

# Folio Seven

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## John and Jesus <sup>1</sup>

*Searching for a way, a model,  
– To have the people focus on Yahweh's FATHERLY love,  
Yet to still emphasize the need for repentance –  
Jesus turned to John the Baptist for inspiration.  
What John preached, resonated powerfully with Jesus.  
Jesus deeply valued  
... John's repudiation of double standards,  
... His heightened consciousness of sin's SOCIAL effects,  
... His stress on personal integrity,  
... And particularly, his insistence on the need for a CHANGE OF HEART  
– Out of which would naturally flow  
A turning from sin,  
And a turning to God, and to one's neighbours.*

*Jesus saw John and his followers as a good model.  
Yet John was by no means perfect.  
John expected God to come  
As a fire, a winnowing wind, a purifier  
– In a word, expecting God to come  
With power and prophetic severity!  
Jesus saw He could work with such a group  
... GENTLING their perceptions and language:  
... Persuading them that the way of humility and compassion  
Was God's preferred way.  
He suggested that God's way was one associated with  
Entrusting ourselves in faith INTO the power of God,  
Exercising authority, through a leadership of service  
... And OFFERING not only, like John,  
To hate the sin,  
But also to love the sinner!*

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<sup>1</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

## Jesus, We Invite You <sup>2</sup>

*Jesus, we invite You into our home.  
Jesus, You are most welcome  
... Bringing as You do  
Good News of Abba's love for the poor and the lonely.*

*Jesus, make Yourself at home  
Within the hearts of all who dwell within.  
Jesus, touch our wounded lives  
With Your healing, enlivening love.*

*Jesus, further open our hearts to receive –  
Both the Body that is Your Church,  
And the Body that is Your Word.  
Cause both to flourish in our hearts!*

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<sup>2</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984. Composed for Eucharistic Visitation to a deaf, house-bound, elderly lady, Nell Devaney, whom I visited in Brisbane from 1984 to 2004

## Healer of the Broken-Hearted <sup>3</sup>

*This is the Lamb of God,  
Jesus, our Guest –  
Who heals the broken-hearted,  
Brings comfort to the lonely,  
Calms the fears of each one He meets,  
And forgives all ...  
From the depths of His Divine Heart.*

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<sup>3</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

## Sin's True Measure <sup>4</sup>

*Our real identity is given – and received,  
Only in forgiveness:  
In forgiveness, we allow God  
To reveal our sinfulness to us  
... Because,  
OUR sense of our sinful past,  
Is NOT the measure of our sinfulness.*

*Sin's true measure  
Is what we have denied ourselves –  
God's Presence! God's Vitality! God's Love!  
This sin-consciousness  
Is a gift of God  
... A flitting shadow  
Of Love's Reality!  
... A weak echo, a snippet  
Of the Symphony of Light, Colour and Warmth  
That yearns to enfold us!*

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<sup>4</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984



## Unreadiness for Mystery<sup>5</sup>

*If – in hoping to be enriched in spirit,  
We long for an enhanced spiritual experience –  
Then God will continue  
To conceal Love's Self in Mystery.  
But, if we seek to be encountered by Mystery  
... With openness of heart ...  
Then we'll truly experience peace  
... For peace itself suggests to us,  
That our only response  
In the face of Mystery,  
Is heartfelt poverty of spirit,  
– The acceptance of the ultimate poverty of our being.*

*Indeed, peace expresses our humble acceptance  
Of our basic HUMAN UNREADINESS for Mystery  
... For Mystery is forever a grace,  
Forever a Gift.*

*Crucially,  
The face of Mystery  
Is the Face of the Crucified-Risen Jesus.  
Yes ... the Person of the Paschal Jesus  
Is Mystery's embodiment  
... Now bodied to us within the Eucharist,  
Within Christ's Body, the Church.*

*O Spirit of Mystery,  
Keep the eyes of our hearts  
Ever focussed  
'On the light of Abba's glory,  
The glory on the Face of Christ.'<sup>6</sup>  
– As we gaze on every parish Eucharist,  
And on every Eucharist-in-action  
Within loving lives.*

