 'Becoming sin, that I might become son'! <sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> Rome Tertianship, Oct 1991

<sup>10</sup> Anon



## Abba's Desire <sup>11</sup>

*Abba*  
*Desires to give Himself to us eternally ...*  
*He wants to surrender Himself*  
*To the person He has created ...*  
*Abba yearns to be invited*  
*– From infinitely within –*  
*Into OUR human heart:*  
*Needed only – the words*  
*‘Our Father ...’*  
*Abba loves*  
*To shine*  
*FORTH*  
*In*  
*Us*  
*In, and as, His Beloved Child, Jesus.*

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<sup>11</sup> Rome Tertianship, late Oct 1991

## My God Within<sup>12</sup>

*My God WITHIN*

*Makes love to me ...*

*Gentle parting with my self needs be ...*

*Gently, gently to LET SLIP –*

*Choice of timing*

*Choice of occasion*

*Choice of words*

*Words themselves*

*Thought itself*

*Choice itself*

*Contemplation itself*

*The experience itself*

*Even the gifts given ...*

*Love given*

*Joy given*

*Peace given*

*...Only OPEN to receive*

*The SAME to give ...*

*O God, You meet me*

*– Not I, You*

*... I only OPEN*

*To You WITHIN ...*

## To Nurture Self Worth <sup>13</sup>

To NURTURE SELF WORTH –

*Accept YOURSELF :*

*Value your strengths  
For who you are,  
Value your weaknesses  
For who you can be,  
Honour your past  
Both strengths and weaknesses  
... Teachers, both.*

*Accept OTHERS :*

*Let them love you,  
So, feeling loved,  
The more loving you can be ...  
Because we become ourselves  
Through others.*

*Accept GOD :*

*Accept God and God's love, for free,  
Thus, the more human we'll be;  
And being freed by love,  
We'll sense our core identity  
... To belong to God,  
God's children be!*

*Avoid two double standards :*

*First, to profess to love the other,  
As he is, with his weaknesses  
... While not loving myself  
BECAUSE on my weaknesses!  
Second, to profess to love myself,  
As I am, with my weaknesses  
... While not loving the other  
BECAUSE of his weaknesses!*

*Both double standards subtly establish a limit  
Beyond which acceptance is not offered:  
The more subtle – the more emphatic the denial of limits.  
For its part ...  
Acceptance is always simple.*

## Love, Our Teacher<sup>14</sup>

*God is love:*

*His love we need ...*

*To pray, to commune:*

*Only those who love,*

*Can teach us either.*

*Yes, only friends can make my heart*

*A praying and loving heart ...*

*So, love not to SERVE people only,*

*But to love them INTO LIFE!*

## God Communing Within Us <sup>15</sup>

*The Father made us for Himself,  
And gave us an orientation to Himself  
Which is the essence of our nature.  
Adam's and our disowning of this orientation  
Called forth from the Father  
An overwhelmingly loving response.  
His gift to us of Jesus,  
Both as the template and the enabler  
Of our transformed and elevated humanity,  
Not only restored our orientation  
But PERSONIFIED and DIVINIZED it  
– Drawing us,  
... In the very Person of Jesus Ascended ...  
Into the heart of the Trinity!*

*The Life for which the human heart was created,  
– Now, RE-CREATED, IN CHRIST –  
Is wondrously, BEING LIVED WITHIN IT!  
Abba, Jesus Ascended, and Their Paschal Spirit  
Live Their Life of Love  
Within us!  
There are NO boundaries beyond which  
They will NOT share with us.  
They draw us into Their ETERNAL COMMUNING!  
They love Their Life  
INTO US!  
With God's Gift, we have become AS GOD!  
DRAWN, BY LOVE ...  
TO LOVE ...  
FOR LOVE ...*

## Jesus, the Powerless One <sup>16</sup>

*Jesus of Nazareth was a powerless man,  
A needy, dependent person:  
Needing the support of the Twelve,  
Heeding suggestions, changing His mind,  
Needing the companionship of women,  
Looking to the affirmation all friendship gives,  
Seeking others, when feeling weak or alone.*

*But Jesus was also powerless – by CHOICE :  
Identifying with the poor and lowly,  
Identifying with sinful humanity,  
Submitting to religious and civil authorities,  
And, ultimately, not resisting –  
Either His voluntary identity as a despised criminal,  
Or His entry into a completely powerless death.*

*Yes, in His life, unto death  
Jesus accepted surpassingly :  
The utter dependency of His own humanity  
On His Abba-Yahweh,  
Emptying Himself of even the slightest aspiration  
To self-power,  
Allowing the boundless power of Abba-Yahweh  
To transcend His whole being  
To the last shimmer of light within His spirit,  
And to the last tracery of what is human  
... Totally surrendering all  
In trust.*

