

Folio Twenty-Three

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As for an Only Son ¹

(The reader speaks :)

*Companioning You, Jesus,
In Your journey into agony,
... Moving down from the supper room
Under the pinnacle of the Temple ...
I feel your deep sadness for all sinners,
Your depthless empathy for all sin's victims.
As we trudge slowly up the Kedron valley
 To the garden of olives,
 This heavy-hearted pilgrimage
 Is there in every season of every life –
 – As a new call for each one's life :
Inviting each to be ONE with You, O Suffering Servant !*

*The call is to lament, and “to mourn, as for an only son” ²
 – For all those lives, dislocated by sin,
 – For all, whose hearts, burdened by sin,
 Wander ... LOST ... through life,
 Looking for love ...
 For a loving Abba's embrace.*

¹ Poem 440 Day 20, Douglas Park, 30 Day Retreat, Sydney, Aug 24th 2001.

² Am 8:10

Thoughts Laid Bare ¹

*Following Jesus, as He was led, a captive,
Before the High Priest,
Peter tries hard, to meld with the attendants, around their fire.
And while Jesus is physically struck
For speaking His Truth,
Peter “bursts into tears” for tragically disowning ²
This same Word of Truth—the light of his life!*

*Later, after the High Priest soldiers spit upon and mock Jesus
... Futilely trying to blindfold “the Light of the world” ... ³
He, who is to liberate all humanity,
Is BOUND, and bundled off to Pilate !
There, He is dressed in imperial purple and crowned with vicious briars,
– So as to mock and devalue His Kingship
... Just as surely as they devalue their won worth, in doing so.*

*A vulnerable Pilate then parades Jesus before a mindless crowd,
Manipulated by the underlings of some of the Chief Priests,
Who brazenly DEMAND –
“The Law wants Him dead
– As the Passover’s communal victim, in our stead :
Sacrifice this “Son of God” ! ⁴
This scapegoating declaration, denigrating Jesus’ Divinity,
Alarms the superstitious Pilate.*

*Moreover, Jesus’ persistent SILENCE to his questioning,
Intensifies Pilate’s panic !
This, combined with the priestly rejection
Of Jesus’ kingship, for that of Caesar’s,
Forces Pilate into his own scapegoating tactics ...
He’s all yours – your “victim” to dispatch :
Do with Him as you will! ⁵*

*The crowd, and its Chief Priest protagonists,
Now, themselves, become captives – of their “own secret thoughts, laid bare” : ⁶
With lives BOUND tight, by the Law
They become ever more tightly BOUND
By their COMMUNAL SIN, of seeking to crucify Jesus
... To NAIL the Free One to the tree.*

*Yet within three days
He, whom they thought
Was BOUND BY DEATH,*

*Releases His Spirit of Freedom
Into the lives of all, BOUND by sin,
Freeing them across all ages,
Freeing each, from WITHIN,
Drawing all together.*

1 Poem 441 Day 21 Douglas Park, 30 Day Retreat, Sydney, Aug 25th 2001.

2 Lk 22:62

3 Jn 8:12

4 Lk 22:70

5 Cf Lk 23:25

6 Lk 2:35

I Am ... Every Person ¹

(Every reader to Jesus :)

Jesus, truly to varying degrees,

I am, in conscience,

EVERY PERSON in the unfolding drama

Of Your Passion and Death –

Peter, and each Temple priest,

Pilate, and his foreboding wife,

Herod, and the beloved disciple, John,

Each Roman and Jewish soldier,

Every member of the mindless crowd,

Calvary's centurion, and its 'nail-man',

The weeping women on the way,

The women standing by the Cross,

Mary, Your Mother and Co-sufferer,

And, above all – YOU.

Humanity's Springtime ¹

Jesus,
On this stark, flint-hard, leafless timber
We hang You.
But ...
Your inner warmth,
Your radiant light within,
Causes buds to swell
– Green globules, promising life –
Bursting into blossom, in Easter's brightness,
Flush with Divine Vitality !
Yes Jesus – You are our spring ! ²
Humanity's Springtime !
Alive with the LIFE of God !

¹ Poem 443. Day 21, Douglas Park, 30 Day Retreat, Sydney, Aug 25th 2001

² "Lent" as a word, means 'spring'. The Passover arrives typically, at the first full flush of spring.

