

Folio Twenty-Eight

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**poems meant to be sung*

The Smell of Hay ¹

*Joseph and Mary were one day out from Nazareth;
The breaking of their familiar home and village routine
Was replaced by the excitement of heading to Bethlehem's census.
As the pregnant Mary swayed atop the donkey,
– Whose occasional snorts startled Jesus –
The rhythm of her soft humming soothed Him.
Later, as the evening coolness of a Jordan Valley breeze
Contended with a weak wintry sun,
... All these changes caused Jesus
To turn in the womb.
Mary adjusted her position,
And her gently stroking again soothed Him ;
As well, her lullabye and the swaying
Lulled Him into the desired sleepiness.
Meal time brought the hubbub around the campfire,
And the noisy shouts of tent-life
... To Jesus's wombed ears,
And increased His sense of change.*

*A few such days swayed by,
Until a cascade of new sounds
Caused Mary to hold Jesus with both hands
... Lingered there longer than usual :
Jangling, jostling 'Jeru-salem'
Seemed, to her rural ears, far from being a city of peace !
Pressing Jesus close,
She increased her singing and humming
So that, in time, the strength of the city's torrent of sound, receded
... And her lilting tones again stilled her baby.*

*But again, more change ; this time – at night :
The lowing of cattle, in Bethlehem's 'house-cave',
The higher-pitched bleatings of sheep
The busy staccato of goats ...
All joined the now familiar donkey snorts.
Then finally, came SILENCE
... Rhythmically textured
With the animals' heavy breathing.
But then, breaking this rhythm,
Came the pregnant mother's quickening breathing,
Which, quite soon, quickened intensively !*

Jesus had not sensed THIS before – ever :
She seemed to be MOVING Him !
He joined in her excitement !
Their twinned expectation grew in intensity.
She pressed Him, even pressured Him
OUTWARDS !
And then, a surge of RELEASE !
He was somewhere NEW !

As Jesus gulped in the breath of earth,
The sudden coolness gave Him VOICE :
A cry of release wedded to a cry of surprise !

But then, NEWER STILL –
Something BEAUTIFUL entered Him,
OPENED Him , DREW Him,
DELIGHTED Him , CLAIMED Him,
UNITED with Him ...
LIGHT !

In that very moment, He felt Himself
TOUCHED ... by the touch of enveloping arms
LIKE the womb – but NEW !
Mary's EMBRACE
Gave the sense of being TWO,
But still ONE again !
He no longer floated in the womb,
But, cradled in her arms,
Was BATHED IN LIGHT !
Then, as if for the first time, He heard HER VOICE
– UNMUFFLED, WELCOMING, INTIMATE, LOVING !
In that precious moment,
Earth opened its heart to God, and spoke to a child !
As a voice of earth ...
Was it also the ECHO of His heavenly Father's heart of love ?

Filled with the peace of love,
Jesus struggled to keep His eyes open
... To look again, in wonder, at her face,
Or at the luminous light,
... To listen again to her caressing whispers ;
Softly, His eyelids closed in sleep ...

Some hours later, light again woke Him
... As dawn flushed Bethlehem's wintry sky,
And colour leapt alive off the cave walls, and the animals within.

But – SHE was not there !

His heart raced ...

But, as quickly, He heard HER VOICE ...

He felt, again HER TOUCH ...

He became calm again,

And drank in the LIGHT.

He reached OUT, to touch it :

It was everywhere !

EVERYWHERE !

BATHING HIM !

... As caressing as HER eyes, and as HER voice ...

ONE with Him ...

But then, after being nurtured at her breast,

Something NEWER still !

Something entered Him

... At His face ...

He SMELT.

He smelt HAY,

EARTHY hay

... The hay He held fast in His little fist,

The hay supporting Him, like the walls of her womb.

As time passed ...

He felt ONE with the hay, ONE with the earth.

*Then her hands reached down,
And again raised Him to her breast,
To her softness,
To kiss Him.
Again, He felt as ONE ...
The LIGHT BATHED them both.
It coloured the hay, coloured her cheeks, coloured her eyes.*

*But then, with increasing light, came NOVEL sounds
... Not just of Joseph and the dawn-roused animals
But of other voices ... many voices.
Firstly, the subdued voices of some shepherds,
Who entered REVERENTLY ...
Knelt on the hay, and bowed their heads.
Then, held in Joseph's arms, Jesus's head turned,
... Eyes widening at the neighing of horses outside !*

*Then came the arrival of voices at the small door of the cave.
And, in a hushed silence
—Amidst glints of metal, the spice of incense, colourful garments —
Three men bowed low to enter.
They too, seemingly awestruck,
Bowed their heads for a considerable time,
Before each placed a present
At Joseph's feet, who stood there
—Descendant of King David as he was —
With his Son, Jesus, in his arms.
The visitors then knelt AMONG the shepherds.*

Jesus naturally responded to all this movement and change :

He reached out for His Mother

... And nestled, at home, in her softness.