*Yet, wondrously, it is through  
His very powerlessness  
– In life and in death –  
That Jesus EMPOWERS others  
... And all creation.*

## Crucified for Love<sup>17</sup>

*Religious Life VOWS unlock the potential for love  
Planted by God in our personalities,  
... Allowing us  
To unlock the love potential in others.  
These Gospel Vows are three special ENERGIES  
For loving DEEPLY  
... Allowing us  
To integrate our lives with others, deeply,  
Therein, becoming able to truly Christianize them.*

*Religious Life vows are a call to SACRIFICIAL love  
– To enter into Jesus' broken, victim condition  
... There to be transformed –  
Into the cross-carrying lover,  
One with 'the suffering servant,'  
A loving, uncomplaining brother.  
This call to sacrifice,  
This entry into vowed vulnerability,  
Is, ultimately,  
To be crucified for love.*

## Human like Christ <sup>18</sup>

*Nothing human is alien to God:  
In His utter surrender to His Son  
Abba pours His whole being, eternally,  
Into our humanity ...  
No pain, but He is there,  
No sensation, a stranger to Him,  
No expressiveness that lacks His sensitivity,  
No activity, He does not love into being.  
He loves what we love –  
When our heart rejoices  
The rejoicing is His, and ours.  
He fathers us into life, loving life into us,  
Delighting fully in our humanity!*

*Sin alone lacks His presence;  
Sin is choosing to close out God;  
Sin is experiencing Abba's absence ...  
Though absent He is not.  
Sin is negating our humanity ...  
Being less human, less like Christ,  
Who so values our humanity  
That He entered into sin,  
Becoming sin,  
Dying of it,  
De-humanized ...  
But only, so Abba could regenerate  
Our humanity anew ...  
Elevating it, glorifying it,  
Drawing it within the Divine Fellowship!*



*Thus, our vocation, here, is to be truly human ...  
To enter into full communion with all, in Christ,  
So we can become more fully human –  
As we are Eucharist to each other,  
Be Word of God to each other,  
And, being ‘members of each other’,<sup>19</sup>  
Serve Christ in each other.*

*Moreover, we become more fully human  
The more we own our choices ...  
Because we focus energy by our choices ...  
Defining ourselves, identifying ourselves,  
And above all, valuing and enhancing others:  
Are our choices now,  
Worthy of our future, in Christ?*

*Our desire for human wholeness  
Prompts us to create possibilities  
For each person, for every group,  
To achieve fullness of human life.  
The quality of life in each,  
Is enriched, or diminished,  
By that of every other.*

*Working for justice is an organic part  
Of our communal growth, maturity and fulfilment.  
Every step to expand human freedom,  
Human dignity and rights, education, and health  
Enlarges us all, dignifies us all.  
Inequality, ignorance and dominance  
– If deliberately imposed –  
Diminish the humanity of us all,  
Crucifying the Body of Christ.*

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<sup>19</sup> Eph 4: 25

*To humanize – and thus Christianize – our history  
We must actively enter into it.  
By valuing each other's past,  
By empathizing with each other's present ...  
We can humanize our future together!  
By co-ordinating resources, co-opting intelligence  
And co-visioning goodwill and togetherness,  
We empower our humanity to fulfilment, in Christ,  
Christ ... its source, its growth, its glory!*

*The inhumanities people visit upon each other  
Ought energize our humanity to respond,  
As would Christ, our brother –  
To let the Word raise the questions to be asked,  
To become Eucharist, broken for our brothers and sisters,  
To be transformed together, in Jesus' Paschal Spirit ...  
To be drawn together in communion,  
To celebrate our humanity – old and new – together ...  
Victims and offenders becoming one Humanity to Christ,  
Becoming Lamb of God to any 'lion',  
Inviting these gentled lions into our sheepfold,  
So as to love one another, as Jesus loves us,  
To be human like Christ.*

## The Free, Fast Gift of Forgiveness<sup>20</sup>

*We receive ourselves, as gift, from others – the Other.  
Deep self-worth and identity arrive with forgiveness:  
Our awareness of the depth of our sinfulness  
Comes painfully alive  
In the love of others – of the Other  
... From a graced awareness  
Whose seed is sourced, in God Within.*