Under the Olive Trees ¹

(Jesus, in Gethsemane, to Abba :)

O Abba !
Remember ME, look on ME :
For 'WE' have sinned against You,
And broken Your commandments ;
And You have given us over
To be plundered to captivity
– To death ! ²

So now do with me, as You will !
If You will, take my life from me :
I desire to be delivered from earth ³
And to BECOME EARTH again.' ⁴

You are blessed, O God of Compassion !
May Your Name be blessed for ever,
And may all things You have made
Bless You everlastingly ! ⁵

You have consecrated me
With Your Spirit ;
Chosen me as Your Beloved :
To be prophet to Your people,
To bring Your Justice to all hearts.
From now, I am a hidden gently voice,
No longer heard in public,
Comforting those crushed in spirit,
Keeping their flame alight.
I long to be a faithful witness to Your Justice :
Steadfast in Your light !
Moved by Your Spirit !
... Until Your Justice finds a home
In all hearts – especially in those
Who long to see Your Face.

*Blessed Father of all that lives !
You created our spirits, and set them free !
You give us the earth and its fruit,
You breathe life into our hearts,
And give life to all that lives !*

(Abba replies to Jesus, in Gethsemane :)

*Beloved Son,
I ask You to restore my people
To their inheritance.
I will companion You, through it all,
Conforming Your life, to Mine.*

*I Abba, have chosen You
To be the New Covenant of My Love,
The One who will
– Enlighten darkened hearts
– Give the blind new eyes
– Free those held captive
– And release those
Who live in death's shadow.*

*I am Your life's fountain ...
All Your vitality comes from Me,
No honour but Mine to give.
All Your trust is rewarded :
I will speak a new Word
Within Your heart
... Good News that RENEWS
... A New Song that GIVES LIFE !*

1 Poem 444. Day 21, Douglas Park 30 Day Retreat, Sydney, Aug 25th 2001

2 This Stanza relies strongly on TOB 3: 3, 4

3 This Stanza relies strongly on TOB 3: 5, 6

4 This phrase has a strong resonances with 'adam' (Heb.) and 'humanus' (L.)
– Both meaning 'earth' ...Thus Paul's 'New Adam', and Paul's 'New Humanity'.

5 This Stanza relies strongly on TOB 3: 11

6 The body of this poem onwards, relies lightly, on Is 42: 1-9

Detached ¹

The grace I ask for – is to be
DETACHED FROM EITHER ...
Being singled out, or unnoticed
Having my voice heard, or unheard
Hearing good news, or bad
Viewing what delights, or dissatisfies
Enjoying what pleases, or displeases
Sensing what stimulates, or bores
Being thanked, or taken for granted.

DETACHED FROM EITHER ...
Feeling being loved, or unloved
Feeling loving, or unloving
Feeling free, or full of fears
Feeling satisfied, or upset
Feeling integrated, or 'at sea'
Feeling enthusiastic, or unmotivated
Feeling appreciated, or blamed
Feeling creative, or uninspired.

DETACHED FROM EITHER ...
The new, or the old
The difficult, or the easy
The past, or the future
Success, or failure
Owning this, or that

*Living in this room, or that
Preferring this process, or that.*

DETACHED FROM EITHER ...

*This friend, or that
This priest or parish, or that
This spirituality, or that
This sacrifice or suffering, or that
This consolation, or that
This form of prayer, or that
This life-path, or that
This Presence of God, or that.*

Only this is needed :

To ACCEPT forgiveness

To FORGIVE warmly

To AVOID what's bad

To SEEK what's good

To ACT justly

LOVE tenderly

WALK humbly

With our God.

