

Folio Forty-Four

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Less and Less ¹

“Go and bathe seven times ...

If the prophet had asked you to do something difficult,

Would you not have done it ?

... So he went down, and immersed himself, seven times, in the Jordan

... Go in peace.” 2Kg 5:19

Naaman was determined to “do something difficult” for God

... To do, as it were, MORE and MORE

– To have HIS efforts MATCH God’s healing efforts !

Yet, he is gradually persuaded to do the understated, simple things

... To do, as it were, LESS and LESS

– To allow God’s healing bounty to far outweigh his little effort.

And, moreover, he is persuaded,

Not by Israel’s King, Jehoram, nor even by the Prophet Elisha,

But by his wife’s serving girl !

Thus Naaman is CALLED, to look not for more and more power and prestige,

But for LESS and LESS ;

To look not to a king, not to a prophet, not to an authority figure,

Not to his consort, not to a male, not even to an adult ...

But to a female ! A slave ! A mere girl !

Moreover, his bathing was not to be

A singular, eye-catching, dramatic gesture

But SEVEN, common place washings !

And humbler yet, to do so, NOT in a significant river

... Like the Abana or Parpar of Damascus ...

But in Israel's much lesser stream,

The Jordan !

Truly, in God's thinking, less is more :

Yahweh was engraving on Naaman's heart, the message –

“God's ways are NOT our ways”,²

... To become LESS and LESS

–So God becomes MORE and MORE !

Naaman was indeed RESPONSIVE to God's invitation.

He DID humble himself – “He went down ...”,

And he underwent a total transformation

– “He IMMERSed himself, SEVEN TIMES”.

Moreover, as with Jesus, to be IMMERSed was to be BAPTIZED,

And Naaman's SEVEN immersions indicate a whole and complete change.

So too for our conversion :

Our journeying into faith,

Our being immersed – EN-PERSONED – in the Risen Christ,

Is truly a call

–To less and less power, possessions, and pleasuring,

To assert one's self less and less,

To speak less and less,

To BE less and less ...

Only then, will God's 'Shalom'

Be ours

... As it was for Naaman :

"Go, IN PEACE".

1 Poem 860, Second Annual Retreat, Marian Valley, late November 2007, Day 3.

2 Is 55:8

Within the Sheepfold ¹

Love, eternally invites :

' COME ...

As family to my Beloved !

FEEL His Easter Joy !

SHARE His Paschal consciousness !

CO-EXPERIENCE His Wondrous Ascension !'

Yet,

In this era of the Spirit

–With the Glory of grace REVEALED, but STILL TO COME –

We, as Jesus' failing brothers and sisters,

Stand humbly below His CROSS

... Our hearts pouring out their eucharist of love !

In doing so, our hearts soften,

So Love can re-shape them, AS HIS BELOVED'S

–Wholly transforming us.

Now, with our hearts' NEW ears,

Love bids us

' LISTEN ...

To the SHEPHERD CALLS of my Beloved.'

For Love knows

.... Hearts can easily turn FICKLE

... Hearts can easily HARDEN

–Causing Love to sicken with anguish for us,

As for a CRUCIFIED ONLY SON !

So, if we stay within the sheepfold of the Beloved's care

–Not initiating changes, but trusting

In the Beloved's HOMING instincts –

The sheepfold becomes a Fellowship of Trust,

A Circle of Love

... Where OUR hearts

LIVE !

In the Service of Your People ¹

O Abba of all tenderness,

Gentle my heart ... Make luminous my spirit ...

In the service of Your people,

So that You behold Your Beloved in us all,

And delight in-us-in-Him !

O Lovable Abba, CAUSE TO GROW within me –

A forgiving heart, emptied of envy, soft with compassion

A God-seeking heart, alight with a child's simplicity

A pure heart, to see You in everyone and in everything

A vigilant heart ... to watch, to wait ... in silence, in stillness

A strength of spirit ... to accept suffering, with a Eucharistic heart

A humility of spirit, ablaze with courage ... to love what I hate in myself,

And to love those, who wrong or grieve me.

A liberty of spirit ... to accept joy NOW – as the touch of Fellowship Eternal !

O Spirit of Abba, draw me into the heart of Your People

... Together, to praise Your bountiful Love !

The House of Love ¹

“I REJOICED when they said to me –

Let us go up to the house of Love !” Ps 122:1

The house of Love, for me,

... Is an unpainted wayside barn.

There, we the needy of God, one twilight,

Were gathered in, by the SAME good news

We’d heard on the way.

