

Folio Three

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Eucharistic Giving ¹

*Abba, through the Eucharistic giving of myself
In Jesus Risen,
I thank You for the fact that I now possess nothing
– Not even myself.
I come to You,
As one who has been gifted, totally by You
... Even before any surrender of mine.*

*I owe You
All my past, my present, and my future.
The deeper my faith becomes
... The more truly I become aware of my utter poverty
... The more I am struck by Your eternal goodness to me!*

*Abba, bring gratitude to my heart,
So that I may have an abiding consciousness
Of who You are!
And of how great You are!*

¹ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

A Humble Awareness of My Weakness ²

*Abba, I feel sorrow, yet much more, I feel wonder
At being constantly brought to newness,
In Christ Jesus,
My compassionate brother.*

*Abba, I feel a deep sense of joy and of gratitude
That I have been guaranteed the victory,
Through Christ Jesus,
Over my deep-seated sinfulness.*

*Abba, I feel a growing mistrust of my self-fulness,
But an increasingly firm trust
In You.*

*Abba, I feel a humble awareness of my weakness
But a wonderful, pervasive sense
Of Your fatherly Presence with me,
And a warming sense of our personal friendship.*

*And finally, Abba, I feel a deep sense of comfort
That I am gradually being transformed,
From one who relied on my own efforts to love,
To the wondrous freedom of being adopted
Into Your own Divine Family,
In Christ Jesus,
The most lovable of sons.*

² Written at the National Tertiaship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

The Love that Heals³

*ABBA, I have not been faithful to You:
Save me now in Your tender love.
Remember, it was me You 'caught sight of',
It was me You 'ran out to meet.'
... 'Throwing Your arms around me.'
... Before 'kissing me tenderly.'*⁴
*I feel so humbled by Your fatherly love,
But even more, I feel REALLY AT HOME
Within Your welcoming arms.*

*JESUS, I stand before You, as You agonize on the cross,
With Mary and John comforting me between them;
Draw us, Your brothers and sisters, ever more deeply
Into the Mystery of becoming one in You.
Your love is that of a brother:
A love that is loyal, tender, slow to accuse, quick to forgive.
Draw us, with You, into Your Abba's healing arms.*

*SPIRIT of this love that heals, draw from my heart's depths
A body-prayer of praise, a spirit-song of joy
... With all who are being made WHOLE.
Spirit, make me LIVE again –
With the renewing Life of my co-healed!
With this communion of the revived!
With this fellowship of the re-vitalized!*

³ Written at the National Tertiaship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

⁴ Lk 15: 20-21

Breathing Your Spirit of Love⁵

*O Abba, look on Your Beloved
... On us, Your children:*

Through Your Love of Him

We BREATHE IN⁶

Your Spirit of Love

Through His Love of You

We BREATHE FORTH

Your Spirit of Love

REPEAT *a second time*

REPEAT *a third time*

O Abba!

⁵ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

⁶ Equates to a long pause

Nothing Is Impossible⁷

Nothing is impossible with God ...

For us – with God!

We ought trust in our humanity

– Forever open

To God, in Christ –

To draw all peoples,

All creation,

TOGETHER

IN

OURSELVES

To wholeness in Christ!

⁷ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

The Deepest Expression of Being Human ⁸

*Not only are we ONE OF A KIND
Our relationships ask us TO BE KIND to each other.
This KINDNESS is enjoined upon us by our very nature;
That is, love is NATURAL to our humanity
... To be human, is to love.*

*So, Jesus, who loves superlatively,
Personifies the deepest expression of being kind,
Of being one of our kind:
Jesus personifies the essence of being human!*

⁸ Written at the National Tertiarity, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

Like a Deer⁹

*O Spirit, it seems to me ...
You have to batter events around my head!
To tip my life upside down
... Before I respond!*

*I'm like a deer, in the drylands
– Either LOST by my own folly,
Or FAMISHED by the seasons –
Who still does not give up
But longs ... yearns ...
Yearns for the running streams¹⁰
Of Your refreshing,
Vitalizing
Love ...*

⁹ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

¹⁰ Ps 42: 1

The Wisdom of the Widow's Offering ¹¹

*The poor widow's generous offering
Teaches us not to apportion our love,
Nor to rationalize how much we can give.
As Jesus' imitators –
We are to offer all we have to each!
More specifically, we are
Neither to under-play our resources or talents,
Nor to forget we are but stewards of them,
But, simply, and humbly,
To put them at others' disposal
... For the earth is the common heritage
Of the gentle of heart. ¹²*