The Way to Life ¹

(Jesus :)

*As I accept this cross, this yoke of sin,
I feel sin's intense weight press down on me :
While You, Abba, sense YOUR PEOPLE'S palpable sighs of relief!
I fall under sin's deceptively heavy burden :
Yet You, Abba, KNOW YOUR PEOPLE will now rise again !*

*As I accept, with trust, Simon's offered help,
Your people also accept, with love, their feeling of being rescued.
Thus, I pray reassurance to the weeping women,
Urging them now to focus on their own and their children's needs.*

*I fall again ... sin tempting me to stay down :
Your love – their hope – urges me to rise.
I flinch as sin bares my dignity to the crowd :
You exult in THEIR future dignity, as Your children !*

*I clench my teeth as sin hammers nails into my raw flesh :
Oh! How You yearn to fully heal Your People's wounds!
As I shudder in pain, to take my "upright" weight on the cross –
You rejoice that THEY'LL walk upright in Your Home again !*

*To you, my people, gathered around this cross ... I say,
My true home is with Abba – to him I am returning ;
To YOU I leave Our Spirit of Love :
This Gift of Ours, will truly reveal Our Love for you,*

*And will form in you ... hopeful, faithful, joy-filled hearts.
I'm always murmuring to Abba, how much faith you need ...
Be certain : that all your battles with Satan, have ALREADY been won !
So, keep close to your heart, Our Promise ...
"Our Spirit is always to be with you."*

*Dearest Abba, You shelter me within Your love ...
As beloved son, You make me Your confidante,
You bolster my courage and confidence,
Calling me to be Your 'servant' and 'restorer' of Your People.*

*You send me to gather all of them to myself ²
So, IN me, You make them Your Light to this world
– To comfort the weary,
– To enliven those who falter.*

*Abba, You're always by my side – an inner companion :
I entrust all I am to You ...
I surrender the hopes and lives of ALL, to Your loving embrace.
I breathe out my last breath for them ...
IN my last breath to You,
Father of us all!*

1 Poem 446 Day 22, Douglas Park, 30 Day Retreat, Sydney, Aug 26th 2001.

2 Jn 12 : 32

Every Morning ¹

*Jesus Ascended,
Every morning You renew us
Encompassing us
Within Your Paschal intimacy, in Eucharist
... Reaffirming Abba's Covenant Love for us.*

*How wondrous Your faithfulness !
Truly, You are our inheritance !
With You, our spirits sing Your Risen Song
Of our New Uplifted Humanity
– Your rapturous Ascension's Song of Love to Abba !
Breathed forth in the Spirit ...
Your – our – Humanity,
Radiant with the same Spirit !*

A Glimmer of God ¹

*In His first Embodiment,
Jesus reveals Himself, initially,
In an infinitesimal glimmer
Of cellular light,
Within Mary ...
To become the most luminous of human beings
– The pinnacle of the first Creation !*

*In His second Embodiment,
God's Paschal Glory
Blazes forth from Jesus' very PERSON
Transforming ALL personal relationships,
Beginning the transfiguration of the universe itself –
Becoming the personification of the Second Creation of Humanity.
Wondrously, "in Him, we are claimed as God's own !" ²
... "Stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit of the Promise." ³*

1 Poem 448 Day 23, Douglas Park, 30 Day Retreat, Sydney, Aug 27th 2001

2 Eph 1: 11

3 Eph 1 : 13

O Spirit of Detachment ¹

*Abba, grant me serenity in detachment.
Make my life, in all things, MODERATE
– Save for LOVE, and FREEDOM –
... So as to reverence Your Centering Presence,
And to reflect this to others.*

*Thus, O Spirit of Detachment, MOVE me –
From self-indulgent choices, to rejoicing continuously in Abba ;
From a self-gratifying attitude, to loving to PLEASE Abba alone ;
From subtly angling to have the focus return to self ...
To ensuring the entire focus of our life is Abba !*

*Also, O Spirit of Detachment, re-shape my heart :
From a secular, libertarian, open-endedness
... “Some is good, more is better : let the free, choose freely,”
To Christian self-denial, that seeks to have Abba
CENTRE both our consciousness, and our very being –
“Some is good, more according to the rhythm of need”
... Especially of the primal human need to ACCEPT
That ALL we experience and are, comes from God
The Serene Centre of WHO WE ARE TOGETHER.*

Enfolding Each Other ¹

*Abba enfolds us
Within
Jesus,
Who enfolds Abba
... Each enfolding the Other,
In the Spirit !*

Adorable ¹

Abba is ADORABLE ...
Welcoming the KISS of His Beloved Jesus, ²
Jesus is ADORABLE
Welcoming the KISS of His Beloved Abba
... The Spirit is Their KISS together.