Within a forgiving circle of listeners, and through shared hurts,

We began to tell the SAME story ...

About a guy in his thirties,

Who’s always there

When times are rough on the track ...

Even though he himself has a weeping wound in his side,

With an attached surgical bag.

Then, as we sit down to eat our wayfarers’ bread,

HE comes in late, sits and listens.

Our group is slowly transformed :

The ones MOST moved by the acceptance they’ve felt, suggest we pray.

We do. Simply and heartfelty.

Our feelings deepen.

*Then a couple get up,
And begin to SERVE us some wine they'd been keeping.
Others draw out more wayfarers' bread
From THEIR packs, and go and share
With those with none.*

*A few begin to hum
The songs of the track.
Soon we are singing together.
The meal draws to a close
And then, most transforming of all,
Some SACRIFICE their sleeping places
For a disabled couple, and for a pregnant single lass
—BECAUSE, the fellow in his thirties
Had begun to wash the ulcered feet
Of an older woman who was slow of mind,
But also, of a gangly youth who was deeply depressed,
And who had a badly cut foot ...*

*Silence filled the barn with warmth :
Our hearts were CENTERED on what we'd witnessed.
Love closed our eyes that night ...*

Love Calls : Our Eucharistic Response ¹

*Our yearning for Love,
Our calling TO Love,
Is but an echo
Of Love yearning for us,
Of Love calling TO us.*

*When LOVE calls
... If our heart is empty of self ...
It RESONATES ... indeed, it RINGS FORTH JOY
As our response to Love ...
Mirroring Love's depthless joy in us !*

*More. Jesus Ascended has sculpted OURS
To be Eucharistic hearts :
He yearns for us –
To Eucharist our every deed to Abba
To Eucharist all our feelings ... our passion for life
To Eucharist all our relationships
And, it is His brotherly, deepest DESIRE
That our Eucharistic hearts
Enable us to COME TOGETHER, IN HIMSELF,
In the Fellowship of Love
Wondrously united in the Spirit !*

Faith Works through Love ¹

“Faith Works through Love.” Gal 5:6 (N.R.S.V.)

While, through the SAVING, ENABLING WORDS of God,

Faith NOURISHES all receptive hearts,

It is LOVE that increasingly GATHERS all these separate hearts,

TOGETHER in Christ !

It is LOVE that ultimately ENERGIZES them –

To CONSENT together, to Abba’s invitation to unity

–Each one’s faith enhancing the others’ !

To CONTEMPLATE together, Abba’s loving compassionate Face

–Unifying them, ever more, as brothers and sisters of Christ;

To COMMUNE, with all God-seeking hearts, with Abba in the Spirit

–Church-wide, world-wide, creation-wide !

To COMMIT together, to be united, witnessing hearts

–To the Fellowship of Love ... evident in lives, lived in harmony;

To BE EUCHARIST for others ... SELF-SACRIFICING TOGETHER in the Spirit

–Lighting up others’ lives, to do the same !

Thus, faith ...

Working through love :

NOURISHES together

GATHERS together

CONSENTS together

CONTEMPLATES together

COMMUNES together

COMMITTS together

EUCHARISTS together.

At-One-ment ¹

*To enable us to live
Eucharistically,
Jesus draws us into AT-ONE-MENT with Abba :
Surrendering His Humanity for OURS,
To unite our humanity to God
And thus, to en-Spirit us
With a share in His Divinity !*

*To REALIZE this union with Abba,
Jesus invites us to CO-ENTER
Eucharistically
Into His suffering for our brothers and sisters,
And, with Him, ultimately ...
To TRANSCEND their, and our, suffering.
Through Jesus, we are drawn BEYOND suffering (even, if still present),
Into COMMUNION with Abba.
Here, within this Divine Fellowship ...
Pain loses its power,
Joy is ever-present !*

*Therefore, Jesus' SURRENDERED humanity
Is itself the bridge
To His, and our, experience
Of AT-ONE-MENT
... Of Communion with the Divine.*

Embraced As Family ¹

The Fellowship of Adoptees

Is a graced Fellowship !

An open Fellowship, and enfleshed Fellowship !

Open to all whom the Spirit chooses

To gather into the community of the Church

... En-Personed in the Ascended Jesus !

... Embraced AS FAMILY by Abba !

