

Folio Thirty-One

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Flesh of the Church, Sinew of God ¹

*We are the body of the Beloved,
Christ's Eucharist alive in the world
... Really, truly en-fleshing the Beloved's Presence
In this place, now, with these people !
Thus to eat and drink the Beloved's body and blood,
Is to dine on the flesh of the Church,
And to drink deeply of its life-blood !*

*As Abba's sons and daughters, beloved adoptees,
We each give sinew, bone and a face to God
... Revealing Christ's identity, through our body language,
In the obviousness of our emotions, and in the flow of our conversation.
We especially personify Jesus ...
As we SENSE being affectionately caressed by Abba,
And as eagerly desire to channel this Love to all !*

WONDROUSLY –

*We too, IN Christ, can Divinize
– With our humble touch and healing words –
All that is human, limited, and needful.
We too, can EMBODY Eternity, now, in this place
... With arms that cradle and embrace,
With hands that sooth, caress, and give assurance,
With eyes that smile Abba's Love on the world !*

*We too, in Christ, can breach the walls of death
... By focussing our gaze on Abba
– Who communes Eternally with us, WITHIN time –
Thus NEGATING death's once potent power
To separate us from God !*

*Abba
As Your Beloved Kin,
Encamped in time,
We are gathered around the God-fire
That flares within our spirits
Transforming our world itself,
Through Your fiery Spirit ...
Into the burnished Image of Your Beloved !*

*Alive and aglow with Your Life, Abba,
We truly PERSONIFY Your Beloved,
Give RESONANCE to Your Word
Becoming ...
Earthen transparencies to the Light of lights !
Laughing eyes to the gaze of Love !
Above all, we EMBODY Christ's love
For You and the Spirit –
Relating as He relates !
Communing as He communes !*

The Spirit's Relating ¹

*The Father's and Son's mutual communing
Transcends all our sense of union.
Their mutual bonding is ALIVE
... Being not something ABOUT Themselves,
But OF Themselves
– A MUTUALITY, Eternally personal : THE SPIRIT !*

*This Person does not say,
"I AM the Relationship",
But "I AM THE RELATING"
... The One-Who-Relates Abba to His Beloved,
And the Beloved to Abba.
Only TOGETHER do Abba, Jesus, and the Spirit proclaim
"We are the Relationship".*

¹ Poem 601, Year 6 of Prayer Ministry, Clayfield Community, Sep 2004.

Spirit ¹

*Our human spirit
Derives from the fact,
That ours is a spiritual soul.*

For us, forever tied TO time,

To be spirit

Is to experience life BEYOND time !

For us, forever tied to specific places,

To be spirit

Is to experience life AS BOUNDLESS

For us, forever subject to fickle emotions,

To be spirit

Is to experience life AS CHANGLESS !

Also, to be spirit, is to live The Truth

– In a way that is beyond human fallibility,

And human infidelity –

Wherein our heart can unite with another's

... Without fallibility, without experiencing loss of trust.

To be spirit
Is to be open to the Absolute ...
To relate to One,
Who TRANSCENDS all our selves utterly, Eternally,
Both individually and communally.
It is also to welcome all other spirits ...
To dwell within our spirit
... As we can choose to dwell within theirs, if invited.

Especially, to be spirit, is to live Endless Love
– Beyond the fullness of human faithfulness –
Wherein, we long for all hearts
To twin with ours, ETERNALLY!
When spirits DO UNITE,
Time, space and limitation vanish!
Love deluges the universe!

The Gift of God ¹

*To be married, sacramentally
Is to receive each other,
As a gift FROM God,
And to receive, in our uniting,
The Gift OF God ...
Wherein, the two, truly become one.*

¹ Poem 603, Year 6 of Prayer Ministry, Clayfield Community Brisbane, Sep 2004

Blest and Poor, As God is Poor – Beatitude 1 ¹

“BLEST ARE YOU POOR, WHO KNOW YOUR NEED OF GOD:

ABBA’S KINGDOM OF LOVE IS YOURS.”

(MT 5:3)

A poor baby

A poor child

A poor teenager

– Such was Jesus

The poor man

Of Nazareth.

As God’s Eternal Beloved, He “was rich”,

But He “became poor”. ²

In Eternity, He is infinitely rich,

–Through Abba’s utter gift ... of ‘His All’.

He is also infinitely poor

– Through the utter surrender of ‘His All’ to Abba.

Thus, as Gift OF Abba ...

As Gift TO Abba ...

Abba and He ARE –

One in Their Giving, ever poor,

One in Their Receiving, ever rich,

One in Their Spirit ...

Giving God ! Receiving God !

*This wondrous Richness,
This wondrous Poverty,
Took root on earth
In time and space,
Within Jesus' humanity ...
The template for our own.*

*It began in the utter poverty
Of Jesus' zero consciousness :
As infant, Jesus was NEITHER
Able to KNOW, NOR to CHOOSE
—Being the Divine Gift OF Abba,*

—Or being the Divine Gift TO Abba

... WHAT POVERTY !