Then seemingly came the climax :

A soaring but MOST harmonious sound of music

– Flooding through the small door –

Filled the cave

–And all their hearts !

First, Mary and Jesus, helped by Joseph

... Then all the others ...

Moved outdoors to the music's source.

There, as the first arc of the sun cut the horizon

–Yet in a still star-spangled sky –

The exultant sound of massed voices

Burst forth over their heads !

From below, came gasps of astonishment and sheer joy !

From above, from Abba's choir of love

Echoes of the phrases

“Joy to be shared !”

“To be shared with the whole people !”²

Resonated deep within Jesus' infant spirit

... His eyes opening in wonder, reflecting the stars

Fading now, before the Glory of the new born sun !

The group lingered, 'til the singing too faded.

Then Mary turned , and led them back

Into the warmth of the cave.

After being nurtured from her breast,

Jesus snuggled into her closeness ...

One with her breathing,

One with the joy of that singing,

One with the smell of hay,

One with our earth ...

As his eyes closed in sleep ...

GOD ASLEEP IN OUR MIDST!

1 Poem 540, Douglas Park Retreat, early Oct. 2003, Day 4.

2 Lk 2:10

Two Pigeons in Exchange ¹

*Joseph's arms didn't yield, like Mary's :
Jesus sensed their solidity and strength.
Joseph's heart beat just one tunic thickness away,
Pulsing straight into Jesus' ear
—Reassuring Him with its power.*

*It was Jesus' first experience
Of life outside of the stable
... Eight days on since His birth,
And, well before their journey from Bethlehem to Jerusalem's Temple.
Mary's white woolly blanket
— The lanoline still discernible in its fibres —
Shielded His face from the glare.
Jesus' nostrils already used to stable smells,
Opened a little to take in this new world :
Wet-earth smells from newly sprouting wheat-fields,
And the sharp smell of minty farm weeds;
And from a nearby copse, some cypress and juniper tree scents.*

*Held outdoors, Jesus' Circumcision Ceremony
Began with Joseph intoning a centuries-old psalm
... With his prayer shawl draped over his head.
The strength and resonance of Joseph's sonorous chanting
Caused Jesus to twist and look up ...
Its masculine power and depth deeply re-assured Him.
Jesus was then lifted up into the air,
On the wood-worker's thick forearms
Offered as the family's first-born,
To Yahweh, the God of all life.
Jesus didn't cry, but reached His little arm towards the sun ...*

*Jesus was now passed
To one of Joseph's Bethlehem kinsmen ... also shawled.
He smelt of the blacksmith shed.
Joseph then opened a carved juniper case,
Inherited from his Davidic male forebears,
And took from it – a little bronze knife,
A whet-stone and a small, shallow, clay bowl.
Mary stood by with another bowl
Holding little tufts of wool,
And a couple of narrow, woollen bandages
... All, many times washed – to be absorbent.*

*The circumcision itself proceeded without fuss.
Through it, adult teeth clenched a couple of time ...
Joseph flinching a little, but remained silent,
And while Mary's lips, tight closed, drained of colour,
Her gaze and breathing were steady.
The hallowed, traditional techniques served Joseph well
Except, that the first droplets of Jesus' blood
Dropped, not into the bowl, but onto the black soil,
Spotting it with crimson
... As it was to do, years later, on Calvary.
Their first-born whimpered ...
Then cried, then whimpered again.
Mary longed to step forward to comfort Him,
But respect for Joseph kept her still
... Made easier by her surpassing confidence in him.
For it was he, not Mary, who applied the bandage
—Smearred with a little honey, to help healing.*

*Back in Joseph's arms ... from his kinsman's,
Jesus was once again lifted up to the sun in the east,
As His Name was PROCLAIMED for the first time
— Just as Abba's Gabriel had directed —
"Jesus ! Son of David ! Son of Joseph !"
Mary herself told Jesus these details
When He was seven years old
—So He could hold His name's meaning to His heart
... Especially the mantle of "deliverer",
That had begun with Israel's hero, Joshua !*