¹¹ Written at the National Tertiaship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

¹² Mt 5:4

White-anting Our Worth As Persons ¹³

*Those who focus their lives
On the acquisition of wealth
Or of sexual pleasure, social status or power
Quickly become habituated to them
– Through the adrenaline they generate –
... With many becoming dependent
And some, addicted.*

*They begin the sad descent
Into defining their worth AS PERSONS
... In terms of possessions, stimuli, others' adulation,
Or, of the measure of their own control.
In the long term, they become alienated from their true selves
– Content with a whiteanted version of reality,
A diminished identity,
And a hollowed-out future.*

*Indeed, possessions, indulgence in pleasure, flattery
And the insidious cancer of self-empowerment
All inexorably, TAKE POSSESSION
Of those who trust in them!
They become captive of part of themselves!*

¹³ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

Maturing in the Spirit ¹⁴

*The Presence of the Spirit enables us to mature
Humanly, wholistically
– By gifting us, successively,
With each of His Seven Gifts.
Through the Spirit's empowering presence
– Gift by Gift –
Both our spiritual and natural maturities
Unfold.
Stage by stage,
The Spirit's fostering of the growth and development
Of our emotions,
Provides the ordinary, natural basis
For our spiritual growth to blossom.
Grace truly builds on nature:
The deepening of our relationship with Abba, IN Jesus,
Forms 'a seamless garment' ¹⁵
With our evolving, natural maturity
... Because both flow forth from the same Spirit.*

*The Spirit's FIRST GIFT is a primal fear of God;
It is not a craven or servile fear.
Rather, our awareness of God's Presence
AWAKENS US
To awe of God's Mystery and Glory,
And, by comparison, to our startling human insignificance.
Little by little, we also are made aware –
Of the marvellous OPENING of our humanity to God;
Of our sheer need of God ... to become ourselves IN God;
Of our stark need of God's liberating goodness
Against the smothering, de-humanizing effects of evil.*

¹⁴ Written at Xavier College, Indooroopilly, 1980. I outlined this poem during the National Tertianship but only afterwards wrote it during my three month stay at Xavier College. Psychologically it succeeds Poem 76

¹⁵ Jn 19:24

*At the natural level, 'our parents' stand in 'God's' place
... For each of the previous aspects.
The Spirit's role, at this level
Is hidden, less explicit, central, and necessary.*

The Spirit's SECOND GIFT complements the first:

*Our reverence and devotedness to God,
Enabled by the emerging GIFT of PIETY,
Reveals itself*

*As a worshipful attentiveness to,
And as a deep desire to adore,
Our Abba, God, in His manifold Presence
... In God's Word, In God's Church,
And in God's Indwelling*

*– Of any group, gathered in Christ's name,
Or of any person living like Christ –
And, evocatively, in the tracteries
Of God's Presence in Creation.*

*At the natural level, this GIFT is sensed
In the widening of our prime relationship
... To our parents ...*

*– To friends, to various intersecting communities,
And, gradually, to society at all levels.*

*The Spirit's THIRD CONTRIBUTION to our developing maturities,
Is His emerging gift of KNOWLEDGE.*

*Spiritually, we are drawn into a deepening awareness,
And into a living knowledge of God, and of the things of God.*

The Spirit PERSONALIZES both, so they become, specifically, OURS :

We internalize a layered awareness of our Church inheritance.

*Unsurprisingly, mutual human love is the WAY the Spirit
Loves to communicate this evolving gift*

– A love that reveals itself as an awareness

Which enlightens our intellects.

At the natural level,

*The Spirit works through all educative agencies -
From familial figures, through all levels of formal education,
To the plethora of cultural, media, and societal influences
– To raise and dignify our human consciousness.*