*The mustard seed of Jesus' consciousness
Relied for growth, totally, on the nurture
Which Mary and Joseph supplied :
Enabling it to sprout, and gain leaf,
To branch, blossom, and bear fruit.
It was SOLELY through them
That Jesus CAME to know and love
His OWN Eternal Father*

... WHAT POVERTY !

*As a small child, He came to love Abba,
Through trusting THEM.
In later childhood, He came to sense and trust
Abba's Presence
Both through them,
And, increasingly, in a more PERSONAL way.
Through Joseph, King David's descendant,
Jesus, as a member of this CHOSEN RACE, came to realize
That He belonged-to-God
—As ONE of God's own people !
With Mary, He simply and lovingly COPIED her
... As she responded to God's invitations
With the fondest faith and trust
... WHAT POVERTY !*

*Thus did Jesus' love for Abba grow, and grow,
But, unlike ours, HIS did so, consistently
—Without the brake our self imposes
—Without the mistrust, our wavering hearts generate
—Without the distractions of our endlessly seeking pride of place.
This love for Yabweh, modelled on Mary's and Joseph's ,
Then blossomed into something intensely personal,
—Into the most trusting, fondest friendship with His God-companion
... Wherein, He was swept into the profound intimacy
Of fondly calling Yabweh, "Abba !"*

*Then, as Jesus matured
Into a deeply dependent adulthood,
This fond, filial friendship
Settled into a profound peacefulness
... As he delighted to commune constantly with Abba Yahweh,
Who filled His heart to overflowing !*

*Jesus thus TOOK YEARS to come
To a fulsome knowledge and love
Of the one from whom He came
... Of Him with whom He was one !*

... WHAT POVERTY !

*Thus Jesus learnt to love through trusting others,
And this trust in His parents, and grandparents,
Extended easily to trust in friends, and in His synagogue tutors.
It generated, too, a NETWORK OF TRUST with His fellow Nazareans.
And it is especially this trust and faith,
That He dearly hoped would be reciprocated, later,
In the hearts of those who humbly reached out to Him for healing.
Because His dependence on Abba Yahweh, came communally and naturally,
Jesus sensed that He simply ought not attempt
To be, or do, anything ALONE :
He was, essentially, one of a people ;
He felt one part of an organic whole
... WHAT POVERTY !*

*The very best of what Jesus knew of life and love
Emerged, when He surrendered to Abba
All His own desires and understandings
... Submitting, with deepest joy and humility,
To the utter, utter goodness
Of Abba's Wisdom
... WHAT POVERTY!*

*Jesus prayed that such Wisdom would characterize,
Would suffuse, the whole of His OWN life
... Relying on Abba Yahweh to lead Him
—Heart within Heart—
To breathe in this Divine Wisdom.*

*With it, He sought to clarify and amplify His personal calling.
As He 'enfleshed' this Love-Wisdom in His life,
His deepest sense of self ... was of BELONGING
... To Abba, and to Abba's people
—And of longing to belong, more and more!
Indeed, His key sense of self
Was of DEPENDENCY,
And of FILLIAL BELONGING
... WHAT POVERTY!*

*From the depths of this trustful, childlike intimacy,
Jesus emerged, galvanized by the conviction
Of being CHERISHED, even FAVOURED
– And in this consciousness, deeply yearning
To have others CO-EXPERIENCE these gifts of Abba.
He longed to SHARE with them –
Abba Yahweh’s loving insistence on purity of heart !
Abba Yahweh’s astounding sense of inclusiveness !
Abba Yahweh’s whole-hearted sense of compassion
And Abba Yahweh’s breath-taking sense of justice !
... To share ALL
That Abba-Yahweh had lavished on Him !
... WHAT POVERTY !*

*One thing really STOOD OUT for Jesus,
In His eager urge to spread Yahweh’s good news :
His Abba’s responsiveness to THE CRY OF THE POOR !
This heartfelt love of the poor
Already resonated profoundly in His own heart,
Because He was so utterly and overwhelmingly DEPENDENT ON ABBA
Being so amazingly CHILDLIKE and SIMPLE !
... WHAT POVERTY !*

*In the months leading to His baptism,
Jesus' deep sense of dependence on OTHERS,
Led Him to become a disciple of His cousin
—Almost His twin by age—
... John, son of Zechariah and Elizabeth.
The Baptist's sense of urgency for Yahweh's kingdom,
Helped to clarify Jesus' own outlook and feelings :
John's call to a whole new way of thinking and being,
Moved Jesus to IDENTIFY Himself
With the "ptochoi", the poor, and the "tapeinoi", the lowly
—Together, as Abba Yahweh's own "nepioi", or little ones
... WHAT POVERTY!*

Jesus knew, within Himself, in prayer, that it was they, "the poor,"

Who knew THEIR NEED OF GOD!

And in His own ministry, He soon sensed in His heart,

That it was "the lowly", the "the little ones",

Who were most often, most prepared,

To share in His own intimate experience

... Of childlike dependence on Abba.

'Abba', Jesus declares, 'delights in FATHERING ALL

Who call on Him with NEEDY hearts !'

In response, Abba, through His Spirit

Points them to His NEEDY SON,

The model of a heart, impoverished of self,

Of a heart, with a truly spacious spirit !

... WHAT POVERTY!