*But for NOW, back inside the stable,
Mary breast-fed, with new joy and pride,
This newest member of their People, ISRA-EL,
And pondered how before, and at His birth,
Jesus too was a wanderer, a sojourner
... Like Abraham, like Isaac, and like Joseph
Who, himself, became Isra-el !*

*Four weeks later, the family of three excitedly made their way
Into nearby Jerusalem – to Yahweh's Temple !
For Jesus, Jerusalem felt like a mother, writ large ...
Its weaving, cluttered laneways, often over-built,
Intimately enveloping their family.
The sound and touch and smell
Of passersby, pilgrims, stall-owners
Encompassed the three, AS THEIR OWN.
Jesus liked these people, and felt at home.
Yet, as all the different food aromas, and waves of accents,
Flowed over Him,
He somehow sensed ... more change !*

*Joseph – quite counter to male traditionalism –
Took Jesus from Mary as they began to ascend
The broad, steep sweep of stairs below the People’s Gate
Of Yahweh’s Temple.
Their necks craned as they reached the Temple’s Gentiles’ Court.
For Jesus, it was like entering another world :
Joseph and Mary’s excitement which He has sensed on the stairs,
Almost overwhelmed Him, vicariously, as they reached the Gate’s arches !
Its cedar was still so freshly worked by Herod’s craftsmen,
That Joseph knew it instinctively,
From its beautiful resin scent.
In moving across the Gentiles’ Court, a wall of sound hit them –
The competing calls and shouts of money-changes and souvenir sellers ;
Animals bellowing, bleating, braying, cooing and squawking ;
And the pilgrims’ chatter and the Temple guards’ gruff directions.
This flood of sensations was just too much for Jesus,
And he began to wimper.
Mary took Him from Joseph, and rocked Him gently
... Singing to Him, His favoured tunes.*

*Quickly they moved to a quieter area of the very spacious Gentiles' Court.
The scale and the majesty of the surrounding Solomon's Portico struck home.*

*Jesus quietened ... so Mary bared His face :
The glinting granite pillars towered above Him ;
As He was faced inwards, the gleaming white marble and dazzling gold,
Atop the buildings of the inner courts,
Were all awash in magnificent sunlight.
All this fixed itself, within Jesus' infant subconscious,
As a primal, seminal image of Yahweh's Presence.
Again, He reached out, this time to 'touch' the Holy of Holies
... The radiant gold of its roof, seemingly within His grasp !*

*They moved into the Women's Court ;
Here they met Anna, a discerning elderly lady
Who each day, prayerfully served Yahweh,
By attending to people, especially country folk,
Who felt overawed by Yahweh's Home.
Putting them all at ease,
She explained how Joseph alone needed to proceed, with Jesus,
Into the next, male-only, courtyard
– The Court of Israel.*

*Mary handed Jesus to Anna to be nursed.
Jesus' presence subtly stilled HER quick breathing :
The Spirit opened her heart, and she sensed Jesus's future.
Daughter of Abraham as she was, the focus was on Yahweh.*

*Soon, Joseph moved off with Jesus,
While Anna stayed with Mary, leading her to the Court of Israel boundary
... Where they could see across to its opposite boundary with the Priests' Court.
Here, Anna held both Mary's hands within her own,
Inviting her to pray the psalms for Jesus' Dedication,
And those for her own At-one-ment.*

*Jesus felt confident with Joseph ;
As they moved towards the Priests' Court boundary
He smelt the wonderfully distinctive spiced aroma of incense.
Being held shoulder high, He looked into Joseph's face,
And imitated the awe and joy on Joseph's eyes and mouth !
Then, as billows of incense, burning cedar chips, and majoran fumes
– All from the Altar of Sacrifice –
Swept over them, Jesus felt the first light touch of Mystery :
His eyelids gently closed within this Cloud,
... While Joseph bowed his head, pulling his shawl over his face.
As the Cloud passed, Joseph pulled back his shawl
And moved forward, in a queue,
So as to talk to one of the Temple priests ;
Jesus' eyes opened, to gaze at the smoke billows
Now spiralling high above the dominating Altar of Sacrifice
Which centred the area of The Holy,
– Which, itself, formed a fore-court
To the wondrous gold-topped Holy of Holies – which easily held Jesus' gaze !*

*Joseph held Jesus in one arm, four caged pigeons with the other
– Two for Jesus ‘redemption’, two for Mary’s ‘at-one-ment’.
For Jesus, their reassuring cooing made up for Mary’s absence.
Then, on meeting with the priest, Joseph first put down the pigeon cage ;*