We receive Abba's KISS
In Jesus Ascended ...
And, in Him,
We KISS Abba.
For US, to share in this Divine Mutual Kiss,
Is to experience Their Spirit !

1 Poem 451 Day 23, Douglas Park, 30 Day Retreat, Sydney, Aug 27th 2001.

2 As explained by Pope Benedict 16th, 'to adore' is to move 'towards (ad) the mouth/lips (or)'

– That is 'to engage the other's mouth/lips'

– That is, 'to kiss'...

So 'adorable' is 'kissable'!

“My Spirit will Live for You”¹

(Jesus, on the Cross :)

*O Children of Abba, dear brothers and sisters,
As you gaze on me, nailed to OUR cross of sin,
Keep pondering in your heart
That LOVE ALONE removes the destructive power of sin
... The power particularly over all of our RELATIONSHIPS.*

*Abba, when these passers-by jeer,
When priests taunt, and soldiers mock,
Please “forgive them, for they know not what they do.”²
As I hang on this cross, of humanity’s destiny,
My heart overflows with deepest thanks, Abba
– For your choice of me as their Chosen Messiah!³
– For choosing me as shepherd to lead Your people
Into ‘Your Kingdom of Love!’⁴
– And, most humbling of all, for revealing me
As Your Very Own Son!⁵*

*So, hanging here, arms splayed wide,
In this open embrace of my brothers and sisters,
I see Your Plan, for Your “Beloved,”⁶
Much more clearly, than I’ve seen before.*

*And to you, my fellow victim, on your cross,
Who calls on me with kindness,
My love will carry you through death
... “Indeed I promise you,
Today you will be with me, in paradise.”⁷
O Loving Mother, seeing you silent in your pain ...
Really hurts!
But Abba’s love draws me, tearfully, to sacrifice
Even being with you
– So as to surrender my trust, solely to Him!*

*To your Motherly care,
I bequeath all the children of the Cross, across the ages :
‘Woman, these are your sons ; these are your daughters ;’⁸
And to all my disciples – “This is your Mother.”⁹*

O Abba ! Pour out Your compassion,
For I am truly distressed !
This trauma ... pounds my body, my spirit, my vision !
Your consuming love for me
Fires my THIRST –
To fully atone for our humanity's deep failings !
I long to be a holocaust of love
For all my brothers and sisters.
Yet still, I vibrate with the sheer shock of the pain ...
Abba, I yearn for You TO SHOW YOURSELF
... Definitely ...
As our history's God of 'faithfulness and loving-kindness'
– The God of Israel's 'emet e hesed' !

O Abba! Even as I call on You
To revive us, all together
– I feel so alone!

In David's words, I cry with all my heart : ¹⁰
"My God! My God! Why have You abandoned me" ?

Yet, O Holy Father, You make Your home, in the praises of Israel
... In You, our fathers put all their trust –
They trusted – and You rescued them !

I am now poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint !
My heart is like wax, melted within my breast !
My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
My tongue sticks to my jaws !
I am left lying in the dust of death !

O Abba, do not stand aside !
O My strength, come quickly to my side !
O Abba, I will tell of Your Love to my brothers and sisters ;
In the midst of the assembly, I will praise You !

All you who love Abba, praise Him !
All of Israel, all in the assembly, glorify Him !
All the earth, from end to end, remember Him !
All who seek Abba, long life to your hearts !
To Him shall all who sleep in the earth, bow down !

My Spirit will live for You !

My children will serve You !

You will be proclaimed to future generations,

Your saving power exalted by a people, yet unborn !