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<sup>5</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984

<sup>6</sup> 2 Cor 4:6

## Enjoy Time's Rhythms <sup>7</sup>

*Love time, dwell within time ...*

*Enjoy its rhythms, its growth cycles ...*

*Be at peace with time, let it unfold*

*... Its creative, healing wonders, within.*

*Be a friend of time, pace yourself ...*

*Savour how it promotes love ...*

*Trust its constancy, its faithfulness*

*... As patient companion, to your changeling spirit.*

*Let it lead you, gently, evenly*

*Through its gift of every moment ...*

*To that ever-present Eternal Moment*

*... Ever radiant with Love's Presence.*

*Learn to be open to Love,*

*Within the moment of Mystery's Unveiling ...*

*Let each intimate, precious moment*

*Reveal your grateful 'yes' to Love.*

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<sup>7</sup> Year 1, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1984



## God's First Gift <sup>8</sup>

*God's first and continuing gift is Their Godself*

*The Father ... fathering*

*Jesus Ascended ... brothering*

*The Spirit ... en-Spiriting ;*

*And This needs to be ...*

*Our first*

*And continuing*

*Gift to each other ...*

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<sup>8</sup> Year 2, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1985

## Become Like Little Children <sup>9</sup>

*Mentally challenged people differentiate, only a little,  
Between major and minor events in their lives,  
And, even, between degrees of goodness;  
In this way, they are like young children.*

*Both are led*

*SIMPLY*

*Into God's enveloping Mystery,*

*And both are gifted*

*SIMPLY*

*... Delighting in God's Presence in their life,  
With openness, artlessness, and innocence.*

*Not so are people*

*Who constantly stifle their conscience,*

*Who do not allow CHRIST TO RISE within it*

*... To enlighten, soften, and sensitize it.*

*These self-absorbed hearts*

*Gradually lose their capacity*

*To differentiate between good and bad*

*– Firstly, in their DISMISSIVENESS, in minor things,*

*... Then through increasingly numerous gradations of insensibility ...*

*Until, hard-hearted, and emotionally impervious,*

*They simply fail to recognize OBVIOUS good and evil*

*– In major issues of life.*

*Their whole conscience becomes –*

*Increasingly UNRESPONSIVE,*

*Accumulatively DARKENED,*

*And ultimately ANAESTHETIZED.*

*Yet even here,*

*Christ still whispers ...*

*'COME TO ME,*

*All you who labour and are heavily burdened'. <sup>10</sup>*

*I am the Resurrection and the Life!' <sup>11</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> Year 2, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1985

<sup>10</sup> Mt 11:28

## The God of Prayer <sup>12</sup>

*At any one moment within us,  
God's Presence is the continuing Gift of the Godself  
... Coming as IT does, out of the heart of Community,  
... Coming as IT does, out of the heart of Eucharist,  
... Coming as IT does, out of the heart of Scripture ...*

*God's Presence is thus, not static,  
Does not admit of closure  
– But is the SAME Presence, ever alive, ever new  
– The One Presence giving itself continually ...*

*For one whom God INDWELLS ...  
If prayer is 'being in God's Presence',  
Then there is no progress FROM prayer,  
No return TO prayer.  
There is only BE-ING at prayer  
– IN Christ who IS our prayer –  
Being present to the God of Creation  
Now, the God of Compassion  
Now, the God of Friendship ...*

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<sup>11</sup> Jn 11:25

<sup>12</sup> Year 3, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1986

## Blest Be You, Abba <sup>13</sup>

*Blest be You, Abba*

*Parenting the Church and this community, day by day;  
You enter into every circumstance of our lives  
With Your ever-present offer, to make us whole.*

*You have raised up Jesus  
As the answer to all our dreams and hopes,  
Jesus – looked for, with longing through all ages –  
Is now our constant companion.*

*Jesus is our saviour, establishing us in freedom  
– Freedom from our lack of vision  
– Freedom to be like He is.  
Thus, Abba, Your love for our forebears is fulfilled,  
And Your Covenant of Love with us, is enacted day by day.*