*Thus, Jesus urged these “little ones” to WELCOME dependence,
Not rejecting it, as immature,
But welcoming it – precisely, AS A CHILD,
... With simplicity and trusting abandonment
... Be they “hungry or thirsty”,
“Strangers or naked”,
“Sick or imprisoned”,³
–Specifically because they, like Himself,
Had little or no resources, to meet their own needs
... WHAT POVERTY!*

*Jesus’ decision to identify with “the poor and lowly”
Moved Him, also, to seek to COMPREHEND
The matrix of personal and societal sin
That ENTRENCHES poverty, and FORCES ‘dependence’.
Thus, He sought out John’s “baptism of repentance”,
Thereby initiating His own CHOSEN IMMERSION into the sea of sin,
Threatening to engulf all His brothers and sisters
... WHAT POVERTY!*

*In this symbiotic immersion in the lives of Abba’s ‘little ones’,
Jesus marvelled at being so PERSONALLY affirmed :
He was astounded by Abba’s public declaration
Of what was, until THEN,
An inwardly private, intimate friendship !
Stunned too, by the Descent of the Spirit –
In HIS anointing and sealing of this RELATIONSHIP WITH ABBA
– As the vehicle for FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD,
Especially for the poor and lowly, so sidelined by life !*

*Within this epiphany, of support,
Jesus felt wonderfully and uniquely affirmed
By Abba Yahweh's exclamation of delight in Him,
As "My Beloved Son !"
And by Abba's equally heartfelt use of the 'suffering servant' scriptures
To confirm Jesus' sacrificial destiny :
His MISSION to the poor !*

*Abba's declaration to the universe, of His delight in His Beloved Child
ENBOLDENED Jesus to go ahead, and freely SHARE with the poor
His own deep sense of childlike dependence on Abba !
He urged them, not just to be dependent,
But to CHOOSE dependence : to seek a baptism of FORGIVENESS
– So as to WELCOME this Kingdom of Dependence, as "little ones"
"Unless you CHANGE and become like little children
You shall not enter Abba's Kingdom." ⁴*

*After His ritual immersion in the lives of His 'anawin',
Waves of joy and humility swept over Jesus :
He felt the need for a very deep, and sustained experience
–Of INTIMACY with Abba –
Before He publicly launched His "good news".
In being "Led by the Spirit into the wilderness", ⁵
He sensed Abba Yahweh's own desire
To prepare and to strengthen Him.
Indeed, this Moses-like preparation for leadership
Became, in part, trial by ordeal.*

Satan, alerted by –
... Abba Yahweh's outpouring of fatherly love,
... Jesus' humble, filial obedience,
... And the Spirit's Anointing of Jesus for mission
– Broke cover, and subjected the Beloved
To a barrage of temptation !

Initially, this most deceitful of spirits, suggested to Jesus ...
'Satisfy your own material needs first,
Before worrying about God and others :
Lift yourself out of poverty
Before focussing on the poor !
One needs to be rich
To help the poor !'

Secondly, he snidely suggested ...
Forget about the way of childlikeness and dependence :
Use your own miracle-working powers
To impress and sway the crowds !
Then they'll KNOW that God's on your side
Such power will convince them !'

Finally, Satan ENVOIOUSLY tried to bribe Jesus

–With the prospect of an alliance between them

... Actually, a disguised ploy for DEPENDENCE, on himself :

Power, independence, and untold influence will be yours,

If you ally yourself to ME ... to those worldly forces,

... Those hidden manoeuvrings ... those dark powers I CONTROL !

Trust and exploit these hierarchies of privilege and licence

– To exalt your dominance over others, and to promote your cause !

Then, you'll be able to enforce 'our' teachings, with ease !'

Jesus simply replied,

'Blest are the poor, who know their need of God :

Abba's kingdom of love is theirs !' ⁶

Yes ! Blest are those who HUNGER for Abba's Presence;

Yes ! Blest are those who MOURN for Abba's seeming absence in their lives

– All such, know their need of God.

The particular challenge by Jesus, to His POOR disciples

–Ever under pressure, to assert their independence of God –

Is that they REMAIN poor, 'poor and needy in spirit'.

Jesus remained so, to death :

He KEPT on trusting, dependent on Abba until His last breath

Entrusting His very spirit into His Father's tender care

... A spirit utterly emptied of self,

... A spirit as poor as God is poor, Eternally

"All I have is Yours,

And all You have is mine !" ⁷

*Thus did Jesus begin humanity's new era,
With this greatest of all assurances to us all –
‘Blest are you poor
Who know your need of God :
Abba's kingdom of love is yours !’* ⁸

BEATITUDE 1

1 Poem 604, 8 Day Retreat, Camden, Sydney, early Oct 2004, Day 1.

(Sr Yvonne Parker, Spiritual Director)

2 JB 2 Cor 8:9 3 JB Mt 25:44 4 JB Mt 18:3 5 JB Mt 4:1 6 Cf Mt 5:3 7 JB Jn 17:10 8 Cf Mt 5:3

NOTE: There are 8 poems: for the 8 beatitudes, for the 8 days of the Retreat.

