

Folio Two

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Our Utterly Selfless Brother ¹

'The life of man upon earth is a warfare,' Scripture insists. ²

Nowhere is it more a warfare than WITHIN US

– The warfare see-sawing between our stark selfishness

And our longing to be like Jesus

... The truly best of human beings

... And our utterly selfless brother.

This warfare surges to and fro –

Between loving with integrity, and lusting;

Between being warmly open-hearted, and being possessive and greedy;

Between empowering others, and centring all on self;

Between being caring and forgiving, and being spiteful and hard-hearted;

Between Christian social responsibility, and self-absorbed irresponsibility.

This warfare ought to sensitize us

To the Christian realization

That 'I am a sinner'

– That is, I always love imperfectly, yet need constantly to imitate Jesus;

I am attracted by sin but find it never satisfies;

I cannot trust my own strength while avoiding sin.

I therefore NEED

Christ's divinely human strength

Because Jesus is, at the same time

Both all-LOVING and all-EMPOWERING!

¹ Written at St Brendan's boarding College, Yeppoon, 1971

² Job 7:1 (Douay-Rheims)

A Graced Change of Heart³

*With sin, our hearts close in,
Focussing on our self ... or on one or other of God's creatures
– Failing to stay open to the WHOLE of life
To ALL God is for us!*

*With a graced change of heart,
We apologize to the Father of Love,
For our attempts to LIMIT His love.*

*Then, with hearts hopefully opened to the Spirit's Presence,
We set ourselves to re-imitate Jesus
– Both in the wonderfully integrating relationship with His Father,
And in His open, inclusive human relationships
... Ever mindful
That all such caring, healing life-choices
Are, always, gifts of the Spirit.*

³ Written at St Brendan's boarding College, Yeppoon 1971

The Transcending Gift of Presence ⁴

*Our own human spirit
Is that dimension of us whereby we share
In the deep personal presence of others
... Such that we entertain each other's spirit,
And, thus, numerous spirits together
– All timeless, spaceless realities –*

WITHIN our spirit.

Thus, our spirit allows us

TO BE

Our inner selves, within others

And they, within us.

*And, superlatively, transcendingly,
In a unique and transformative way
Father, Son and Spirit share Their Presence with us
In the deepest centre of our spirit.*

They do so, utterly and completely,

Offering us

ALL WHO THEY ARE TOGETHER.

*For our part, we embody our spirit's response
To Their Presence within*

By humbly acknowledging, ALWAYS –

That all the graces we receive in this Encounter,

That all our own responses to Their Presence,

Are GIFTS

– Love's sheer, unconditional gifts of love,

Gifts, wondrously accompanied

By the Giver of the gifts!

And marvellously, this Presence, these gifts,

Enhance and dignify us

Through the whole of our life

... 'Grace unto grace' ⁵

'Until we become, humanly, fully mature in Christ' ⁶

⁴ Written at St Brendan's boarding College, Yeppoon 1972

⁵ Jn 1:16

⁶ Eph 1:13

Indwelling Our Whole Reality ⁷

*Father, Son and Spirit, dwelling within us
– And inviting us to dwell, ever more deeply, with them –
Are, Mysteriously, forever beyond –
The reach of our touch,
The reach of our imagination,
The reach of our emotions,
The reach of our thinking,
The reach of our will
... Eluding all human efforts
To initiate or to control Their Presence.*

*However, even unchurched, our spirits can reach Them
Through prayer
... Graced prayer ...
Or, by sharing Their silence with Them.
By drawing us, within ourselves,
To Their silent centre,
They allow us to somehow sense
Their Presence
As They rejoice in Their Love for each other,
And for us, in Christ.*

*Wondrously, moreover, Father, Son and Spirit
... Knowing our inability to initiate any Encounter,
Also choose lovingly to DRAW us to Themselves
In a persuasive, exterioralized way
– In an outpouring of generosity –
Through Their historical self-revelation in the Scriptures,
And in Their Covenant of Election and Obligation.*

*Then, astoundingly, in a divine deluge of love,
Father, Son and Spirit
Step so decisively into our lives
... That Their Covenant of Calvary, Church and Indwelling Intimacy,
Divides our history into two ...
Around the Person of Jesus Christ
– The Sacrament of Their presence in the world.*

⁷ Written at St Brendan's boarding College, Yeppoon 1972

*Now bodying Their Presence to us through His Church,
Their overwhelming choice of Encounter
Is to gather a People together, within Their Paschal Mystery,
Through the Ascended Jesus' loving sacramental ACTIONS
... All within the encompassing sacrament of His Church.*