*Then, holding out Jesus, solemnly proclaimed
“This son of David, I, Joseph, offer as a first-born gift
To Adonai !”*

*The young Priest flanked by two Levites bowed deeply ;
He received the baby – clad only in a simple dedication garment –
And proclaimed a Prayer of Acceptance by Yahweh.
Jesus was startled by the Priest’s trumpet-like tone,
And reached out to Joseph
But was interrupted, by being lifted and offered again,
As He was named – as if by Yahweh – “Jesus”.*

*Meanwhile, Mary and Anna had followed all this
– AS BEST they could, from across the large crowded Court of Israel –
And their hearts leapt, in thankfulness,
As they clearly witnessed Jesus being twice lifted and offered up.
Mary felt that her hoped-for ‘at-one-ment’ was happening NOW,
Deeply ... wonderfully WITHIN her :
She felt, literally, “at one” with Yahweh
... Her Divine Spouse !
Her heart overflowed with praise
... As it had done in her Magnificat !*

*At that very moment, Jesus was stretching towards Joseph
... As He spent His last moments in the priestly hands
Of a representative of the Mosaic Covenant.*

*But before He was handed back, the senior Levite
Stepped forward and, in a mutual bow with Joseph,
Accepted two pigeons as payment to Yahweh*

For Jesus' "RANSOM".

*The younger Levite then stepped forward to receive
The other two pigeons for Mary's "atonement" sacrifice.
Only then, did the Priest hand back Jesus to Joseph,
Again with mutual bowing.*

*Then, in the short while it took the Priest and the Levites
To return from sacrificing the four pigeons ...*

*Joseph prayed Psalm 8 in thanks,
While Jesus gurgled, like a cooing pigeon,
... Before falling to sleep in the pre-noon heat.*

On their return, the Priest and Levites

Re-prayed Psalm 8 with Joseph :

*"What is humanity that you should be mindful of it ?
You have made each human being little less than a god !" ²*

*They received Joseph's grateful money offering,
And withdrew to the sanctuary.*

*As Joseph retraced his steps
To the Women's Court, to Mary and Anna,
– Themselves still quietly praying the psalms –
Simeon, a man in his seventies
... Who had, with deepening excitement,
Watched their Dedication and Atonement service ...
Caught up with the young wood-worker
Just as he re-joined Mary and Anna.
His was a role, in the men's court, akin to Anna's.
Unusually spirited for a man of his age,
Simeon's excited presence woke Jesus.
With Mary and Joseph both sensing his holiness,
Simeon, with deep assurance in his voice,
And with eyes resting on Jesus' own smiling eyes,
Almost sang the words –
"Blest are my eyes, Lord,
To gaze on Your chosen one, the deliverer of ISRAEL,
The one anointed by the Spirit of the Promise!"*

*Jesus was then cradled on Simeon's forearms and lifted
– But only half as high as Joseph and the Priest had managed.
Very solemnly and clearly, he said
"This Child will be a light to all,
To reveal your Torah, 'Way', to all the people" ³
Jesus drank in the mid-winter's sunlight,
Before He was lowered, and handed back to Mary.*

*“Mary,” Simeon almost whispered,
“Your first-born will be rejected by His own people,
And Himself, be the cause of division
—Leading both the good and the bad to choose
... Either life with God, or without God.
Of course, this will cut right to your own heart !
But it needs be, because He is God’s Beloved.”*

*Some lambs, sacrifice-bound, bleated plaintively nearby ; ⁴
Mary and Joseph, standing stunned by Simeon’s words,
Somehow felt they were sharing in the lambs’ fate.
Jesus Himself fell asleep as He settled back
... Like a lamb Himself,
Rolled up in His woollen blanket.*

*Joseph led Mary and Jesus back to their cheap lodgings.
It was still only midday, and their meal together
Was one of the deepest thanksgiving,
Mixed with genuine puzzlement and wonder
... And the need to entrust all to Yahweh.
Jesus’ full stomach allowed Him to sense a general peacefulness,
And, again gurgling like the cooing of pigeons,
He drifted off into His afternoon sleep.*

1 Poem 541, Douglas Park Retreat, early Oct. 2003, Day 5.

2 Ps 8 3 Cf Lk 2:32 4 In Hebrew, “lamb” and “servant” are the same word – “talit”.

Being Your Beloved Child ¹

Dearest Abba,
Having surrendered myself to You, in brother Jesus,
As a sacrifice to be consumed by Your Love,
I ask that You allow me, Your SPECIAL GRACE
Of FULLY being the beloved child You desire
—Sharing Your own Child’s surpassing outpouring of trust.