O Abba, "Your mission in now accomplished !" ¹¹

"Abba, into Your hands,

I entrust my spirit." O Abba ! ¹²

1 Poem 452 Day 23, Douglas Park, 30 Day Retreat, Sydney, Aug 27th 2001.

2 Lk 23: 34

3 Cf Jn 1: 34

4 Cf Jn 10: 11

5 Cf Lk 3: 22

6 Cf Mt 17: 5

7 Lk 23: 43

8 Cf Jn 19: 26

9 Jn 19: 27

10 There follows for the next five stanzas, a FREE selection of verses from Ps 22, from both J.B. and N.A.B.

11 Jn 19: 30

12 Lk 23: 46

Jesus' Invitation ¹

*Come ...
Follow the Way of my Cross,
To the TRUTH of your hearts,
Where you will find
The gift of Our Life
Alive in you !*

Your Brother in Glory ¹ *

REFRAIN : *Prepare Ye the way of the Lord*
 Prepare Ye the way of the Lord
 Prepare Ye the way of the Lord
 Prepare Ye the way of the Lord

Here I am, my Abba, ²
Your loved and loving son,
Your faithful Covenant partner,
Your “suffering servant”,
And, Jesus, I hope to be
Your brother in glory !

Repeat REFRAIN ...

1 Poem 454 Day 24, Douglas Park, 30 Day Retreat, Sydney, Aug 28th 2001.

* Written to be sung. Music and Lyrics for the refrain are from the 1970's musical Jesus Christ Super-Star.
2 Lyrics of stanza are original, by the author. Music – simply recitative.

Within ¹

*To be spirit,
Is to be alive
To the withinness
Of another.
GRACED with The Spirit,
Our spirits are given
A Divine Identity ...
Within Jesus,
Within Abba,
Within others.
Thus we can commune,
With all welcoming spirits,
In Jesus' Spirit
– Our spirits now OPENED
To welcome
A world of others,
Within ourselves ...
Freeing others,
Being freed,
To sing
The Spirit Song
Of Paschal Joy ...
Within Jesus,
Within Abba,
Within Love.*

Everyone's Family ¹

*Mum and Dad,
We love you ...
We came from the womb
Of your love :
Let us all be family
Together
In the womb of Abba's Love
... All
Sisters and brothers to Jesus,
Praising Abba's Love
Together.*

Past, Future and Present ... and Energy ¹

*My past life, still a PART of me,
Needs to be hollowed out
For Abba's INFILLING.
It was a time when I used energy INTENSIVELY
Becoming habituated to squandering it
In self-indulgent ways ...
Where one's personal energies were over-focused
– Whirling into tightening spirals and swirls –
With energy not free, or available enough, FOR OTHERS.*

*Yet, my past was precisely the time
When Abba's faithfulness to His Covenant of Love with me,
Enwrapped me in an envelope of care.
O Abba, may Your consuming, jealous love
Burn away and purge the remnants,
And the continuing effects, of my unfaithful past.*

*Thus, shadowed by my past,
I set out INTO MY FUTURE
But ... my future life, my future heart,
Is NOT unexplored territory
... Jesus, OUR WAY has already gone before us :
– He is wonder-fully familiar with the map of the human heart,
– He is wondrously aware of the whole vista of human consciousness,
– He is the ONLY ONE who identifies with ALL that is human within us.
It is in His company,
Indeed, WITHIN His Person,
That the future becomes ours !*

*If we are truly attuned to Jesus,
Far from engineering, or 'carving out' our OWN future ...
We are DRAWN, IN the Spirit of Abba,
Into a future we SHARE with Jesus,
And, in Him, WITH OTHERS !
Still, our choices are truly free :
For, though Abba's Spirit ever prompts us
To choose as Jesus chooses,
Our choice is our own.
Still, it is an ACCOMPANIED choice :
The good we choose
Is simultaneously chosen by God.
Who always chooses all that is good.
Thus, our choices for our future,*

*Come to CO-RADIATE
Jesus' TRANSCENDENT humanity, alive in our world.*

*In thus CO-ENABLING our future, with the Spirit,
My use of energy in EXTENSIVE
... Needing to be wide-focussed and inclusive,
Seeking to scan the human HORIZONS of what is possible
– Engaging the WHOLE of reality,
The WHOLE of God's People,
The entirety, of any situation or process.
However, at times, this 'future' energy can be dissipated
By unrestrained day-dreaming, or self-indulgent fantasizing.*

*For our hope to be REALISTIC – that is, to be CHRISTLIKE,
It needs to be lived wholly within Abba's providential care :
O Abba, send forth Your Spirit so that my our hearts' yearnings
Seamlessly conform to Your own fatherly Desire for us.
To fully live, IN THE PRESENT,
Is, at all times, to reflect Abba's PRESENCE within.
O Abba, may the enrapturing WARMTH of Your life-giving PRESENCE
... Lived in Fellowship with Jesus and Loyce within ...
Cause my PRESENT to come alive,
Through the continuing gift of Your Divine Intimacy.*