*Superlatively They draw us, through the Eucharist
– Into a co-enactment
Of the WHOLE Paschal Mystery
... Culminating
In our adoption as brothers and sisters
Of the Ascended Jesus
– Through His sharing of the Paschal Spirit with us.*

*This Uplifting to the divine
Usbers in a new era for our humanity
– Individually and communally –
Wherein the Trinity of Love's
New deeply PERSONALIZED indwelling
Makes us 'sharers in the divine nature'.⁸*

⁸ 2 Pet 1:4

A Wedding Made in Heaven⁹

*Rationally, within marriage, for each to LIMIT their sharing
To a pledged 50% contribution*

... So a sense of wholeness and oneness can be arrived at ...

Can be very persuasive.

However, the folly of this earnest arrangement,

Jesus suggests,

Can be easily demonstrated:

For, as each gives 50%,

An obvious 50% is retained for one's self

– A clear recipe for a contentious, self-focussed marriage.

No, Jesus' wisdom enjoins each to give 100%

– Each to surrender themselves FULLY to the other –

Whereby 'the two shall become one' ...

For 'they are no longer two, but one body'.¹⁰

Husband and wife are united WITHIN

... Through Jesus' Spirit of Love

Because, being a SACRAMENTAL action of God,

Marriage is an enabling sign of Christ's UNITIVE PRESENCE.

This enabling Unitive Presence

Is that Face of the Paschal Mystery

Wherein the Ascended Jesus draws to Himself,

In deepest intimacy,

An ever-assembling Church, as His glorious BRIDE.

⁹ Written at St Brendan's boarding College, 1972

¹⁰ Mt 19: 5-6

A Time for Choice ¹¹

There is a natural developmental time
– *Around seventeen or eighteen years*
 For most –
For a primal religious choice to present itself
... *With one's capacity then sufficiently developed*
To minimally grasp or at least sense –
 What it means to transcend time
 ... *To be eternal,*
 What it means to be
 All loving,
 All empowering,
 With a universal reach,
 With a heart truly open to all.

For some of these ...
 This natural development,
 Together with personal receptivity to Grace,
 Allows them, much more really, to CHOOSE CHRIST
 – *The Christ who enters our history,*
 And who draws it and our renewed humanity,
 ... *Into the centre of eternity,*
 Into the heart of God.

These young adults,
 By allowing their identities to be merged with Christ's,
 Come to share in His trans-historical consciousness,
 And, more wondrously, to share in His Paschal humanity's
 Eternalizing experience of God's Embrace.

There are those, of course, who stall in their natural development
– *Becoming locked in a mid-teen's limited spiritual horizons,*
– *Or allowing their spirit's opening to the eternal*
 To be stifled
 ... *By their confining life-choices.*

¹¹ Written at St Brendan's boarding College, Yeppoon 1972

*And, further, there are those who baulk
At the deeper level, unwilling to surrender their identity
To Christ :
Unable to welcome Christ to live His LIFE in them,
Unable to choose to live their life in Him.*

*In the face of all this,
Faithful spirits
Open their hearts WIDER STILL
To draw in
The grace of sweet surrender to Christ
FOR OTHERS
... All others
— So all can move
Into the full flowering
Of both their natural and Paschally graced,
Humanity.*

Being Human is Being Kind ¹²

*In opening to the fullness of being human,
Jesus acted justly, loved tenderly,
And walked humbly with His God. ¹³
Jesus continues to love His humanity
And loves to walk with us as a fellow human being
... For this is His cherished yearning
— To brother us
As sons and daughters of the same wondrous Father.*

*Jesus came to show us
That being-of-our-kind
Is the CORE REASON
For our being KIND to each other.
As the perfect human,
Jesus radiated human kindness
... Showing us what it is to be essentially human.*

Jesus highlighted

- *How those who sin are UNKIND
Being what they ought not be ... un-human, inhumane.*
- *How those who WANT to be unkind,
Want to be NOT OF OUR KIND
... That is, a loner, a self-centred individual.*
- *How to be KIND
Is to be a loving family person,
To be like Himself
... The Father's BELOVED Son
... The focus of the Divine Family.*

*Most crucially, Jesus showed with His life,
That He died FOR OUR KIND,
So we became 'members of one another', ¹⁴
- One of a KIND ! KIND like Him!*

¹² Written at St Brendan's boarding College, Yeppoon 1972

¹³ Micah 6:8

¹⁴ Eph 4:25

Die My Sins¹⁵

Die my sins with Christ! O die!
Die my sins with Christ ... O Christ!
Pained, contorting, crucified –
With You.