*Like John the Baptist, even as a child,  
We are called to prepare the way for Jesus  
... In the hearts of those who grace our lives:  
To make known to them  
– By revealing in OUR OWN lives –  
The welcoming and forgiving Jesus;  
To invite them to open their own hearts  
To Your loving-kindness, Abba  
– Alive in the heart of Your Beloved!*

*... So that, in the darkness of all our lives,  
The Light of Your Beloved may dawn  
– Leading us to that Banquet  
Where, together as Your Children,  
We rejoice in Your peace.*

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<sup>13</sup> Brisbane Retreat, Gregory Terrace community, 1988. This poem is a free version of the 'Benedictus'

Your Presence Brings Out the Truth <sup>14</sup>  
*(A Trilogy – Part 1)*

*Jesus, here I am again;  
It's good to be here.  
I feel good, now I'm with You.  
You're a real friend.  
You always make me feel O.K. ...  
Whenever I share with You.*

*I know I'm kidding myself,  
Whenever I don't keep in touch with You  
... Bluffing myself 'I'm O.K.':  
I just don't end up being Your witness!  
I sell You short!*

*I'm not the genuine article like You  
I'm not really trusting, like You:  
I hold onto my fears  
I cling to the old patterns  
I hesitate, on the edge of courage  
I postpone the real decisions  
I flirt with sin and temptation  
I fail to leave my past behind.  
I simply don't come across, AS YOU,  
In the here and now.*

*Yes, Jesus, I feel far short of Your dream for me;  
I'm just not REALLY open, Jesus, to others in my life.  
Why?  
Because, at heart, I'm scared;  
Not scared of any single effort it takes,  
But, scared of BEING You – unrelentingly, day after day!  
Abba knows, how I need Your strength  
... Need You to be with me, on a daily basis;  
I really need You – as a FRIEND, Jesus  
... To be with me always.*



Struggling With Your Presence <sup>15</sup>  
(A Trilogy – Part 2)

*Even when I know You're there, Jesus,  
I quickly take You for granted –  
Forgetting You're there, by my side,  
Not giving You a second thought.*

*Mostly, I'm just a little person  
... Loving my secure routines  
... Clinging to my easy ways  
... Complacent in my self-image  
Because, I don't want to trade 'my crowd'  
For Your 'friends', a pretty demanding lot;  
I won't even trade my 'loneliness'  
For the company of Your 'friends'!*

*I suppose, in my heart, I'm afraid of real change:  
I want You there, for sure,  
But without making any demands!  
The deep change You call for  
Really frightens me out of my wits;  
Come to think of it ...  
I suppose I really prefer my mediocrity  
My comfortable anxieties, and comfortable fears;  
Actually, I guess even my loneliness  
... To what's on offer, from You being with me.  
O Jesus!  
If only I could ... really ... genuinely ...  
Trust my future to You!*

*I know, deep down,  
I doubt ... You'll fill my intimacy needs,  
And, in fantasy, run to this one, and that one,  
Searching for the rainbow, seeking comfort.  
I always want contradictory guarantees from You,  
Before I step out into the deep waters of real trust ...  
"When you seek me  
With ALL your heart,  
I will let you find Me,  
Find me ... as 'I am'!" <sup>16</sup>*

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<sup>15</sup> Brisbane Retreat, Gregory Terrace community, 1988



Gently, Gently Into The Presence <sup>17</sup>  
(A Trilogy – Part 3)

*Jesus forgive me ...  
Bring me to forgive myself for my lack of trust.  
With Your gentle forgiveness,  
I can then bring forgiveness  
To the heart of my presence with others.  
Only then, can I be open and true  
To Your enabling Presence within me!*

*Jesus encourage me ...  
Give me the heart to risk –  
The known for the unknown,  
Routine for change,  
'Having it all together'  
For the uncertainty of coping ...  
Therein, inviting me  
Into radical reliance on You!*

*Jesus move my heart –  
To celebrate the breaking in of Your Grace,  
To celebrate Your Presence in our humanity,  
To celebrate community: our togetherness in You;  
And to celebrate You, Yourself  
... Beloved of Abba, Giver of the Spirit  
The source, the growth, the glory of our lives,  
The Whisper in our memory ...  
'Come to Me ... and rest'. <sup>18</sup>*