*Here in the present I am intent on using energy INTRA-TENSIVELY,
As – with Christ, and in Christ – I face life ... with OPEN PALMS
– Free to RECEIVE Love's energies,
– Free to GIVE them, as gifts, to others
... So that the life of Your Beloved
Flows freely through me.*

*To abide, thus, in the PRESENT,
One needs to have an open, unencumbered heart
... Never seeking to grasp, to retain, or to be possessive
Of ANY of Love's gifts,
But, content to be Love's conduit.*

*To enable this to be so, Abba,
I ask that Your Wondrous Spirit
Keep my spirit OPEN and SENSITIVE
To discern the changing direction and focus
Of Your integrative, creative Love.*

With New Eyes ¹

*Jesus, we recognize Your Presence,
Recognize the Mystery of You, the Risen One
Rising within our hearts ...
Transforming our woundedness,
Surprising and delighting us,
Empowering us with the Gift of Your Ascension
– The Spirit of Visioning
Who enables us to see the world and all our relationships
With NEW eyes ...with Your eyes !
With the eyes of a loving brother, the eyes of a Cherished Child !*

*Thus empowered, we discover with You
... The Spirit of Enlivening at work :
In people thought dead ... but alive to growth !
In people thought depressed ... but unleashing joy !
In people thought bound ... but free to dance !
In people thought broken ... but walking whole !
In people thought wounded ... but healed through love !
In people thought lost ... but finding a home !*

*In gazing, on You, the Risen, Ascended One
We become what we see ...*

“We receive what we are” ²

– A NEW HUMANITY, IN YOU, ³

*Ever thankful for a woundedness, that merits such a Redeemer !
... Such a Loving Brother ! Such a Divine Destiny !*

¹ Poem 458 Day 25, Douglas Park, 30 Day Retreat, Sydney, Aug 29th 2001.

² St Augustine. ³ Eph 2 : 15 (N.R.S.V.)

Photinia ! ¹

*Early one Easter morning,
As dawn's rays beamed a golden crown
Over the eucalypt forest to the east,
And as I strolled in my Dad's garden alone
Save for the symphony of bird song –
A song rose to my throat, but ... it stayed unsung.*

*A tall stranger had entered the garden,
And was walking down the slope towards me.
About twenty metres away, he called out good-humouredly –
“Zac ! I saw you in the fresh sunrays
... How are you ‘Smiles’ ?” ²
It was my nick name from of old ...
Now new-born, it seemed.
I gazed at him but the sun was in my eyes.
His voice was light and bright, with a warm, consoling tone.*

*I listened : open-eyed to hear !
Just then he put his arm around me –
“How's my mate ... any change
From when we were both inside ?”
I felt his sweet breath flow over me
As he drew me to his heart.
To my delight – I couldn't tell why –
I felt his face touch mine.*

*I turned, still wordless, to see his face
...To give him my reply ...
When, just as quickly as he'd come,
He walked back through the sun !*

*Then to my surprise,
That unsung song came forth from deep within me,
From within a heart, ALIVE !
But now HIS voice became MINE ...
"Good on yer mate, God keep yer live,
Keep yer 'out, and free' !"*

*Only then did I look down :
He'd broken off a bloom, and left it in my hand :
A PHOTINIA !*

*... With its packed bouquet of creamy florets
Dew-kissed, and glistening in the sunlight.*

*So now, in later times, as life is flowing free,
Often I smell that Easter fragrance ³
– Especially meant for me –
And settle my gaze on its glistening crown of mini light-bursts,
That so delight my eye,
And continue to so steal my heart,
That I am drawn into that Paschal Encounter once again ...*

1 Poem 459 Day 25, Douglas Park, 30 Day Retreat, Sydney, Aug 29th 2001.

2 "Zac", a short form of Isaac – the name given to me, as a spousal name, a year before :
'Isaac' in Hebrew, means the one on whom God 'smiles'.

3 The photinia a tree, blooms in spring. In the northern hemisphere, this is at Easter.