Thrust them into hell, O Christ :
In the furnace of Your great torment
Let die –
All my crass desires – yes, all!
Sear self to its roots – O, yes ...
Die my sins with Christ – entomb!
Leave – just what ought to be, within ...
Christen what remains; Enthuse!
Then ... Smile ...

Rise through pain with You, and vow
Never! – sin again: God's Death –
Prevent!

Brace me with Your strength – renew;
O Spirit me Yourself, O Christ,
Breathe forth into me – not smite!
Brother all to me: blood of Yours ...

Mary, Mother us: Lings, Browns, Bantus too
Enfold ...
Christ's will's tongue's hand, we'll be!
Soon – Spirit us away; no – stop:
Here! Work!

Within us form Your Christ, O Spirit ...
That the Father see in us, HIS Son –
And do what's His to do –
Father children ...
Glory!
Yes! God .. Is .. Family ...
O Torrents of Joy, O Rivers of Peace –
O God – O God – O God
Our God

¹⁵ Written at St Brendan's boarding College, Yepoon 1972

Of the Teenage Christ ¹⁶

*O Holy Spirit of the Father and Christ,
Living deep within me,
Shine forth through my thoughts and words and actions,
So that they may become for others
– The thoughts and words and actions
Of the teenage Christ.*

*Strengthen me to respect others' feelings,
Their reputations and property,
To be pure in my friendships
And to respect myself as a home for You,
The Spirit of the Father and Christ. ¹⁷*

¹⁶ Written at St Joseph's College community, Gregory Terrace, 1973

¹⁷ One of six prayer-poems (29-34) composed which, with other prayers, formed a booklet for morning prayer for mid-Secondary classes which the author taught in the '70's and '80's. Some changes were made to the prayer-poems through the years.

A Teenager's Prayer to Mary¹⁸

*Mary, virgin, Mother of God:
Let us be wholehearted in our service of God.*

*Mary, Mother of our Redeemer:
Keep us loyal to Your Son.*

*Mary, favourite daughter of the Father:
Form in us, a true respect for girls.*

*Mary, temple of the Holy Spirit:
Let me also respect myself as His temple.*

*Mary, Mother of Jesus the man:
Let me respect ALL of humanity:
Black and white, rich and poor,
Successful and unsuccessful,
Winners and losers.*

¹⁸ Written for teenagers at St Joseph's College community, Gregory Terrace, 1973

Prayer in Paschaltime¹⁹

*Jesus, by Your having become God-Man,
I thank You
For wanting to carry the guilt of my sins,
For being the model of our humanity.*

*Jesus, by Your Death,
Do to death
My sins of thought, of speech, my sinful actions;
Strengthen me in temptation.*

*Jesus, by Your Resurrection,
Revitalize me with Your Life,
The Life of a loving Son.
Form in me a new relationship to Creation.*

*Jesus, by Your Ascension,
In Your glorious re-newed humanity,
Unite us to Your Father
... Winning for us Your Spirit of Love.*

*Jesus, by Your Bestowal of the Spirit,
Let us shine forth that Spirit in our lives
– To form communities of love,
And my own family of love.*

*Father of Jesus,
Father us, as You Father Your Son
... With Your promised Gift,
The same Spirit of Love,
The Seal of our adoption
– Given to Him, for us!*

¹⁹ Written for teenagers at St Joseph's College community, Gregory Terrace, 1973

Apology to God²⁰

*Lord Jesus Christ, I apologize and beg pardon
For my sins and failures.
I detest them, because I bring about for myself
... Eternal loneliness and misery in hell,
Because they have crucified You, my loving Saviour,
And, most of all, because they represent
My failure, in love, for You,
And my lack of concern for my neighbour.*

²⁰ Written for teenagers at St Joseph's College community, Gregory Terrace, 1973

Eucharistic Thanksgiving²¹

*Most loving Abba,*²²
Father of tenderness and compassion,
Fathering us within everlasting love,
We thank You for Your wonderful Gift
... The fulfilment of every human heart
— Jesus, Your Beloved, whom You love indescribably
— Jesus, our Way of Love, the Truth of love, our Life of Love.

*Jesus, lover of life,*²³
Reveal this love of life to me.
Because of my deeply rooted failings
Be my Saviour again.
Renew my joy in Your Presence
... So that I may truly glorify
And bear God in my body.
Because, brother Jesus, You do not redeem us
From our weaknesses but IN our weaknesses ...
Bring me to accept who I am in Your sight now,
And help me to bear my cross daily and follow You.
Let Your Presence blossom in the fullness of Your Spirit.