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<sup>16</sup> Jer 29: 13-14

<sup>17</sup> Brisbane Retreat, Gregory Terrace community, 1988

<sup>18</sup> Mt 11: 28

## Why Do You Hide Your Face? <sup>19</sup>

*Jesus eternally yearns to be with us  
... Only sin frustrates this yearning.  
Instinctively, through sin,  
WE hide our face from the Lord.  
We imagine it to be the other way round.  
Yet we have ONLY  
To turn and 'seek the face of the Lord', <sup>20</sup>  
To welcome the compassion in the eyes of Jesus  
– For our brother's forgiveness to be ours.*

*Sin distances us  
– In OUR minds, not His –  
From the enlivening presence of Jesus.  
To sin, is NOT, to worry  
... That Jesus is absent, in that facet of our life;  
It is to let slip the opportunity  
To BE CHRIST in the situation  
– To shrug off the WONDER of Christ's Presence there.  
Yet, mysteriously ... through the Paschal Mystery,  
The welcoming, compassionate Christ  
Is present in the very midst of our estrangement,  
In the heart of our loneliness and alienation  
... Arms open to embrace: His heart ... our home!*

*Some hearts open; many fail to respond  
... Continuing to ABSENT themselves  
From Christ's enveloping presence.  
But when the effects of such self-exile bite hard,  
We turn, and without any irony, or shame,  
Project the blame onto Christ, for being absent!*

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<sup>19</sup> Brisbane Retreat, Gregory Terrace community, 1988

<sup>20</sup> Ps 27: 8 (Grail)

*Thus, it is in Christ's apparent absence, when we cry –*

*'Lord, why do you hide Your face?' <sup>21</sup>*

*That Jesus often surprises us,  
Revealing His Presence through FORGIVENESS.*

*On the Cross, Jesus, too, experienced Divine Absence*

*But in a radically HONEST way:*

*Traumatized in agony*

*By Abba's absence ... AS A FELT PRESENCE,*

*Jesus kept on trusting in Abba's Promise*

*– The giving of the promised Holy Spirit –*

*To restore Himself, and US in Him,*

*To Abba's tender loving presence.*

*This gift is a homecoming for our humanity,*

*In Jesus our brother,*

*The Beloved of Abba.*

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<sup>21</sup> Ps 27: 9 (Grail)

## The Father Draws Us<sup>22</sup>

*The Father draws us in a myriad of ways ...  
‘Christ plays in ten thousand places  
Lovely in limbs and lovely in eyes not His’.*<sup>23</sup>  
*The Father draws us, firstly, to seek forgiveness  
Of Jesus, present in others,  
Of Jesus, present in the Word,  
Of Jesus, in Eucharist as Sacrament,  
Of Jesus, deep within us.*

*Jesus Ascended is ONE Presence  
Unveiling Himself in many forms.  
A facile faith has us separating Christ  
Into MANY presences ...  
Confusing us, distracting us, dissipating our energies.  
But Grace inserts us into this ONE Presence,  
So that, deeply integrated through forgiveness,  
We long  
... To be Eucharist, broken by brothers and sisters,  
... To be Word of God to all in Christ’s Body,  
... To be IN Jesus Ascended, dwelling in each other  
Being ‘members one of another.’*<sup>24</sup>

*As our best model on how to INTEGRATE these presences,  
Jesus gives us Mary*<sup>25</sup>  
*As Mother of the One who Unites  
– Uniting us, together as Church,  
Uniting us, within ourselves  
... Integrating our worship, work, prayer and silence.  
Mary is the exemplar, because hers is a life  
Lived radiantly in the face  
Of the one, seamless Presence of Jesus.*

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<sup>22</sup> Brisbane Retreat, Gregory Terrace community, 1988