*To face our sinfulness, apart from God,  
Is always destructive: never renewing.  
But, shame and confusion ARE part of its journey  
... Which, without God,  
Surely end in grief and, ultimately, in death  
... The death of a dream, a relationship, or a life.  
Yet, the free, fast gift of forgiveness  
Replaces all with God's warm, enlivening Presence.*

*Still, forgiveness for limited man, is conversion by degrees:  
We do not easily surrender  
All of our heart, all at once.  
We do not even see most of our shadows ...  
And so, subconsciously,  
We hesitate, we qualify, we waver.  
Yet our loving God,  
Who designed us,  
'Does not break the crushed reed  
Nor quench the wavering flame.'<sup>21</sup>*

*The surpassing love of others, of the Other, DRAWS US,  
Time after time, into the Paschal journey:  
We enter  
Heads bowed and humbled,  
With Christ, into death:  
Easter forgiveness, its victory over sin,  
Turns life into wonder, thanks and praise!...  
'Bring to mind all that the Lord has done for you'.<sup>22</sup>*

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<sup>20</sup> Rome Tertianship, Nov 1991

<sup>21</sup> Is 42: 3, Mt 12: 20

<sup>22</sup> Psalm 105: 5

*Forgiveness, in its re-orientation of our spirit,  
Always invites our active engagement.  
If passive, we 'show little love' for Jesus' sacrifice; <sup>23</sup>  
Indeed, not to depth our humiliation, our self de-humanization,  
Is, to underestimate sin's addictiveness, and potency for chaos,  
– To take God's death for nothing,  
– To devalue God's glorifying in our humanity,  
– To make light of God's Eternal Love!  
The simple need is to empty our hearts of wilfulness,  
To deeply, deeply TRUST in Abba's limitless love,  
And gently, tenderly,  
Allow ourselves to be lifted into Life  
By Love.*

## The Spirit of Eucharist <sup>24</sup>

*For the disciple of Jesus,  
To receive His Spirit,  
Is to receive –*

*A new zest for life*

*A new empowerment*

*A new confidence*

*A new sense of accompaniment!*

*A new direction in life,*

*A new courage,*

*A new sense of purpose,*

*In Jesus' affirming presence,*

*They experience –*

*Being companioned,*

*Being brothered,*

*Being gathered*

*Together in harmony,*

*To CELEBRATE*

*Their constant renewal through His Presence*

*... Most especially in Eucharist!*

*This is PERSONIFIED*

*In the Spirit of Eucharist,*

*Who INTEGRATES*

*Their ongoing renewal in Jesus' brothering presence*

*Within the CORE life-realities*

*Of*

*SERVICE, SUFFERING, and SACRIFICE.*

## The Well's Depths <sup>25</sup>

*A contemplation on 'the water in the WELL' of Jn 5 ...*

*To look at a dim reflection of myself  
On the mirrored surface, of this divinely deep pool,  
Is to glimpse the truth of my own deep being.  
It is to experience myself, in my origins,  
In the EMBRACE, of the depths of God:  
– Of Abba,  
Who, lovingly and boundlessly,  
Fathers me into Life;  
– Of Jesus Ascended,  
Who brothers me with deep peace,  
And with the most heartfelt affection;  
– Of Loyce,  
Their Spirit ...  
Rising, soaring, free within,  
Integrating all I am, and all WE are together!*

*To brighten my dim reflection, Christ, humanity's shining light,  
Needs to shine, more transparently, WITHIN me!  
When this happens, Abba catches sight of His Beloved,  
Joying in the wonder of His love!  
Out of Their encounter,  
Arises an INVITATION to me  
... Not only to drink of its depths,  
But to PLUNGE,  
Heart first,  
Into the depths of God ...*

## Jesus <sup>26</sup>

*Jesus, so loving, so lovable  
I embody You as brother,  
So as to love You, in the other.*

*Beloved Jesus, when I drink water,  
I'm quenched by You, our Living Water!  
Beloved Jesus, when I eat bread,  
I hunger for You, our Bread of Life!  
Beloved Jesus, when I drink wine,  
I can taste Your own blood, poured out for us ...  
Loving Jesus, when I search for a way out of confusion,  
I find it in You, our Truth.  
Loving Jesus, when I sorrow for a person who's victimized,  
I feel for You, our Lamb of God, on Calvary.  
Lovable Jesus, when I long for inspiration,  
I'm surprised by You, Light to our world!  
Lovable Jesus, when I ache for friendship and community,  
I discover it in You, the Vine, life for us branches!  
Lovable Jesus, when I long for excitement in life,  
I rejoice in You, Source of Life! Vitality itself!*