*In the Spirit's FOURTH GIFTING or bridging gift,
 We are graced, specifically, with COURAGE,
 To accomplish the transition from younger adult spirituality,
 To one in which WISDOM is more obvious -
 And more explicitly guiding our relating and life choices.
 Here, we are fortified by the Spirit
 To LIVE OUT the earlier gifts ...
 Our growing acknowledgment of God's Presence,
 And the receptive phase of our knowledge of God.
 We are Spirit-affirmed
 To become proactive witnesses TO and WITH others, of both:
 We are graced to INTEGRATE
 The varying faces of God's Presence,
 And our disparate knowledge of God,
 Both within ourselves,
 And with others' practices and life views.
 This transitioning gift challenges us to profess
 What we love, believe and are in our relationships,
 More openly, and even publicly.
 Perhaps by doing so,
 We hearten others to be Good News heralds themselves.
 At the natural level, the clear NEED for the Spirit's affirming
 In a younger adult's life
 ... To stay true to, and to promote, his or her CORE VALUES ...
 Is all too obvious,
 In the midst of modernity's relentless undermining
 Of personal values.*

*If one continues to grow as a person,
 Despite the world's white-anting of Christian values
 – Being 'in the world, but not of it' – ¹⁶
 The Spirit's ever-evolving companionship
 Vitalizes us with a further gift
 ... The assuredly mature adult GIFT of COUNSEL.
 Through this quiet FIFTH GIFT,
 The Spirit purposely challenges us, invites us
 To develop a new sensitivity
 To the revelatory character and striking frequency
 Of God's GUIDING us, in an hourly or even more frequent way.*

¹⁶ Compare Jn 17:11 with both Jn 17:6 and Jn 17:16

*Because of our deepening CHOSEN DEPENDENCE
On God's Fathering Presence,
This gift graces us with a wonderful sensitivity
To the constant flow of the Spirit's sensitizing us
To Divine Intimacy's persuasive seductions.
This gift of discernment allows us to respond
To Divine Beauty's attractive allure.
As a call to ministry, this gift enables us
To GUIDE others in letting their own lives be opened
... To the mysterious interplay of God's Presence
With our human freedom.*

*On the natural level, the fully maturing adult
Is led by the Spirit
Firstly, to develop the openness
To accept advice in their lives;
And only then, to advise and guide others
... Through valuing the worth of dialogue and consensus ...
In the privileged role of assisting others in their life-choices.*

*Out of a sustained GIFT of COUNSEL, active in one's life
– The first OVERT flowering of WISDOM
In the life of a Spirit-led Christian –
There emerges the companion GIFT of UNDERSTANDING.
Here, God's Spirit of Intimacy,
Honours one's closeness and fidelity,
With gifts –
Of INSIGHT, God's own REVELATIONS, even glimpses of the Divine!
Some insights surface, from our being counselled, and counselling others.
Many more arise from Scripture, and from the inheritance of the Church.
St Anselm's affirmation 'We long to UNDERSTAND
What our hearts believe and love',¹⁷
Coupled with St Augustine's
'UNDERSTANDING is the reward, given by faith',
Help us to conclude that a life of imitating Christ, becomes one
Of 'faith seeking UNDERSTANDING.'¹⁸*

¹⁷ St Anselm

¹⁸ St Anselm

*Indeed, our faith's yearning is not disappointed :
A sense of spiritual fulfilment is what this SIXTH GIFT offers.
Through its gift of centering and contemplative prayer,
— Of sharing in what underlies our believing,
And of what flows forth from our loving —
The Spirit fills our hearts with peace,
And prepares us for the intimacy
Of the fuller GIFT of WISDOM.*

*At the natural level, the mature adult reaps the rewards
Of a life lived wisely,
And is gifted by the Spirit with an integrative understanding
Of his own life, and of its inter-relationship with others'.*

*The Spirit's crowning gift, WISDOM,
Clearly arises out of the previous gifts
— Drawing together, the best fruits, the most Christ-like qualities, of all.
Once again, through the profound awareness of the previous gift,
We are given the grace of this new GIFT of WISDOM
To LIVE IT OUT
In a Godlike, INTEGRATED way:
... We experience the inter-relationship of all life,
... We experience humanity's many faces of love, in universal terms,
... We assess what we choose and do, in the context of Eternal values.*

*Now, we sense ...
Abba's wondrous, overflowing love, animating our whole reality —
All our decision-making!
All of our thinking, our feelings, and our imagery!
In the Paschal Light of Wisdom,
All life flows forth
Out of Abba's and Jesus' mutual love,
And returns, to find in it, its resting place and home
Within the Eternal Circle of Love.*

*At the natural level,
Numerous books from antiquity onwards
— Pre-eminently, the Scripture's wisdom literature —
Have been lovingly written
To preserve humanity's wisdom heritage.*