<sup>23</sup> *As Kingfishers Catch Fire* Gerard Manley Hopkins

<sup>24</sup> Eph 4: 25

<sup>25</sup> Jn 19: 27

## The Passover of Your Glory<sup>26</sup>

*Father, through Jesus, lead us  
Into the Passover of Your Glory,  
That, together, we may glorify You:*

*Enliven us with Your Love  
That we may love You.  
Enthuse us with Your Desire  
That we may ask of You.  
Empower us with Your Freedom  
That we may offer all to You.  
Breathe into us Your Gift  
That we may thank You.  
Unite us in Your Spirit ...  
That we may be one in You.*

*Glory be to You, Abba,  
Our tender, loving Father;  
To You, Jesus, our friend ...  
Our brother, our saviour, our God;  
To You, Spirit  
Our love, our joy, and our peace.*

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<sup>26</sup> Brisbane Retreat, Gregory Terrace community, 1988. This poem I gave out, at the end of my 1991-2 Rome Tertianship (see Note Poem 149), as my personal memento to other participants, of what the Tertianship meant for me. I have also used it, ever since, at Eucharist.



## Discipleship of the Word <sup>27</sup>

*A true experience of the Word of God  
Is always one of DISCIPLESHIP*

*This discipleship of the Word –*

*Is, firstly, one of LISTENING  
... Listening, with the ears of one's heart,  
Of opening, like loosened earth, to the seed being sown,  
Patient, 'til its rootlets find a home within the depths  
... Of one's receptive spirit.*

*This listening, this opening –  
Is a responsiveness to being CALLED,  
Is an attentiveness to the voice of the Shepherd,  
Is a sensitivity to the Spirit, whispering within.*

*This calling  
Is Abba's activating Presence, His enabling role,  
In the DISCERNMENT  
That ought characterize a disciple's whole life:  
Abba's active Presence PRIMING the disciple's receptive presence.*

*Is, secondly, one of BEING EMPOWERED:*

*The disciple's receptive response  
Calls forth Abba's generosity –  
A cascade of wonders  
... A Father's lavishing of GIFTS  
Which, once given, are not withdrawn!  
Most treasured of all,  
Is Abba's invitation to COMMUNION  
– To enter the Divine Circle of Love.  
From this profound experience,  
Flows ALL other gifts  
– Enabling the disciple's ministering  
To reflect the Good News mission of Jesus  
Amidst a people, gathered in the Spirit.*

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<sup>27</sup> Year 6, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, Jan 1989



*Is, thirdly, one of BEING MISSIONED.  
Since there is but one mission  
– That of Jesus ... spreading the Good News of Abba's love –  
All disciples are missioned, IN CHRIST,  
And, through HIS Spirit, are SENT FORTH!  
While they are sent on 'individually gifted' MINISTRIES,  
They are gifted, not for a solitary aim or goal,  
But for the COMMUNAL MISSION  
– Of spreading the Good News of the Paschal Jesus  
Together, AS CHURCH!*

*Thus, as disciples together,  
We are to PROCLAIM  
– With our lives –  
Abba's love for Jesus  
And Jesus' – and thus our – love for Abba;  
And to witness, in Their Spirit,  
To the Fellowship of Love! <sup>28</sup>*

## Two Hearts ... One Love ... One Destiny<sup>29</sup>

*The wedding of any two lives  
Is an invitation for us  
To bestow worth on two committed people  
... In their mutual gifting to each other,  
And with Christ,  
To honour this union of hearts:  
Two hearts ... One love ... One destiny.*

*This wedding of hearts, is also an invitation  
For the community present  
– A community FORMED by invitation of the couple –  
To ENTER the relationship  
... To support, nourish, challenge and encourage it.  
The relationship at the wedding ceases to be a private one,  
And becomes a community-sanctioned one.*

*Thus, the Sacrament of Marriage invites community INTERVENTION  
Into its very heart ...  
Precisely because it is a community-SUSTAINED relationship.  
Such intervention respects three special areas  
As the exclusive preserve of the couple –  
The area of FINAL choices concerning the welfare of the relationship itself,  
KEY choices on the welfare of any children,  
And the area of the couple's marriage intimacy.*

*As we, of the community, enter into the HEART of the couple's relationship,  
– Now a WEDDED relationship –  
There, we hope to find the Ascended Jesus  
... Who is at the heart of all processes  
That dignify human beings.  
So it is, WITH Jesus, that we of the community  
Undertake the life-long responsibility  
To ANIMATE this unique relationship.*

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<sup>29</sup> Year 6, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, Jan 1989. Poem composed for a wedding reception speech for Peter and Wendy Morrison, in Feb 1989. Peter had been a student of mine at Woodford prison.