Boundlessly Deepening Human Freedom ¹

Ultimately,
Only Christ Himself ... the Truth of who-we-are
– And not some human PROCESS –
Can lead us into the Mystery
Of our inner life
–As to how the Divine encompasses the human, within us.
He does this ... not only IN complete freedom,
But by boundlessly DEEPENING human freedom !

¹ Poem 605, 8 Day Retreat, Camden Sydney, early Oct 2004, Day 1.

The Ungentle and the Gentle – Beatitude 2. ¹

*“Blest are you who are gentle :
Abba’s promises will be fulfilled in you” (Mt 5:4)*

*Rebecca’s was an ungentle spirit
... Ready to cheat her blind husband,
To snatch Isaac’s inheritance, for her favourite, Jacob;
Isaac’s was a gentle spirit
... Seen by God as a selfless, obedient person,
Very much the sacrificial lamb, he was asked to become.*

*Zachary’s was an ungentle spirit
... Both breaking trust with God – “But I am an old man”,
And making demands on God – “How can I be sure of this ?”;
Mary’s was a gentle spirit
... Simply, trustingly, putting her whole life
At the service of God’s Desire – “Be it done unto me ...”.*

*John the Baptist’s was an ungentle spirit
... Preferring, immediately, to CONFRONT his converts,
Rather than to invite and persuade them :
PROVOKING the crowd, as a whole – “Brood of vipers !”
ORDERING the soldiers bluntly – “No intimidation ! No extortion !
... Be content with your pay.”*

Jesus' was a gentle spirit

WELCOMING CHILDREN – *“putting His arms about them”*

COMFORTING THE WEARY – *“Come to me ... my burden is light”*;

LEADING BY EXAMPLE, NOT BY DIRECTIVE – *humbly washing feet* ;

PUTTING OTHERS' FEELINGS FIRST – *comforting His Mother and the women,*

While being brutalized Himself on the way to Calvary ;

BEING IN TOUCH WITH OTHERS' NEEDS –

... *With the cured girl, “Taking her by the hand,*

He directed that something be given to her to eat”;

... *With the leper, “Jesus reached out His hand to touch him”*;

... *With the boy with convulsions, “Jesus took him by the hand,*

helped him up, and restored him to his father”.

... *With the blind man, “Taking the blind man by the hand,*

He led him forth, outside the village”

Jesus' Spirit invites US to be gentle

So that He can enter, animate, and Christen

Each circumstance of our lives.

Yet, within each of us ...

Our ungentle spirit and our gentle spirit

Uncomfortably co-exist, like weeds with wheat.

Thus

While our ungentle spirit seeks to insert the self into most processes,

Our gentle spirit is content to be unacknowledged ;

While our ungentle spirit is impatient, seeking quick solutions,

Our gentle spirit respects growth, and human incompleteness ;

While our ungentle spirit gives little time to silence and reflection,

Our gentle spirit reveres both, as necessary for human growth ;

While our ungentle spirit seeks to organize and structure participation,

Our gentle spirit seeks to attract and welcome co-operation ;

While our ungentle spirit ... to plan, limits the range of others' choices,

Our gentle spirit prioritizes equality and free choice ;

While our ungentle spirit uses 'distancing' responses with upset people,

Our gentle spirit uses touch, sensitivity, and affirmation ;

While our ungentle spirit seeks to achieve, to compete and be distinctive,

Our gentle spirit like to be of service, to participate, and to include ;

While our ungentle spirit believes happiness is a goal, attained through effort,

Our gentle spirit believes it is a gift, which grows only if we share it.

Jesus, the gentle one,

Invites 'both' our spirits, to live in harmony

'Enough for me to keep my soul, tranquil and quiet,

Like a child in its mother's arms" ²

... Our ungentle spirit cradled within our gentle spirit.

BEATITUDE 2.

1 Poem 606, 8 Day Retreat, Camden Sydney, early Oct. 2004, Day 2.

2 J.B. Ps 131:2

NOTE: 11 quotes for the gospel on page 1 are uncited.

In Him We Weep – Beatitude 3. ¹

*“Blest are you who mourn now :
God will be your consolation” (Mt 5:5)*

“A Christian does not live for himself alone, but belongs to God.” ²

Because we do not live for ourselves, but for God ...

When God grieves, we grieve ;

When we grieve, God grieves.

We humans sorrow, because of sin and sin’s effects

... Both in ourselves, and in others :

When I’m cruel, all others wince,

When any other is cruel, I wince.

Abba Himself, to whom we belong,

Recoils when any of us is hurt, or cause a hurt !

All our mourning is always ...

“Like the mourning for an only son” ³

– For Calvary’s Jesus, the Beloved of Abba !

Weeping in the garden, He wept for us all :

Because, so often,

WE cannot summon tears to weep ...

Because in our hard-heartedness to others,

We “do not recognize our opportunity

When God offers it.” ⁴

Yet, Jesus bears both our pain, and this deep sense of lost opportunity.

Through His tears, we slowly begin to lament

Our crucifying betrayals.

Yes ... as He hangs in torment, racked by pain

– An “Only Son” lavished with love by a loving Father

And now brutalized by our treachery –

We finally find tears of our own to weep ...