*These writings particularly focus on
The ongoing, multiplying effects of a person's wise life-choices.
They marvel how such wise people
Exemplify and enhance humanity itself
– Offering the best of what humanity is capable,
And the highest to which it can aspire.*

A Sinner's Key Defence ¹⁹

*A sinner's key defence against sin is FELLOWSHIP
– Be that within the family, or a chosen community,
Or in the company of close friends.
Such fellowship effectively acts as a power holding sin at bay.
Moreover, because 'none of us lives to himself', ²⁰
The drifting of a sinner from fellowship,
Will expose him to the destructive individualism
Of a world where celebration of self-absorbed role-players
– With their deceitful devaluing of long-term relationships –
Spawns the same fickle fantasies of fame
Which seduced him!
A truly effective defence against sin is secured
Only by the love of others, and by opening one's heart to others
... And because 'anyone who loves, lives in God', ²¹
Therefore, one's life is anchored in an ETERNAL Fellowship
– The best protection in time of trial.*

¹⁹ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

²⁰ Rom 14:7

²¹ I Jn 4:16

Faith is Essentially Communal²²

*Faith is, essentially, COMMUNAL
... A unique way of being-with-others,
Co-sharing in our uniquely human openness to God.
Through this faith, we become all One Person, in Christ Jesus
... No longer Jew, gentile, slave etc²³
Indeed, Paul never speaks of new 'MEN' in Christ,
But only of the singular 'perfect Man',²⁴
In whom 'Christ is all, and in all'.²⁵*

*Yet these members of Christ's Body or Christ's Person,
Do not possess the gift of the Body or Person
AS THEIR OWN,
But live this life of Christ, of faith,
In each other:
'We are one Body of Christ
And MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER'.²⁶*

*In other words, we belong to each other:
We are each –for others – their WAY to Christ,
We are together – for each one – the TRUTH of Christ,
We are together – for each one – the LIFE of Christ,
Together we constitute the faith of the Church
– Communally – for each other.*

²² Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

²³ Col 3:11

²⁴ Eph 4: 13

²⁵ Col 3:11

²⁶ Rom 12:5

When Suffering Becomes Fellowship²⁷

*For us, 'to proclaim the DEATH of the Lord', in our body,*²⁸
Is to encompass the suffering of others
As OUR OWN
... To transform THEIR suffering
By being with them, in it
– Like Christ –
So that suffering becomes fellowship
– And all are transformed TOGETHER
... Becoming Eucharistic brothers and sisters.

²⁷ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

²⁸ I Cor 11:26

The Roots of Sin ²⁹

*Sin is, ultimately, neither strictly personal,
Nor ever, solely, the responsibility of others.
Rather, the roots of sin are enmeshed in the complex interplay ...
Between the individual, one's family, one's acquaintances, and the community
... And even the miasma of global sin.
Every time a person sins,
He adds to the entanglement and weightage of sin.
Each one's sin further restricts and enmeshes others
In the humanity-wide web of sin.
Personal sin incrementally deepens the malaise
Of loneliness, low self-esteem, apathy and the exploitative urge.
And while our sin entrenches societal resentments and divisiveness,
Contrarivise, our own quest to live a God-centred life,
Is handicapped and confined
By societal sin, suffering and sickness.*

*Life would be depressive, if this was our unchanging lot.
But Jesus' disempowering of sin is total:
His Paschal empowering is present in every facet of our life!
The victory of His vitalizing love, absolutely CERTAIN!
In the meantime if we surrender OUR struggle to Jesus,
– Identifying with Jesus' utter trust in Abba –
Our contending with sin will, in Jesus,
Become a communal, a Church, response
– Assured of a peace-filled outcome.*

²⁹ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

An Extended Daily Tryst³⁰

*One of the best times for us to pray,
Is when we are asleep.
What a blessing eight hours of free-spirited prayer can be!
If, in a prayer of surrender, shortly before sleep,
We invite the Spirit of Love to free and open access
To the totality of our non-conscious world ...
Then this Spirit's INTEGRATIVE PRESENCE
Will enter our sub-conscious and our unconscious,
Our whole universe of imagery,
... Floating freely through our lazing intellect ...
— Offering wondrous generic possibilities
For our later, conscious will to choose!
What wonderful intimacy! What an extended daily tryst!*