Dearest Abba,
As You lovingly ACCEPT all my choices, all my thinking,
All my imagery ... past, present and future,
All layers of my feelings,
All my sub-conscious, all my cellular responsiveness,
And all that is plainly physical within me
—RE-CREATE ME
Into the closest likeness of Jesus Your Child
So that I become, a “we”, not an “I”,
And relate to others, COMMUNALLY, in Him.

Dearest Abba,
For ALL that has been good in my life, I thank You ;
For ALL that has been bad, I ask a child's forgiveness ;
For the future, I ask that all our hearts change
–To reproduce, together,
The expressive heart of Your Beloved Child, Jesus.
Totally transform our lives
And ENRAPTURE them within Your Paschal embrace of Jesus
–So that, daily ASCENDING with Him,
We may experience all others WITHIN US, WITHIN HIM,
And You, IN HIM !

Dearest Abba,
Within this Enrapture, en-Spirit all within me,
With Your joyous, peaceful Spirit of childhood
So that me may be RE-CREATED, in Christ.

Dear to Jesus' Heart ¹

For Jesus,

The once wood-worker, and now wandering homeless preacher,

Three groups were especially dear to His mission :

– Being one with the ‘poor, the destitute’, the “ptochoi”,

Allowed Him to more easily know His NEED OF GOD ;

– Being one with ‘the lowly of heart’, the “tapeinoi”,

Allowed Him ... to CHOOSE the lowest place,

... To let Himself be sidelined,

... To ACCEPT being dismissed, relegated to unimportance,

Knowing GOD HIMSELF ‘would be His comfort’ ;

Moreover, to be both of the above, TOGETHER ,

Was to be one of ‘the little ones’, the “nepioi”,

... To whom the Mystery of the Kingdom

Is revealed

... And to whom it BELONGS.

Moreover, for Jesus, being ‘a little one’,

Goes hand in hand with the spiritual childhood

Which, He insisted, was required

For ENTRANCE His Abba’s Kingdom of Love.

1 Poem 543, Douglas Park Retreat, early Oct. 2003, Day 6.

Reconciliation and the Ascension ¹

*For us,
Reconciliation is at the heart of that Moment
When the Ascended Jesus, in accepting the Gift
Of His Father's WHOLE LOVING REALITY,
Stands as a Witness to All Truth
– Humanity's and all Creation's –
In the Spirit.*

¹ Poem 544, Douglas Park Retreat, early Oct. 2003, Day 7.

This Is My Body ¹

*In Jesus' earthly mind
He understood His body
As His enspirited SELF.
Thus, His Church
In becoming His Risen and Ascended Body
Becomes the en-Spirited self
Of Creation's New Man
— The Body of the Abba's Paschal Son
... Now radiant with Divinity.*

¹ Poem 545, Douglas Park Retreat, early Oct 2003, Day 7.

Questions within Questions ¹

In periodically asking 'WHO AM I?'

– To deepen the sense of my IDENTITY–

Other revealing questions arise :

... What is Abba's dream-for-me ?

... Am I the son He longs for ?

... Am I a fitting likeness of His Beloved Son,

Loving and praying for those who oppose me ?

In asking 'WHO AM I WITH?'

–To deepen the sense of my RELATIONSHIPS–

Other revealing questions arise :

... Is my relationship with Abba,

A true echo of His with me ?

... Is Abba's and my relationship, in Christ,

The template for all my other relationships ?

... Am I as equally receptive to others,

And as equally giving to them, as I am with Abba ?

In asking 'WHOSE AM I?'

– To deepen the sense of my BELONGINGNESS–

Other revealing questions arise :

... Does my belonging to Abba

Enable and sustain my surrender to others ?

... Do I give my time, gifts, and trust to them, as I do to Abba ?

... Do I give myself to them,

Giving until it transforms both of us ?

*In asking 'WHO AM I ONE WITH ?'
To deepen my need for INTIMACY –
Other revealing questions arise :
... How deeply and openly do I share with Abba,
Who shares ALL with me ?
... Is this Divine Intimacy, a template,
For my deeper sharing with others ?
... Am I open ENOUGH, to share deeply and constantly ?*

*In asking 'WHY AM I HERE ?'
– To deepen the sense of my DESTINY ? –
Other revealing questions arise :
... Is Abba, who is the sole source of my being,
The whole FOCUS of my living ?
... Do all those others, who give my life purpose and meaning,
Truly reflect Abba's dream-for-me ?
... Does my life – and thus my destiny – find its best expression
In Abba's Beloved Son, Jesus,
Who utterly EXPRESSES ALL that Abba is ?*

In asking 'How, specifically, AM I TO WALK CHRIST'S WAY?'