*O Jesus, Beloved and Lover –  
When I stray in life, You're at my side, a compassionate shepherd.  
When I'm captivated by the beautiful, I delight in You, life's Ecstasy!  
When I apologize, I'm raised up in You, cheek to cheek with Abba ...  
When I suffer for others, I'm nailed with You, O Crucified Love!  
When we love, with Your love, we become the loving family  
Of Your loving Father!*

## Lives Wedded <sup>27</sup>

*Jesus Ascended so yearns to share  
Who He's become for us,  
He instinctively leads us  
On every occasion to His Father  
... To Their Embrace in the Spirit,  
So that each successive invitation  
Draws us, AS FAMILY,  
To accept Abba's love,  
In an ever deepening experience.*

*As blooms opening to the sun,  
We become exquisitely conscious  
From Jesus' personal tenderness and care ...  
Of our own glaring selfishness,  
Of our sin's need to be nailed with Him,  
... So that we are raised up and empowered  
– Wounds made whole, lives wedded,  
As sons in the Son, daughters of Abba!*

*Eager to share Abba's Ascensional Embrace,  
... With those receptive to Love's Gift ...  
Jesus Ascended overwhelms us,  
With a brother's exhilaration,  
As His Spirit creates in us:  
... Hearts bursting with wonder,  
... Voices stilled, in awe,  
... Lives opened in thankfulness.*



## Eternally Called<sup>28</sup>

*Our first call,  
Our first 'Come follow me' echoing within,  
Our first invitation to share God's Eternity,  
Is my call from nothingness into existence!  
It is the fashioning of my 'I'  
... The loving fashioning of my parents' contributions  
Into God's own Image!  
But ...  
So surpassing is the love of Abba's creative heart,  
That His love OVERFLOWS  
– To fashioning a dwelling place  
For the Eternal Persons Themselves,  
In the heart of our spirit!*

*This dwelling place is subliminal to our consciousness  
– Beyond any dream we'd ever have!  
This Presence becomes real through faith,  
... Also God's OWN gift!  
Entry is only with, and in, the crucified Jesus of Glory  
... Be that known or unknown.  
Within our spirit,  
Christ's Calvary Spirit is creative ...  
Both of the healing of our sinfulness,  
And of our very desire to seek union with God ...*

*Our homecoming to the Eternal Presence within,  
Is a Calvary journey  
Into the heart of our own spirit.  
HERE, human fulfilment needs be  
What it was in Jesus  
– Total surrender of any human possibilities to Abba.  
It is complete openness to, and complete mutuality with,  
Our Creator's desire for us.  
Love, eternally offered,  
Embraces us in Jesus, with Fatherly tenderness  
Breathing forth, in the joy and peace of the Ascension,  
Their Eternal Spirit.*

*This journeying to the God of our spirit,  
Is not taken consciously or unconsciously:  
It is BEYOND all human capability or effort  
– Active or passive.*

*It is PURE gift,  
ALWAYS.*

*Any 'sense' of it, is dependent only  
On God's Eternal Graciousness.*

*It can never be EXPRESSED  
Other than through metaphor:  
Retaining sunshine in our hands  
Would be a far easier human achievement!*

*Simply, we are asked to constantly call to mind,  
This most wondrous of all gifts  
– That God, within our hearts,  
Who called us into being,  
Calls us NOW, into ...  
Eternal Intimacy, Fellowship and Family Life!*

## Finger to the Button <sup>29</sup>

*Human nature is deeply ORIENTED TO GOOD*

*– Eternally so;*

*And, in extremis,*

*It is not so much evil or revenge*

*That would be the real impetus*

*To press the nuclear button*

*... But the far more ambivalent force*

*– Fear.*

*Only the human heart, seized by FEAR,*

*Would guide our finger to the button.*

*Evil or revenge only gain root*

*From fear of suspected others*

*Or, worse,*

*From fear of faceless others.*

*Trust removes fear:*

*Trust first begets courage to FACE fear,*

*Then begets compassion to heal wounds;*

*This mutuality gives birth to peace-seeking hearts*

*... Who walk the road to harmony,*

*And, with deeper trust,*

*Both value and love*

*Those they once feared!*

## Overwhelmed! <sup>30</sup>

*There's no human reason  
For the boundlessness,  
For the unconditionality,  
Of God's love for us;  
It makes no human sense.*

*We can't stop God's love,  
We can't change its character,  
We certainly can't earn this love  
– Even with our most loving behaviour.*

*The incomparability of God's Mysterious Love,  
Its depthless goodness, and utter beauty ...  
Overwhelm us! Conquer us!  
Transform us! Divinize us!  
Our only response is wonder ...  
With the deepest thankfulness ...*