From, our depths, we call to You –

O broken-hearted Abba !

Listen compassionately to our cries !

O listen to Your Son’s pleas ;

“Abba forgive US, we know not what we do.” ⁵

Yes, in Him, we GROAN, when ...

“Hemmed in by enemies on every side,

Our loved ones, dashed to the ground,” ⁶

Your loving-kindness, O Abba,

Seems “hidden from our eyes”. ⁷

Yet, in reality,

Your Divine Compassion

Is obscured by OUR rage, OUR lust, OUR fears

By OUR greed, OUR pride, OUR lack of hope !

But now, gentled into a new vision, by the tenderness of Your grace,

We plead –

Let us be to You, like Your First Born !

The Beloved of Your eyes !

The Delight of Your heart !

In response

Your swift forgiveness works its wonders

Because,

You draw us into Your Family

... Not as a niece, or a cousin, or grandson ...

But AS Your own Beloved Son !

IN Your Beloved Son !

Yet unbelievably ... for all Your boundless love ...

Our worldly misgivings, and ambivalence of heart

Still linger in dark crevices of our spirit,

Cloying our vision and, whiteanting our will.

So, as we pine over lost opportunities,

Yet stubbornly want to love on OUR terms

—As one of “the many, who behave as enemies of the cross of Christ” — ⁸

We can only lament,

“If we had only understood Your message of peace !” ⁹

Yet AGAIN, the Face of our crucified brother, Jesus,

Beings us to our knees ... and to tears.

‘O ! How could we deny Him ?’

Then again, deep within,

We hear the whispers of the Beloved’s heart ...

“The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me

... To comfort ALL THOSE who mourn :

For your mourning robe,

Put on the oil of gladness !

For despondency, praise !” ¹⁰

*Our hearts jolt with joy !
He who wept with us,
Is now the source of our joy !
His Spirit, the 'Promise of the Lord,' ¹¹
Is ours !
In Him, "all our tears are wiped away !" ¹²*

BEATITUDE 3.

1 Poem 607, 8 Day Retreat, Camden Sydney, early Oct 2004, Day 3.

2 St Ignatius of Antioch. 3 Amos 8:10 J.B. 4 J.B. Lk 19:44 5 J.B. Cf Lk 23:34

6 J.B. Lk 19:43 7 J.B. Lk 19:42 8 J.B. Phil 3:18 9 J.B. Lk 19:42

10 J.B. Is 61:1, 3 Cf Lk 4:18 11 Cf Acts 2:33 12 J.B. Rev 21:4

Longing to Belong – Beatitude 4 ¹

*“Blest are you who hunger and thirst
For what God desires : you will be satisfied” (Mt 5:6)*

*To long for God,
And to be satisfied ...
Is to BELONG to God.
Thus to long for God ...
Is both, to long to be WITH God,
And to long with ALL our being :
Only God can satisfy such utter longing !*

*If ‘belonging’ is, at heart, ‘longing’,
Then to be with God,
Is STILL to long for God :
Possible ... only because
God is EVER BEYOND all our longing !*

*To be with God, then,
Is to DESIRE God
... ETERNALLY.
Nothing else fulfils our nature :
“He made us, we belong to Him” ²
... AS creatures to God ;
Yet wondrously,
In Re-Creating us, we belong to Him
... AS God to God
... In Christ !*

*Thus our very nature, created or re-created,
Is to desire all that is OF God,
And all that IS God :
– Only God !
O Communion Divine !*

*At heart, we desire only what God desires :
– God !*

Because God is Desire itself ...

God's desiring

Is to infinitely give to the Other :

Father to Beloved Son Eternally

Beloved Son to Father Eternally

... The Spirit – being God's Giving, Eternally

... The Spirit – being God's Receiving, Eternally.

In Christ, all of God's desiring

Is OURS :

The life of Abba, Jesus Ascended and the Spirit

Is LIVED OUT within us !

THEIR life is our life,

THEIR belonging, our belonging,

THEIR desiring, our desiring :

“Blest are we, who thirst for what God thirsts

... We will be satisfied.”³

BEATITUDE 4.

1 Poem 608, 8 Day Retreat, Camden Sydney, early Oct 2004, Day 4.

2 J.B. Ps 100 3 Mt 5:6

Within the Warmth of Your Wings ¹

Wrapped within the warmth of Your Wings,

–Your enrapturing embrace –

We gaze into Your eyes

... Drawn to the fire

Of Your Depthless Love,

To the Love, encompassing All

– Flowing freely into all those of open heart,

Enlivening them !

Held gently captive here, within Your wings,

We never lose heart

... Never lose our heart

To any but You !

Attract us, so we can choose

No one but you ...

FREE us to serve, to love,

None but You !

Enraptured thus, in You,

In the embrace of All ...

No enemy can last

But the space of a fear :

Our loving them, sees them TRANSFORM

Into lovers – in You !

*Mourning with Your broken-hearted Beloved,
As straying, yet 'homeing' hearts of our Family,*

– Hearts aching for Your Peace –

We become witnesses,

Channels,

Of Your Son's Paschal FORGIVENESS

AsHe transforms –

All hurt, all loss, all estrangement

... Into the intimacy of Your Embrace.