²¹ Written for teenagers at St Joseph's College community, Gregory Terrace 1973

²² 'Abba' – a later editing, see note on Poem 40

²³ Wis 11: 26 (JB)

*Holy Spirit of Abba and Jesus,
Gentle comforter in the heart,
Stir my heart to accept
With deep humility and yearning
... You, O wondrous Gift of Love
Help me to surrender myself wholly,
Through Jesus to Abba.
Flood Jesus' love for Abba into my heart,
And thus into the hearts of others.
Empower with Your guidance, Your peace and Your joy
All those who have a special claim on my love.
May you be the Praise of Abba's Glory within me. ²⁴*

Use Me to Make You Loved²⁵

*Jesus, may Your Spirit
Use me, to make You loved
– That my life may radiate Yours
... Even through my failures.
I need Your help, Jesus,
Your special brothering.
The world needs Your light.
May I so live
That I become a light for others,
Leading them to You
– ‘The way, the truth and the life.’²⁶*

²⁵ Written for teenagers at St Joseph’s College community, Gregory Terrace, 1973

²⁶ Jn 14:6

Any One of God's Faces²⁷

Any one of God's faces

Is the face of any other:

Be it giving, receiving, freeing ...

Be it loving, choosing, creating.

Because the Father, Jesus and the Spirit

Share all these AS ONE ...

They are utterly poor, utterly rich,

Utterly dependent on each other,

Yet utterly free.

They are creatively loving,

Yet lovingly creative.

They are communally divine

Yet divinely personal.

²⁷ Written at St Joseph's College community, Gregory Terrace, 1975

Our Loving God²⁸

*Our loving God,
Father, Son and Spirit,
ATTRACTS US
To what is of Them
... As it is beautied forth in every creature.*

Careful, lest we be captivated by the creature

*Our graced destiny
Is to allow ourselves
To be ATTRACTED
By our adorable, irresistibly beautiful God
... To behold ... to experience ...
The life-centering BEAUTY
Of Their ecstatic Communing together.*

²⁸ Written at St Joseph's College community Gregory Terrace, 1975

I Am Not My Own²⁹

*I love You, my beloved Jesus,
I love You more than myself ...
Because I am not my own
But Yours!
I repent for ever having offended You,
Because You
Are so good!
Never permit me
To separate myself from You again;
Grant that I may love You always,
And then do with me
As You desire ...*

²⁹ Written at Clairveaux College Community, Mount Gravatt 1976.

I was Deputy Headmaster in the mornings and three days a week, from noon into night, attended the University of Queensland for a two-year Master of Literary Studies.

A Freedom, Enshrined Eternally³⁰

Human nature cannot be fully explained:

It is forever OPEN

– To the Presence of God!

Moreover, while humanity's core and dignity are unchanging

– Even if not fully explicable –

We do change, in areas that are open

To human freedom

... A freedom, enshrined, Eternally

Within the freeing will of God.

³⁰ Written at Clairveaux College Community, Mount Gravatt, 1977

At the Service of the Community³¹

Call to mind ...

One can only gift one's spouse, one's friend

With a gift of love

That is birthed in the heart of a community.

To complete the cycle,

Such love always needs, ultimately,

To be at the SERVICE

Of the community

... 'So that ALL may be one'.³²

³¹ Written at St Patrick's College community, Mackay, 1978. I was the College Deputy Headmaster

³² Jn 17: 22

Call Me, Gift Me, Send Me ³³

(AS FROM JESUS ... AND BECAUSE OF OUR ADOPTION... FROM US, IN HIM)

O Abba,
CALL me, through Your Spirit,
That I may continue to seek Your Presence
Al through each day and night,
With whoever I am with
... Always discovering You in the present moment.

O Abba,
GIFT me with Your Spirit,
That I may ever be reconciled with You ...
Dwelling in the heart of the family or community,
And accompany You in each wounded person.

O Abba,
SEND me ... Your Spirit
– To move me to worship You
... Dwelling in the heart of a group
Gathered in Your name;
And in every open-hearted individual.
With the Spirit's prompting,
Move me, further,
To serve and tend to You,
IN them.

³³ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980
The National Tertianship was held at Vaughan College from January through to March 1980, and comprised a group of same-aged Brothers from across Oceania. The author was aged 37 and wrote: 'This was a watershed course in two ways (1) God's key gift to me – 'God first loves me in every instance i.e., loving God is only ever a response to God's initiative and (2) I began from this time in my life to address the Father AS JESUS DID – in the second person, with the familiar 'Abba'.