To Humanize Divinity ¹

In enfleshing His Divinity, within our humanity,

In incarnating Mystery, within our ordinariness,

In embodying Eternity, breath, by breath within time,

Jesus

Humanizes Divinity :

Wherein – Divine love pulses forth in human heart-beats ;

Human suffering MOVES the Divine in Him, to CO-SUFFER with us,

So that, IN Christ, our pain is FELT within the Divine;

And God experiences infinite humility in choosing

To be lovingly, freely constrained within our humanity.

For all those IN Christ,

Love, born in God's Divine heart,

Works through God's human heart

... To empower and transform humanity,

So that man restores to man

The gift of Divine Life ...

Wherein man leads man

Into the heart of God !

Though DIVINIZED ...

– Still we quiver ... on the threshold of the Divine

... ‘Surely God’s loving us, could not be so lavishly excessive ?’

– Still we quaver ... on the edge of terror

... ‘Surely, WE do not choose, AS GOD, when IN Christ,

Much less, IN Christ, TO BE GOD ... to God ?’

– Still we hover, in doubt, as we RATIONALIZE

‘It’s only metaphorical; it’s just poetry ...’

But, just as, for Jesus, human experiences were mystifying,

Reflecting the fact, say, that God really did NEED to sleep ...

... So in us, Divine attributes are not at all evident

–Even as, IN Christ, we too, BREATHE THE SPIRIT into those we forgive !

Yet, to the measure that our faith

Depths the REALITY that ‘God becomes man’

To the same measure, will our faith be fired

By the REALITY that ‘Man becomes God,’ IN Christ !

If God becomes man

To unite with us, AS AN EQUAL,

Must not we, in all simplicity, rejoice –

To unite with God as LIKE TO LIKE ... IN Christ ?

It’s the face of this utter, primal DIVINE REALITY,

That we so instinctively withdraw from !

That we so shake our facile confidence !

We baulk, we blanch ...

At the INFINITE REALITY of ‘Man becoming God,’ IN Christ !

*In truth, it is not an experience
That we could ever become used to,
Precisely because, it is not just an EXPERIENCE,
But an IDENTITY !*

*Nor is it an identity WE assume,
But an identity we are DRAWN INTO*

– “Nobody can come to me,

Unless My Father draws him”.²

Moreover, this identity is not even subject to OUR awareness :

Indeed ‘OUR’ consciousness belongs ONLY to Christ

– “Let the SAME mind be in you, that was in Christ Jesus.”³

To be fully, humanly ALIVE-IN CHRIST,

Is to offer our humanity

As God, to God, IN God.

It is to share in the Circle of Love :

God who gives, God who receives, God who is Gift !

Thus, the glory of humankind

Is God, fully alive in humanity !

¹ Poem 868, Year 10 of Prayer Ministry, Gold Coast Holidays, January 2008.

² Jn 6:44

³ Phil 2:5

Abba Is All ! ¹

Jesus' response to His desert temptations has several faces :

To the FIRST, Jesus' faith-filled response is to choose the way of the Spirit

... Openly asserting the PRIMACY of God in all of life,

And refusing to follow the SELF-INDULGENT ways of the flesh.

To the SECOND, Jesus truly affirms our human giftedness as FULLY GRACED,

Being Himself, wholly absorbed in exalting the Divine

... Dismissing all fickle appeals to His Abba-God to intervene needlessly.

To the THIRD, Jesus is wholly single-hearted in His responsiveness to Abba,

Rejecting both the lure of riches, and the vanity of power

As empty substitutes – for His consuming relationship with Abba !

¹ Poem 869, Year 10 of Prayer Ministry, Woolloowin Community, February 2008.

NOTE: the poem is a response to Mt 4:1-16.

To Be a Paschal Heart ¹

To be a Paschal Heart :

... Is to co-suffer with Jesus FOR ALL, with His open-heartedness,

And with our desire for them, enshrined within Abba's Desire ;

... Is to be re-born spiritually, into a new humanity and dignity,

Into a new consciousness, and new identity,

–All sourced in the very Person of the radiant Risen Jesus ;

... Is to thrill to THE ENRAPTURE, within the enveloping arms of a loving Abba

– As the Gift of the Spirit ... SEALING the Ascension of our humanity ...

Gloriously unfolds within-us-within-Christ

– Both, as a community, and personally !

Your Fiery Finger upon My Heart ¹

*When, in the past, I did less than love-my-enemies,
My heart's spiritual energies short-circuited themselves :
... Rendering, much less open-hearted, my ministry of prayer,
... Lessening ENGAGEMENT to the wider community of life IN Christ,
... And reducing my personal focus and heartfelt endeavours,
To self-generated activities and to old, SAFE relationships .*

*But then, Abba, You ALWAYS gently INTERVENED.
To this heart-escape of limited vision and restricted growth,
You reached out, from Your home, deep within my spirit*

Placing Your Finger on my heart

– Your Spirit of Renewal –

Regenerating it, re-releasing its graced energies.