– To deepen my sense of MISSION –

Other revealing questions arise :

... In what particular ways of relating to God's People,

Am I to seek fulfilment-in-Abba ?

... In this regard, am I sufficiently sensitive

To the promptings of the Spirit ?

... Does what I am, and do, attract and draw others

To this Fellowship with Abba in the Spirit ?

In asking 'WHO HAS FORGIVEN, AND WHO HAVE I FORGIVEN?'

– To deepen my need for RECONCILIATION –

Other revealing questions arise :

... Am I open to the Spirit's sensitizing me to all the ways

I EXCLUDE others from 'my' journey into Fellowship ?

... Am I open to the Spirit's constant flow of promptings

To ever more INCLUDE others IN CHRIST ?

Am I open-hearted, both to seek and receive forgiveness,

And lavish, in forgiving others and myself ?

Empty of Heart ¹

Our hearts need to EMPTY
With an emptiness that is limitlessly NEEDFUL
With an emptiness that is infinitely YEARNING
With an emptiness that is boundlessly TRUSTING
... All three, as Jesus IS, for Abba.

Only You, Abba, can fill this need and yearning,
And completely reward such trustfulness
... All three with Your Most Lovable Presence
– Through the Spirit !

¹ Poem 547, Douglas Park Retreat, early Oct 2003, Day 9.

The One Reality ¹

Our Abba God

Can never be

JUST ONE MORE REALITY

Alongside others.

There can never be our Abba God, and any 'other'

... Such as, 'Abba AND I.'

Abba eternally TRANSCENDS

The 'otherness' of all 'others'

... For instance, transcending us, indwelling WITHIN us.

Thus, at the same time –

Abba both centers our very being,

And transcends all we ever are to Him,

And all we ever know of Him !

It is ONLY and WONDROUSLY,

IN Jesus Ascended

– The living expression of Abba's whole reality, made flesh –

That we can ENTER Abba's COMPANY !

Indeed, IN Jesus Ascended,

We can INDWELL Abba

As Jesus, the Divine Son, indwells Him :

–Knowing Abba,

AS WE ARE KNOWN

... In Jesus Ascended ;

–Relating to Abba

... Yet only WITHIN the RELATIONSHIP of Jesus with Abba !

How limitless is Abba's embracing of us

AS HIS OWN

... As Jesus' adopted brothers and sisters !

Ours is thus NOT an individual's relationship to Abba ;

Ours is a communal relationship to our Abba God

Only expressible IN Jesus Ascended !

1 Poem 548, Taringa Community, Brisbane, late Oct 2003.

NOTE : 'While Clayfield's house was being rebuilt, I spent 11 months at TARINGA.' AUTHOR.

Without Regard for Consequences ¹

*Abba, Your Word to me
At this time, at all times,
Is to 'love and not to count the cost'
–To be a nothing
To Your infilling Fullness
–To be a darkness
To Your transfiguring Light
–To be fuel to be consumed, in love
To radiate Your Presence.*

*Abba, seduce me as You desire ;
Trail Your Spirit, Your Perfume of Delight,
Across my eager heart
... Enticing me to let go of all, for You !*

*O Spirit of Divine Depths,
Let my will be held captive
Within Abba's Desire for me
–Held fast there,
By love's indifference to consequences.*

*Yes Abba, may Your consuming love
Crowd out all my fears
– Indeed even negate all MY hopes –
So I will be free to love others
... Without regard for consequences,
Rendering meaningless, the calculus of conditioned love !*

*Then, Abba, overwhelmed by Your love,
My heart can settle wholly,
Within the intimacy of Yours
... Totally unmindful of consequences !*

*O Abba, let the rhythm
Of Your Breathing
Draw my heart
To a rhythmic concordance with Yours :
... One together ... together one ...*

*But, You call me on
... Deeper into the Paschal Reality of love.
So, when the duress of love's night
Descends on this day of surrender
– Crucifying me at the crossroads of life –
Grace me, to offer myself, wholly and freely,
To help free those
Who also yearn to love
... Without regard for consequences.*

Revealing God ¹

Revelation means radiating the human with the Divine

–Showing forth what it means to be fully human.