That sunburst of joy,

Rising from the heart of Your Homecoming Beloved,

Irradiates the very fibre of our beings,

All our RELATIONSHIPS,

Such that all of 'open-heart'

Are enveloped within the arms

Of our Homecoming Father !

O Blest Communion !

What Enrapture is ours !

Unless ... ¹

*We who exploit others in any way
– Their dignity, their feelings, their gifts –
Have ULTIMATELY,
No chance of escaping responsibility
– As we have to reckon with a God
Not only allied, but IDENTIFIED,
With the exploited poor and lowly ...
One with the poor, God-man of Nazareth
... Unless ...
Unless we mourn our hard-heartedness,
Unless we welcome the grace
Of a complete change of heart !*

*This necessitates surrendering all that we possess
– Especially all we cling to –
Even to giving our lives to the poor and lowly !
If we do so, we find we're in the company
Of the same, poor, God-man of Nazareth
... Who has already done so,
And who IS the 'poor one', the 'lowly one',
To whom we surrender our life !*

1 Poem 610, 8 Day Retreat, Camden Sydney, early Oct 2004, Day 4.

Nearest the Father's Heart – Beatitude 5 ¹

*“Blest are you with compassionate hearts :
You shall experience Abba’s own tender compassion” (Mt 5:7)*

*When my heart’s been broken
– A dream lost, a friend betrayed –
... From its wounds,
My feelings have spilled out
Over myself and others.
Mysteriously,
Such a heart is often ‘graced’ by God’s Spirit
As a home of prayer.
Thus, when I sense the sufferings of others,
My heart’s wounds re-open, in empathy ...
And, with the flow of compassion
... Comes prayer.*

*Our Abba God
Longs to choose such a heart
To channel further
The torrent of loving compassion
Pouring from Christ’s side on Calvary !
Such a love especially enables
All wounded hearts involved,
To CHERISH ANEW –*

How Abba RUNS to embrace straying sons and lost daughters,

How Jesus tenderly walks, HAND IN HAND, with the blind,

On their journey to renewed vision;

How Jesus KNEELS TO BATHE both bruised feet and aching hearts

In the waters of renewal ;

How the Spirit fills open hearts, with the sense of a companioning presence.

Wondrously, the compassion channelled through such broken hearts ...

Not only renews and transforms crushed spirits,

But soothes sinews,

Regenerates trust,

And transforms destinies,

*– Often through the accompanying power
Of a transformed 'elder brother's' PRAYER !*

Prayer best begins in healed hearts,

In hearts once broken,

Because prayer's end

Is, to HEAL other broken hearts,

Until all hearts change !

They heal best ...
Who pray 'heart to heart' :
If our hearts rest
IN the heart of the Ascended Christ
The one "nearest to the Father's heart" ²
... Where 'heart speaks to heart' – ³
Then –
Worlds can heal !
Whole people change !

Changed hearts
Change the universe !
For, when we move the heart of our Abba God,
His Beloved's pierced heart
DELUGES our universe
With depthless forgiveness
–An out pouring of joy connecting us all,
Cascades ... of peace, to our hearts' content !

1 Poem 611, 8 Day Retreat, Camden Sydney, early Oct 2004, Day 5.

2 J.B. Jn1:18 3 Bl. John Henry Newman.

The Stream ¹

Preamble : On the evening of Day 5 of the Retreat, in response to my simple question to Abba

... "What about our life within, Abba?" ... I sensed His immediate reply, in the words –

"THERE FLOWS IN THE HEART OF THE RIVER, A STREAM, FLOWING FROM THE HEART OF SILENCE."

I immediately penned the words of this poem :

The 'stream' always flows WITHIN the river, at its heart

... Rarely on its surface, rarely touching its banks ...

Moving, periodically, to seek out its depths.

It does not hold itself apart from the mother-stream :

It is water, as she is water;

It flows, as she flows

... The same, but distinct :

While the river gives the stream

A womb-like context, and direction,

The stream, within, supplies its gift of nutrients to the river

... Becoming a 'life-source' for it.

*Flowing from the heart of silence,
The stream courses onwards
– Silently, speedily, unseen, unsensed, by human onlookers.
While it moves, with energy,
It disturbs little, but the hidden depths below it
... And this, only periodically,
As its own cooler, denser waters,
In dipping to trawl the river's bed,
Lifts up a cloud of nutrients,
Carrying them downstream,
To nourish the plants and animal life there
– Bringing about transformative life-giving change.*

*For a long time, stream and river companion each other ...
Ultimately, the stream merges with the river,
Identifying with it ...
As they empty into lake or ocean, as one.*

*For us, our life-source is the Spirit
– THE Stream of Life issuing forth from the heart of Silence.
In this nourishing silence,
The Word
... With voice stilled, eyes lowered,
Lips fragrant as incense ...
Is being KISSED BY,
And is KISSING,
His Beloved Abba.*

Their Breathing quickens ...
Life flows between Them
– God's gift of God, to God, in God –
Nourishing Each Other,
Nourishing US, IN Christ.
As Their Breathing
Becomes Silence,
The Spirit 'Life-Stream' bathes us in Their Love.