*How the Spirit DELIGHTS in sanctifying the many hours
Of our spirit's unanchored POTENTIAL, within our dream-world!
If, while awake, the Spirit already moves our body
To incarnate prayer, through stillness or service,
Or with music, or with artistry, or in sport, or in love-making ...
How then, while asleep, how much more freely, uninhibitedly,
Can the Spirit integrate our whole NON-CONSCIOUS PRAYING
... Glorifying Abba, without reserve
... Thanking Abba for our own Dream Brother, Jesus
... Seeking to forgive, and be forgiven, without words
... Communing with those, in Christ
— Whose dreams, the Spirit weds to ours
... And opening up our hearts, in fondest yearning,
To our loving Abba
... 'Who gives to His beloved as they sleep'?³¹*

*If our sleeping hours are so full of the Spirit's activity,
Maybe He will gift us to pray, with the bride of the Song of Songs,
'I sleep, but my heart watches.'³²*

³⁰ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

³¹ Ps 127: 2

³² Song 5:2

Feeling His Presence³³

*We ought positively desire and welcome
The consoling, felt love of God.
The fervour and emotional experience
Of sensing God's Presence
Ought to be ardently welcomed
But, emphatically, not self-generated.
Consolation subsides when we disown our feelings
... Perhaps we fear others' reactions?*

*Is it not most likely
That, in Abba's tender, freeing gift of Himself
An integral desire is that we FEEL His Presence
In a truly, wholly human way?
To be OVERCOME in God's Presence,
Is a specifically emotional grace:
Not to be moved, not to be overwhelmed
Is to disown our humanity
And the Father of Love
Who created it
With its OPENNESS TO MYSTERY.*

*Abba is divinely, eternally skilled in drawing us to Himself:
Unless we sinfully withdraw from Abba's consoling Presence,
Or, in Jesus' words, 'disown me in the presence of men.'³⁴
Our faithful Father does not allow us to long remain
In 'dryness' or in the 'darkness' of emotional exile
— For He knows that, fickle and wayward as we are,
We direct our emotions to something or someone else
As an adrenaline substitute!*

³³ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

³⁴ Matt 10:33

*O! How emotional is the jealous lover who is our God,
Who, in His invitation, urges us -
‘Come to me!’³⁵
‘Come, follow me!’³⁶
... ‘So that my own joy may be in you
And your joy may be complete!’³⁷
It is He whom we are to IMITATE.*

³⁵ Mt 11:28

³⁶ Mt 4: 19

³⁷ Jn 15:11

Quickened by His Spirit³⁸

*Sent by Abba to Gospel others,
We need to testify
‘To what we have seen,
And to what we have heard’³⁹
... How we have gazed on the Face
Of the risen, crucified Jesus,
And drunk in His words of love.
Quickened by His Spirit,
We have this deep urge
To reflect to others His life of sacrificial love,
To repeat His gentle words of compassion,
To echo His call for unity of hearts,
But, most profoundly of all,
To join Jesus, in His utter trust in Abba.*

³⁸ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

³⁹ I Jn 1: 3

Fasting As Prayer⁴⁰

Fasting is an intense, NON-VERBAL FORM of prayer:

In effect, we pray ...

'Abba, I do not need these things;

You ALONE, Loving Father, are all I need.'

Our whole body is thus continually

Praying this prayer as we fast.

Fasting gives our spirits

A sensitivity, a readiness, a receptivity

... To the Spirit's gentle stirrings within us.

As grace follows grace,

Our body becomes finely attuned

To the Spirit's promptings:

Fasting helps us stay undistracted ...

Unimpeded by non-spiritual preoccupations and consolations.

Positively, it allows our spirits

To become focussed and single-hearted.

Ultimately, as DISCIPLES

Of the Crucified One,

We are schooled in Jesus' personal DISCIPLINE

... 'Doing good to those who hate,

Blessing those who curse,

*Praying for those who mistreat.'*⁴¹

Any follower who fasts like Christ,

Generates joy

– Easter joy

... As we wait for the Lord,

To rise within our hearts!