For us

This unfolding of the Divine within the human –

Enables us TO BE OPENED to Abba, through faith,

Moves us to surrender ourselves to Abba,

And thus, TO BE FATHERED INTO THE LIFE

Awaiting us WITHIN the Risen Christ.

Such a life, lived IN Christ,

Allows the Spirit of Love

To unite our humanity

Wholly to the Father's Divinity,

In Jesus Ascended.

This optimizes humanity's depthless potential,

So that each human person

Can reveal the Face of God

To every other ;

And, together, we can reveal

The face of an exalted humanity

To the Divine Father,

In the Ascended humanity

Of the Divine Son.

1 Poem 550, Year 5 Prayer Ministry, Taringa Community, Brisbane, Nov 2003.

In Harmony with the Spirit ¹

The Spirit

*Who moves through, and in all things,
—And in an especial way in the hearts of each and every person*

Whom we pray for —

*CAN, through our en-Spirited DESIRE
Become the source of all our motivation,
The wellspring of all that is graced within us,
The spark of all our spiritual inspiration !*

Seek only

*That which is Christ-like, in the other,
And that which is “gentle and humble of heart”, in ourself, ²
To be assured that we are in harmony with this Spirit,
And ever open to His initiatives, to His promptings,
And to His Mysterious Embrace.*

It is only through and in Him,

That I can be

A praying-heart for others.

¹ Poem 551, Year 5 Prayer Ministry, Taringa Community, Brisbane, Nov 2003.

² J.B. Mt 11:28.

To Repent ¹

To repent

Is to see evil as it really is –

– Its effects within oneself,

And on the face of the suffering Jesus !

When we cease to philosophize and to demonize evil,

We can deal with it in DEEPLY HUMAN terms

... With Jesus' kindness and compassion .

Thus, we need to deal with it, within THAT relationship,

That He has with His Father.

Thus to repent,

Is to move, with Jesus, BEYOND the world as we like it to be,

And to change that world, from WITHIN HIS relationship with Abba !

Thus GRACED, we will re-join it as a DIFFERENT person

– As Jesus, and IN Jesus.

To repent

Is to be open ... to be receptive, WITH Jesus, to Abba's love ;

And, to be prepared for the LAVISHNESS of His love ...

We need to look to the BOUNDLESSNESS

Of the ocean, of the sky, of the universe itself ...

So as to SENSE, a little, the depthless reaches of God's heart !

Thus, we need to be prepared, both to be overwhelmed,

And to be open to the need for DEEP personal change :

"I will BETROTH you to myself ... in tenderness". ²

*The test for genuineness, following repentance,
Is loving your enemy,
Doing good to those who hate,
Blessing those who curse and repudiate you,
And praying for those who mistreat you !³*

1 Poem 552, Year 5 Prayer Ministry, Taringa Community, Brisbane, Nov 2003.

2 J.B. Hos 2:21 3 Gf. Lk 6:27, 28.

The Eucharist Transforms Us ¹

In Eucharist, we are TRANS-FORMED
–Transfigured, ever more deeply, at our core –
Into the PERSON of Christ Ascended
... At home in the arms of Abba !
It is this TRANS-FORM-ATION we celebrate in Eucharist !

Eucharist is when we are drawn into Christ's Passover,
Climaxing in His Ascension
–Entering, Sacramentally, and truly
... In a way that changes, that deepens, who we ARE.
Eucharist happens TO US, and IN US, within Mystery,
... Both to 're-mind' us that Christ is our Passover,
And to ENABLE US, ever more profoundly,
To be His Passover People.

As such,
Every Eucharist needs to begin
With the washing of each other's feet,
And to culminate
In the communal Enrapture of the Ascension
In the Circle of Love !

¹ Poem 553, Year 5 Prayer Ministry, Taringa Community, Brisbane, Nov 2003.

Yahweh Enpeoples Himself ¹

*Yahweh's ever-faithful love
Is His enduring Covenant Love,
With which He ENPEOPLES Himself
In our history,
Vowing Himself
– His Pledge being His very Self –
To hold
... A people within His heart !*

*At first, this people is gathered as ISRA-EL,
And, ultimately,
In an outpouring of Divine Intimacy,
In-gathered in the Ascended humanity,
In the very PERSON,
Of His own Beloved Son,
Jesus !*

¹ Poem 554, Year 5 Prayer Ministry, Taringa Community, Brisbane, Nov 2003.