Transparent Hearts – Beatitude 6 ¹

*“Blest are you with transparent hearts :
You will see God in everyone, and everything” (Mt 5:8)*

*Historically,
Those hearts, rendered more obviously transparent
... To God’s Presence,
Such as Moses, Elijah, and Paul,
Were each allowed in some way
To gaze on God’s Face
More openly.*

*In the Flow of Light
Between God and them,
The effect was a ‘Godburst’ of life.
Their lives changed radically.
It transformed their very persons
– Widening their vision of life limitlessly !
Further, because they now viewed humanity,
Much more as God beholds it,
This deepened their love of people immeasurably,
And wondrously LIT UP other lives around them
– So THEIR hearts also became more transparent !*

As with Moses, Elijah and Paul ...

*So too, now, with all open transparent hearts
Transformed in the Paschal Jesus.
Paschal grace, cumulatively, allows all these hearts
To view the fruits of Jesus' Resurrected Presence
In their own lives.
In deep gratitude, these hearts feel IMPELLED by the Spirit
To be witnesses of His Risen Presence, to others.*

*They especially, become witnesses of His Ascended Presence WITH Abba,
Wherein humanity, IN Christ, gazes openly on Abba's Face.
Day by day, they are graced to witness to the Risen and Ascended Jesus
... As his Spirit gathers them together in Eucharist,
To live His kind of sacrificial love !*

*By thus living IN JESUS ASCENDED
With all who are similarly open-hearted,
They share, wondrously, in the Ascended Jesus'
Open-eyed gaze upon Abba's Face !
Thus Abba,
In seeing each of their faces, simply as 'My Beloved',
Gives voice
But to one word,
"Jesus".
And the Paschal Jesus
—Utterly sure He speaks for us—
Gives voice
But to one word,
"Abba".*

In such a Christian's transparent heart,

These two sounds as one ...

"Beloved !"

... In the Spirit

Who breathes forth Their Love

Within us

As ONE.

Thus, such a transparent heart

Becomes one who KNOWS fully

With Christ's knowing

... Knowing Abba as Jesus Ascended does ;

And becomes one who CHOOSES fully

With Christ's choosing

... Choosing Abba as Jesus Ascended does.

Such a transparent heart, thus,

–Becomes a place of full encounter, of Eternal encounter,

Where, in Jesus Ascended,

We meet Abba

With a pure, open gaze

– Especially in the people He indwells

... In the members of Christ's own Body !

It is a place of open union with others :

Because there is no holding back.

We share in the utter openness of the Ascended Jesus

To the waiting arms of Abba !

*Thus, to be a transparent heart
– Like Jesus Ascended –
Is not only to see God
In everyone, and in everything,
But to be united to God,
In everyone, and in everything !*

BEATITUDE 6.

1 Poem 613, 8 Day Retreat, Camden Sydney, early Oct 2004, Day 6.

Paschal Peace – Beatitude 7 ¹

*“Blest are you who strive for peace :
Abba will call you children of His heart.” (Mt 5:9)*

*Deep within Abba’s heart
Is a realm of peace ...
Its five doorways within,
The five wounds of Jesus :
One hand, touching the leper’s isolation,
The other, holding Peter’s faith afloat ;
One foot, kicks Temple greed a ‘jealous’ blow,
The other, climbs Golgotha’s self-sacrificing heights ;
And His heart, ruptured in love, deluges us all !*

*As we pass through these wounds,
“Loving, till it hurts”, ²
Peace seeps
Into the marrow of our spirit,
Kindling an inner fire in our hearts ...
Radiating the warm Presence of the Divine.*

This same peace flows
–When the prodigal’s face rests
At last ...
Flush against His Father’s cheek ;
–When the prostitute’s lips kiss
Jesus’ feet,
Wet with her tears ;
–When the leper’s open sores –
... Tingling with new life ...
Feels the accepting touch of Jesus’ fingers ;
–When Lazarus’ UNBOUND hands
Hold Jesus’ face,
In a tender kiss of thanks ;
–When Emmaus eyes behold the broken bread
And see in the “stranger’s” gaze
A glorious Sunrise,
A Peace Divine ...

This Peace of the Paschal Jesus
CASCADES
From heart to heart,
Down the centuries,
As full hearts OVERFLOW to others
–As hearts, newly fired ...
As spirits, aglow with peace ...
Set a whole people a light !

Human hearts, of themselves, cannot create peace :

We are children of a fractured inheritance.

Yet broken hearts give grace entry.

When these do STRIVE for peace,

It is God's Peace they receive –

“My peace I leave with you,

My peace I give to you ;

Not as the world gives,

Do I give to you.”³

More wondrous still ...

God's peace is a peace

Whose clear focus is COMMUNION :

“These things I have spoken, so that

IN ME

You may have peace.”⁴

Our fractured inheritance is thus remade – WHOLE :

To be united in peace

IN CHRIST

Is to be

The sons or daughters

Of the Father of Peace

... Truly, children after his own heart

... Just like His Beloved !

BEATITUDE 7.