This seemed like a climax of years of prompting ... because Your Touch

Was on the very day of my heart procedure,

When, literally, my heart was FIRED ... ²

And AT-ONE-MENT became Your gift to me !

From Your Beloved's Paschal woundedness, it seemed,

Jesus' energies flowed within MY spirit-wounds

–Recreating, renewing my heart's graced senses.

Indeed the ears of my heart seemed re-attuned ...

To Your compassionate voice, CALLING TO ME from others :

*... In the whispers of those sidelined, or vulnerable,
And in the prayerful pleas of other pilgrim hearts.*

One of this AT-ONE-MENT'S special gifts, was my heart's SEEING ANEW

... The Image of Your loveliness, in Eucharist .

Seemingly sharing in Jesus Ascended's sensitivity,

I was able

To witness to some friends' deeper motivations

... How, for instance their hearts radiated

The CLEAR IMPRESS of the Cross.

Thus, like those similarly graced –

The 'other' became our Brother,

The Church, more a Mother,

Our faith ... our sacrifices

More like Jesus'.

1 Poem 871, Year 10 of Prayer Ministry, Woolloowin Community, February 2008.

2 NOTE: On the use of "FIRED" :

On St Valentine's Day, February 2008, because of my decades-long inclination to heart palpitations (when over heated or dehydrated), because of a 'faulty-firing' atrial valve, the surgeon inserted a probe in a vein in my groin area, moving it to the heart. He noted the fact that the electrical node in the top half of my heart, having 'fired', passed not ONE but TWO currents of electricity to my bottom half, thereby setting up a closed electrical circuit ! This not only made my heart inefficient, but also caused my atrial valve, at times, to malfunction ... thereby causing possible life-threatening palpitations (earlier, four times, my heart had to be chemically stopped, and be allowed to reset itself !).

The surgeon then electrically heated the tip of the probe, and used it to cauterize (or 'FIRE') one of the electrical currents' entry areas, through the flat muscular tissue that separates the top and bottom halves of my heart, This "firing", or cauterizing, thus ELIMINATED 1. the inefficient short-circuiting effect 2. all palpitations and 3. my atrial valve malfunctioning. Truly I was gifted with a wholly renewed heart !

God Loves : Therefore We Are ¹

*The Mystery of Love that is God
Is made accessible, and able to illumine our spirits,
WITHIN THE REVELATION of the Paschal Mystery.
Yet, to thus experience this singular Wondrous Mystery,
Is ours ONLY through GRACE !*

*This Mysterious God of Paschal Love
Centers all life,
All our loving
... Overwhelmingly, without our awareness.*

*Life is NOT "I think : therefore I am", ²
Nor even, "I love : therefore I am"
Because WE are not its CENTRE.
Rather ...
Life is "God loves : therefore we are".
Equally true is "God loves : therefore we love".*

*Yet, we still can choose to love, or not to love
... Because, the Mystery of Freedom
Exists within this Mystery of Love.
Thus, to choose not to love is to exercise freedom.
Yet, NOT TO BE FREE is to BE UNABLE TO LOVE.
Thus, TO LOVE, is to BE WONDROUSLY FREE !
That is, TO BE OF GOD !*

1 Poem 872, Year 10 of Prayer Ministry, Woolloowin Community, March 2008

2 Descartes

Healed Together ¹

*To be baptized into the faith of the Church,
Is to be immersed in the fellowship of service
– Of those gazing with compassion upon similarly wounded hearts,
Becoming one with Christ' Healing Presence
... There to be immersed in the grace of being healed TOGETHER.*

¹ Poem 873, Year 10 of Prayer Ministry, Woolloowin Community, March 2008.

Your Heart, House, City, and People ¹

Abba, O Abba

*Let me be to You this morning, within this Eucharist –
A HEART as lowly and tender, as Your own Beloved's
... So lovingly reflected in Mary Magdalene,
As she kissed His feet, with tender lips,
And tenderly, ever so tenderly, caressed them with her hair.*

O let me be to You –

*A HOLY HOUSE of prayer, suffused with longing
... An echo of Your own yearnings for me;
A HOUSE of contemplation
... With that gaze, that gentlest gaze
That You, with beautiful love-lit eyes, like Your Son's,
So trustingly coax forth from me.*

O let me be to You –

*YOUR HOLY CITY aglow with devotedness,
... Swelling other voices and hearts, in whole-hearted praise
Settling silently, into ever deeper peace ...*

O let me be to You –

*YOUR HOLY PEOPLE, lovingly aroused with zeal,
... Impassioned for all that is Yours!
Aflame with Your surpassing Fellowship!*

¹ Poem 874, Year 10 of Prayer Ministry, Woolloowin Community, March 2008.