*As we sacramentally welcome this couple into our hearts,  
We welcome them to that deeper stream of community life  
That safeguards and enhances  
The wedded couples within it.  
We are always more than witnesses:  
We too are to be faithful to our pledge  
– To ANIMATE and to CELEBRATE  
The continuing union  
So as to CHRISTIANIZE it.  
In this spirit, we affirm our commitment to them.*

## Each Other: The Way to God <sup>30</sup>

*(Spoken to the wedding couple ..).*

*Spoken to the wedding couple ...*

*In reflecting on Jesus' heartening promise,  
Where two or three are gathered in my name  
There am I in their midst', <sup>31</sup>*

*We know that a wedded couple, together, or as a family,  
Form an especially blest FOCUS for Jesus' words.  
In sacramentalizing your wedded bond,  
Jesus ennobles marriage  
With a special Presence  
– A Presence that enables, affirms, and celebrates  
UNITY THROUGH LOVE.*

*Know also,  
That, by surrendering yourself to each other  
– Through the sacrifice of letting go of self –  
You each will come to KNOW JESUS  
In a new and unique way  
– Jesus who is the integrating presence  
Animating your marriage relationship  
In every possible way.  
Indeed, relating to the other,  
Becomes your preferred and the Church-sanctioned way  
Of ENCOUNTERING CHRIST in your life!*

*Be clearly aware,  
That a unique feature of a marriage relationship  
Is its mathematics!  
Each is not asked to contribute 50% to the marriage:  
If so, 50% would be RETAINED personally,  
And, sooner or later, would become the focus of MISTRUST.*

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<sup>30</sup> Year 6, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1989. See Note Poem 138

<sup>31</sup> Mt 18: 20

*No, each is asked to contribute 100%,  
And Christ assures us that 'the two shall become one'.<sup>32</sup>  
Moreover, in giving 100% in mutual openness,  
Each WILL receive a 100% as SHEER GIFT!*

*Such CONTINUED MUTUAL GIVING is the fruit of prayer,  
And of vigilance in replacing a mindset ...  
Of 'EXPECTING a return'  
– Which puts pressure on the other –  
With the much more freeing attitude, of HOPING for a return  
... A virtue that springs from the heart of God!*

*Marriage's 'sacrament', in Greek, is 'mysterium' or mystery.  
At the heart of all mystery is SURPRISE.  
So, if you desire to deepen faithfulness within your marriage,  
Then surprise each other  
With unexpected expressions of love  
... Tender actions and appreciative words, that are UNEARNED,  
That are SHEER GIFT,  
And which, of their very nature,  
Draw both more deeply  
Into Love's Mystery.*



## Caressing Hearts: Opening Minds <sup>33</sup>

*The Gospel is the sacred voice of Christ,  
A sacrament of His Person for us:  
All people can listen to the WORDS of the Word ...  
Only faith has ears to hear the VOICE of the Word ...  
‘His sheep hear His VOICE’. <sup>34</sup>  
Only lives, lived ‘IN Christ’ know His MIND:  
The Spirit opens such minds to Christ’s  
... ‘Interpreting the Scriptures to them’. <sup>35</sup>*

*Yet, the voice of the Word FIRST speaks to the HEART,  
Before ever speaking to the mind.  
To encounter the Word, one must first yearn  
For the Lord’s KIND CARESSES.  
Only in this tender encounter,  
Will His voice begin to move hearts,  
And animate lives.*

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<sup>33</sup> Year 6, Prison Ministry, Woodford, from Gregory Terrace community, 1989

<sup>34</sup> Jn 10:3

<sup>35</sup> Lk 24: 27