⁴⁰ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

⁴¹ Lk 6: 27-28

A Celibate's Welcome and Giving⁴²

*The gentle, giving, touch of a celibate
Ought generate a sense of kindness, warmth and togetherness
... Without triggering any desire or passion,
Or any sense of 'taking'.*

*A celibate rejoices
In the freedom and mutuality of friendship,
And, moved by the Spirit of Openness
Sets every friend free to befriend others
... So that they themselves never become
The sole focus OF another
Or focus solely ON any other.*

*A celibate welcomes
The unique loving and lovable presence of a friend
And TAKES PARTICULAR CARE
To always act in such a way,
As not to offer nor to invite ...
The slightest suggestion of sexual intimacy.*

⁴² Written at the National Tertiaship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980

Like Father: Like Son ⁴³

*Jesus the boy, Jesus the teenager,
Loved to be with Yahweh ...
In the reflective rhythms of shepherding,
In the punctuated silences of woodworking,
In the family sharing during a daytime break,
And, increasingly, in the times alone, at sunrise
... Praying ... under a dawning sky.*

*For Jesus, the revered inherited images of Israel's Yahweh
Fills His spirit:
– The earthy, mysterious Yahweh of Adam and of Noah,
Who covenants Himself to the faith-filled Abraham,
Pledging Himself to guiding all his descendants-in-faith,
Personally staying Abraham's trembling hands
From sacrificing Isaac.*

*Another inheritance for Jesus was -
The mystic El Shaddai of the mountain-top,
Of the burning bush, of the Covenant of Holiness,
Of the cloud by day, of the pillar of flame by night
... The intimate friend of the humble, stuttering Moses.*

*A further inheritance for Jesus was -
The 'hands-on' Adonai, kingly Leader of His People,
Motivating and challenging them through His prophets,
Uniting and inspiring them through the humble loyalty
Of the much-forgiven David.*

⁴³ Written at the National Tertianship, Marsfield, Sydney, early 1980. This poem mirrors the big change in my life from the Tertianship onwards – of imaging, and praying to, the Father, as 'Abba'

Yet the KEY image of God for the boy Jesus
– *The image that finds the deepest home in His heart –*
Is the face of Joseph, the person of Joseph
Who, intimately bound to Mary, His Mum,
Together model
The ‘hesed we emet’ of Yahweh for Him ⁴⁴
– ‘YAHWEH-WHO-FATHERS-AND-MOTHERS-ME’.

Thus, as Jesus came to delight in Joseph’s and Mary’s company,
Relishing the deep intimacy of their parenting,
His feelings of being their cherished son
Transferred effortlessly to Yahweh.
So with His senses flooded by love,
With His heart brimful with trust,
And with the humblest confidence,
Jesus came to call
The ONE-TO-WHOM-HE-BELONGED
‘Abba Yahweh!’
And later – simply and lovingly –
‘Abba!’
An encompassing, loving ABBA!
My faithful Abba!
My loving Abba!
My Light! My Life! My Love!’

With His spirit suffused by Abba’ enveloping Shalom, ⁴⁵
And with a delicious abiding sense
Of excitement and surprise
Jesus became spontaneously sensitive
To Abba’s eager Presence,
To His mysterious WTTWIN-NESS.
This revealed itself within His life’s quieter moments:

⁴⁴ Renowned Hebrew phrase from the Old Testament ... meaning ‘loving-kindness and faithfulness’

⁴⁵ The Hebrew word ‘shalom’ means ‘peace’. I gave it a capital to suggest the Holy Spirit

*In His own inhaled breath, in others' smiling eyes,
In the touch of a breeze rippling the hair of a baby,
And, as He nursed a neighbour's elderly parent ...*

*But, 'like Father, like son',
Jesus was equally, and visibly, moved by –
The grimace on a rejected youth's face,
The dropped head of depression,
The anguish of an isolated, battered wife.
Abba-Yahweh's wondrous, inclusive love,
For the least able and the powerless of Israel
Burned passionately, incandescently within Jesus' own heart.*

*Abba's Beloved just could not bear to see anyone
... Belittled ... prejudged ... excluded ...
... Hurt ... forgotten ... or abandoned.
His eyes shone the light of Abba's compassion on them.
His whole person ached
To embrace, to include, to comfort them,
To draw the poor and lowly WITHIN
... Into Abba's relationship with Himself
– There to be deluged with the warmth and tenderness
Which He Himself experienced.*

*At the same time, Jesus did not, just could not,
Transgress upon their freedom:
His eyes spoke invitation,
His arms offered embrace,
His touch re-assured
... But did not pressure.
His whole person was suggestive of gentleness,
Sensitive to ambivalence, supportive of choice
... 'Come to me ... I will give you rest.' ⁴⁶*

⁴⁶ Mt 11:19