1 Poem 614, 8 Day Retreat, Camden Sydney, early Oct 2004, Day 7

2 Bl. Mother Teresa. 3 Jn 14:27 N.R.S.V. 4 Jn 16:33 N.R.S.V.

O Utter Goodness ** 1

Abba, Jesus, and Loyce

WITHIN Your luminous loveliness,

WITHIN Your communing in love,

WITHIN Your love's rapturous beauty

Is a boundless, transparent ocean of peace

–Incomparably CLEAR

... Where You, God Ever Beyond are God Most Near !

– Incomparably ENERGIZED

... Where You, Love's Still Centre are Life Alive In Us !

– Incomparably LOVING

... Where You, O Utter Goodness, fill, to over flowing,

The universe of our hearts !

These cherished hearts you fondly renew and re-shape

– Transforming them all

Into the very heart of Your Beloved

... Whose heart alone

Can summons the love and thanks

Sufficient to honour

Your Goodness !

Yet –

It is these hearts ... ALL of these hearts
– Hearts to be empowered and transformed by You –
That You have ENTRUSTED TO ME PERMANENTLY
... To be for them, A PRAYING HEART
... Especially for those who are 'mute'
– Who cannot pray, who will not pray.
Yet, I have no pray to offer You ...
O Wondrous Three-Personed Love,
Centering all our lives
... But Jesus, Your Word of Love,
Your Eucharist of Praise !

** For the key notes for the emergence of this poem, see my JOURNAL – SPIRITUAL, Vol 4 pp 13, 14, 15. See also Poem 618.

1 Poem 615, 8 Day Retreat, Camden Sydney, early Oct 2004, Day 7.

A New Vision of What's Possible ¹

*Beauty, in all its forms,
Whenever it DRAWS US,
Brightens our lives
With a new vision of what's possible
– Of the promise of what lies within,
Of Mystery glimpsed,
Of something, someone
... Reanimating hope !
... Firing hearts !*

*Beauty, beautiful lives can transform those of us
Stuck in an old 'reality', an old vision
– Stimulating us
... To re-engage life !
... To brave new frontiers !
... To deepen our relationships !
... To commune with hearts unknown !*

¹ Poem 616, 8 Day Retreat, Camden Sydney, early Oct 2004, Day 7.

Home to Your Arms ¹

O Loving Abba
Lead us
Into the depths of Your indwelling
That we might radiate
Your Saving Light
To others
– Radiating, through our relating,
The warmest invitation
To share in Your ever inclusive welcome
... To come home to Your arms.

¹ Poem 617, 8 Day Retreat, Camden Sydney, early Oct 2004, Day 7.

Brimming Hearts ¹

PREAMBLE: *“On the evening of Day 7 of my 8 day retreat at Camden, 2004*

having being moved by the Spirit – seemingly in a life-changing way –

IT BEGAIN TO RAIN RAIN, AND DID SO STEADILY FOR 9 HOURS THAT NIGHT.

For this whole time I was AWAKE, reflecting and writing.” TO'D.

*Moved by the Spirit,
As the rain continuously tap-danced on the tin roof above,
My heart brimmed over, with thanks to Abba
... For that faithful remnant
Of hundreds of thousands of other brimming hearts,
In parishes, in churches, in mosques in temples,
In groups all around the world,
... Hearts overflowing with love
–Imaged, for me, in the millions of raindrops !*

*The hearts of these people
Are ever-ready to flow
... With love,
A thousand times, a thousand thousand times ...
Brimming over with Your Ascended Love, O Jesus
–For the Father of Love !*

NOTE: This poem PRECEDES that of Poem 615, in time, and both ought to be read in the context of my notes on my whole experience in my Journal – Spiritual, Vol 4 Poems 13, 14, 15.

¹ Poem 618, 8 Day Retreat, Camden Sydney, early Oct 2004, Day 7.

Peace and the Cross – Beatitude 8 ¹

‘Blest are you
When you’re targeted for giving witness :
You’ll experience Abba’s love.
Quietly celebrate
When you’re mistreated, excluded, or slandered
... For being ‘my followers’
–Because, TO KEEP ON LOVING such tormentors,
Heaven IS YOURS ALREADY !
Tormentors like these
Who kill those who stand up to witness
To the Father of Love,
Obviously need our love.” (Mt 5:10-12)

Jesus’ Peace
Makes a home in all you
Who embrace His Cross
–Who are mistreated or excluded,
Slandered or targeted,
For genuinely witnessing
To the One who was sent
To embody the Father’s love.

Contrarwise, Jesus' Peace

Deserts all you

Who rationalize, or reject the Cross

Either ... by divisively challenging,

Or, by slyly devaluing

Christian witness.

The Spirit's gift of COURAGE

Is really needed by all Christians,

When direct attacks, or undermining,

Come from –

Church-attending Christians,

From your close friends or relatives,

Or hardest of all, from your family.

Jesus urges you to carefully discern

The Father's specific, personal call to you, in this situation,

And to stay true

To your original 'in-Spiration' in following Jesus.

You will almost certainly FEEL the nails bite home

... 'Bite', as in 'missing out', as 'being isolated',

Or as directly experiencing the spite of others.

Above all, Jesus urges you

To be deeply respectful,

And as perseveringly loving

– As He would be –

To those undermining, or persecuting you.