NOTE: used as a Eucharistic prayer by the author.

The Gift of Yourselves ¹

O Abba, Dearest Dad,

In this Eucharist

Thank You for the gift of Your PEOPLE ...

And you, brothers and sisters,

In this Communion,

Thank you for the gift of YOURSELVES :

– For the gift of your SPIRITS,

As TOGETHER we come alive

In the Spirit of the Beloved !

–For the gift of your MINDS

As TOGETHER we are configured

To the Beloved's mind !

– For the gift of your HEARTS

As TOGETHER, our conjoined heart

Loves as our Beloved loves !

–For the gift of Your BODIES

As we tenderly CO-EXPERIENCE ...

God alive in US !

We EN-PERSONED in God !

Eternity EMBODIED within !

– And for the gift of our Brother's PRECIOUS BLOOD

Coursing through His, and thus our PERSONS ...

Reviving us together !
Nourishing us together !
Transforming us together !

Brothers and sisters, with heartfelt affection, I thank You

... For thus being TOGETHERED,

... And for who you are to me

–And I to you –

Abba's Beloved !

Breather of the Spirit !

The Transformation of Suffering ¹

All suffering needs to be brought

To the Eucharist

– To the Paschal Mystery, sacramentalized –

To be transformed .

There, we are transformed IN the Paschal Jesus,

Whose whole life is CENTERED on love

On sacrificial love .

Jesus' Paschal loving supplies all of our suffering

With a LOVING, ENABLING, HEALING CENTRE,

Who offers Himself

As a GIFT, to every sufferer .

Thus, as suffering's CENTRE,

The Eucharistic Jesus

LOVES all of our relationships INTO LIFE,

FREEING each relationship ... be it even to inanimate Creation ...

To radiate ALL with the wholesomeness

Of the Paschal Christ !

*This transformation of our suffering
Sees us drawn into the Beloved's Paschal Feast of Grace,
Wherein Abba invites us, IN Christ,
– To the Wedding of the Divine with the human
... To taste NOW within time,
The wondrous Gift of Eternal Health
– The Spirit of Divine Fellowship !*

Revolutionizing Suffering ¹

“Jesus made suffering a FUNDAMENTAL means of salvation”. (Ben XV1) ²

In overcoming evil with good,

... The good pouring out of the heart of our crucified God,

THROUGH US ...

Sacrificial love REVOLUTIONIZES suffering,

Transforming our IDENTITY into Christ's ,

–Christ giving all

... On the Cross

... And as the Ascended One

Within the Trinity !

¹ Poem 877, Year 10 of Prayer Ministry, Woolloowin Community, Holy Week 2008.

² In Observatore Romano, 2008.

Faith Blossoming into Love ¹

A lived faith

Necessarily blossoms into love ...

Because, God whose Presence we simply KNOW, in faith,

Is also the FOCUS of our faith

Both AS Someone to be ever more UNDERSTOOD,

... And AS Someone who PERSONIFIES LOVE,

Overflowing KINDNESS, and COMMUNION .

A Triune Triumph ¹

O Father of the Risen Jesus,

Fire our consciousness,

So we may adoringly utter

Your Renewing Word

With the deepest AWE

... For as we proclaim

Your Enabling Easter Word,

It is given Voice

While being gloriously embodied

Within our lives !

Yet, this is only obvious –

To hearts of faith !

To Regenerated hearts !

To Resurrection spirits !

O Risen Jesus,

Breathe through our minds,

Illuminating our perceptions,

So we may embrace each ...

As our RISEN BROTHER IN THE OTHER !

As a RISEN DAUGHTER IN OUR BROTHER !

... *And, in dis-covering* THERE,

The imprints of Your Wounds ...

To salve and caress them

With Your regenerating JOY !

O Spirit of Jesus Risen,

Inflame our spirits, stir our hearts ...

To resonate with Alleluia lives !

Accompany us, as our whole 'heart-world'

Thrills with Your Glorious Vitality !

And exhilarates, to BE UPLIFTED

Into the Arms of Love,

Into the ecstasy, the Enrapture

Of Your Sublime Fellowship !