In Praise of You, Abba ¹

*Our hearts expand in praise of You, Abba
For You hold close to Your heart,
All faithful imitators of Your Crucified Son –
Making us brothers and sisters of Your Beloved ;
And so we rejoice in You, the Father of our salvation !*

*You transform within Your embrace, every one of our fears,
And, with gentleness and forgiveness,
Heal and sooth our sinful wounds ...
Strengthening our wayward hearts,
Shaping us, ever more, to Your Beloved's likeness.*

*You are awesome, mysterious, almighty ...
Yet You caress our hearts with tenderness !
You reach out through Your Intimate Spirit,
And gather us, in love, from every place ...
WITHIN Your Beloved ... Himself WITHIN Your Embrace !*

*You are ever mindful of us,
For the Spirit of both You and Your Beloved
Abides within our hearts.
Your Spirit's enabling love is always on offer,
And, through us, on offer to all
Who live the life of Your Beloved.*

Gather Us, O Abba ¹ *

*Sing 'Our Song' at twilight
When the lights are low,
When the Spirit's Presence
Gently comes and goes :*

Note 1

*"Gather us, Your children,
Gather us, in love,
Gather us, Your Family,
In the Spirit's love.*

Note 2

*Gather us, O Abba
Gather all within,
Gather all – in Jesus,
Together in Love ...
Together in Love."*

1 Poem 556, Year 5 Prayer Ministry, Taringa Community, Brisbane, Dec 2003.

*Written to be sung. Tune: "A Song at Twilight".

Note 1 Verse 1 is sung, AS IF sung by Abba and Jesus together, TO US.

Note 2 Verses 2, 3 are sung BY US, in Jesus, to Abba.

Verse 1 is indebted to the original song, for some words.

The Call to Eucharist ¹ *

*Spirit – call to my heart’s
Deepest consciousness,
Draw within my own heart
All those who praise God’s Love :
– All celebrating with us
Heaven’s Liturgy
– All who yearn to do so
Now in Purgat’ry ...*

*– All present from future ages
– All present from ages past,
– All pilgriming now, on this earth ...
Servants – both ‘first’, and ‘last’.
– All I have sinned against
– All who lament their sin,
– All in my loving fam’ly
– All my beloved kin !*

*– All of my friends, so tender
– All I pray spec’ly for,
– All needful and troubled people,
– All of Creation’s store !
Draw them ALL, now, O Spirit,
Into my spirit’s depth,
That here, within our Jesus,
We glorify Abba’s Love !*

... All offered in brother Jesus'
Eucharist of thanks and praise
Holy ! ² Holy ! ² Holy ... Holy ! ²

1 Poem 557, Year 5 Prayer Ministry, Taringa Community, Brisbane, Dec 2003.

*Written to be sung; Tune: "After the Ball Is Over".

Our Father, Dearest Abba ¹

*Our Father, dearest Abba,
Radiating source of life, Eternal Mystery,
Boundlessly awesome is Your Holy Presence !
May Your Kinship of Love
Encompass, embrace, and enrapture us all !
May You transform all our desires
To continually achieve this Enrapture for us –
Both here, as Your pilgrim servants,
And as Your children, at home with You.*

*Give us, this day, our daily bread,
To nurture our Kinship in the Paschal Jesus;
And forgive us, for failing to live like Jesus ...
Just as we forgive others, for not doing so ;
And let us not be seduced,
By anxiety, escapism and temptations,
But lead us – safe from all evil –
Secure within Your Love, in brother Jesus.
Amen !*

¹ Poem 558, Year 5 Prayer Ministry, Taringa Community, Brisbane, Dec 2003.

Note: A reflection on the 'Our Father'.

Choosing Always to Reveal ¹

*God ALWAYS chooses to REVEAL,
Never to conceal !
Indeed, Abba loves us
To the point of emptiness
... To the emptying out of His very Self !
Abba animates all our inner senses to be RECEPTIVE
To His great outpouring act of Self-Revelation,
So that we are able –
To hear His Word
To see His Face
To smell His Fragrance
To taste His Kiss
To touch His Tenderness
To feel His Love
And to surrender to His Embrace !*

*The great sadness is ...
Many of us convince ourselves
That God CONCEALS Himself from us
– But, it is our lives that block our receptiveness.
O ! How wondrously receptive we could be,
If we live our lives IN CHRIST !*

¹ Poem 559, Year 5 Prayer Ministry, Taringa Community, Brisbane, Dec 2003.

