

Loving Creation ¹

*To love Creation,
Is to value every creature,
And to glorify the Mystery of Jesus' Cosmic Person
– To hold in deepest awe,
Jesus Ascended
... Who forever transcends the universe
Of which He is the fountain and goal!*

¹ Rome Tertianship, Nov 1991

Alive with Life! ²

Jesus, our brother
– Alive with Life –
Calls us forth from the dark prison
Of all that is life-diminishing,
Freeing us ...
FOR all that is life-enhancing,
And life-fulfilling
– So we, too,
May sing with life!

Human Heartbeats, Like Mine ³

O Jesus,
Whose eternal love for Abba,
Is NOW measured
In human heartbeats
... Like mine ...
Draw me to serve Abba,
With a heart whose focus is singular
... Like Yours ...
Whose beat is one with the rhythm
Of Your Spirit
... Of breathing the Spirit in, and of breathing the Spirit out,
... Of receiving Divine Equality with God!
... And of sharing this Divine Equality!

Without Reserve ⁴

Let us pass Jesus' Spirit to each other

... 'Without reserve' ... ⁵

The richer in the giving,

The richer in the receiving,

The poorer in the keeping!

– Breathing OUT, breathing IN, savouring God's Breath!

⁴ Rome Tertianship, Nov 1991

⁵ Jn 3: 34

Firing Each Other ⁶

*Fire speaks to all LOVING hearts :
The warmth that bursts forth for the other,
The light that illuminates and enlightens those
It falls upon,
The slow consuming of the giver
... Bequeathing the ashes of self
For the glow of new life in the other,
Even setting the other afire!
And best of all, lighting us up together, with the radiant flame of UNION!*

Passing Shadows ⁷

*Everything on earth, in this life,
– Even the deepest insights into God –
Have only the empty impacts
Of passing shadows
... Unless wedded
To Eternal Love.*

To Revere Grace ⁸

*Jesus calls SOME disciples
To a prophetic consecrated stance –
To witness more intensely,
To live gospel values single-heartedly,
To become a light on the hill,
... Through being consumed
As the fire of sacrifice.
Such disciples
Call us ALL
To revere GRACE
... To accept that ALL is gift.*

Humbly To Sow Seeds ⁹

*The Church's mission,
Like grace, builds on nature.
Thus it is fitting, that this mission
Does not seek to transplant
Europeanized religion to Africa,
But, humbly, to sow seeds,
– So that Africans
Can Africanize the Church.*

Sustained by Abba's Love ¹⁰

*Jesus, let the Spirit's Presence
Transform us into You –
Standing poor before Abba,
A child-man in Spirit,
Open, vulnerable,
Sustained by Abba's Love.*

The Gift of Each ¹¹

*Jesus, let us welcome
Each person in our life
As a gift
— A new brother, a new sister —
Coming, in You, to us.
Enable us
To return each, constantly,
To You
As gift
... To Abba's Glory!*

The Key Other ¹²

*Spirit of Love,
Fire my heart with a love –
That does away with fear,
That does not set limits,
That is ever thankful that Jesus is near,
That rejoices with this Child, in Abba's Presence!*

*Within this love, it becomes ever more clear
That I become my true self THROUGH OTHERS :
Open me to the enlivening, teaching, and challenge
Others give.
Form us all, to be one, in Jesus
– The key Other
For each, and for all!
Keep me simple, free, and trustful of the Other,
Sensitive to Christ's tender, faithful BROTHERING.*

¹² Rome Tertianship, Nov 1991. See Note on Poem 149

So Good a Son ¹³

*Abba, fire my heart
With the love of Your Son,
Dwelling in the heart
Of my brothers and sisters!*

*Yet, to love as Jesus loved,
Is to be CRUCIFIED :
And to delight in You, Abba,
We need to give all,
As He gave ALL .*

*In giving all as Jesus did,
We are able to exhilarate
In the fullness of the humanity
We share with Jesus,
And to come ALIVE in His Divinity!*

*So, fire my heart, Abba
– To identify with Jesus,
Who is so good ...
So good a Son!*

Past ... Present ... Future ¹⁴

To be receptive,

As God draws close,

Is to abandon,

One's PAST to Love ...

As it is transformed, into our PRESENT.

To be responsive

To Love's infilling

Is to welcome Father, Son and Spirit

As our FUTURE,

– As They radiate, each PRESENT moment

With the promise of peace.

Draw Me ¹⁵

*Father, Son, and Spirit,
From the depths of my spirit
– Where You are ALIVE
With love for Each Other –
Draw me to Your Godself ...
Love me into life!*

*Yet I know,
That at the ENTRY
To the depths of my spirit
– To Your Presence here –
Is Jesus,
Crucified in love!*

*Draw me into Jesus, on His Cross,
O Spirit of Courage
... Into others, co-suffering with Him,
Into His sacrificial love for us all.*

Called to Wholeness ¹⁶

*Abba, I rest secure and at peace
In Your Eternal, unchanging love for me
... Even in the midst of my self-focussed sin
... Especially in my fickleness and inconstancy.*

*There in the heart of human woundedness,
Your Son, Jesus, calls me, us,
To wholeness :
To true humanity in Him,
To be child with Him,
To be brothered by Him,
To be brother to Him
... Fathered within Your arms.*

Waiting, Crucified by Love ¹⁷

*Jesus, I have no limits to expand to
– But I find You there ...
Companionable, compassionate
– Having gone that way ALREADY as man!*

*When I shrink into sin and self-fullness,
I find You WAITING
In the heart of my sin ...
Which You entered by choice
Crucified by love
To Your kin!*

A Child's Sensitivity ¹⁸

*Spirit of Wholeness,
Gift me with a child's sensitivity
To Your Presence.*

*Firstly, let me be sensitive
– With the human openness of Jesus to Abba –
To the Mystery of Your Presence
Enveloping myself
... In the touch of a breeze,
... In the tone of anguish in a voice,
... In Your own whispers within.
Grace me with a Eucharistic heart
To welcome and to respond always
To Love's advent.*

*Secondly, let me be sensitive
To Your every movement within others.
Grant me discernment
Not only to dis-cover You there,
But to be attentive to You in others,
To relate to You there,
And, especially to pray and worship You there!
If we pray to God's Presence, in others' souls,
Following death ...
Why do we find it hard to relate to God
Present within the living?*

*Thirdly, let me be sensitive ...
To 'wherever two or three are gathered in Jesus' name' ¹⁹
And most perceptively,
O Spirit of Wholeness,
To Your Presence ALIVE in the Church,
In the very Body of Christ
... In its Fellowship of Compassion,
... In its Fellowship of Prayer,
And, most intensely,
... In its Fellowship of Eucharist.*

¹⁸ Rome Tertianship, Nov 1991

¹⁹ Mt 18: 20

Measured in Human Heartbeats ²⁰

*Shelter me, Abba,
Shelter me within the heart of Jesus
... Whose Eternal love for You
Is now measured in human heartbeats
– Like mine!*

*Draw me deeply
Into Your enveloping silence
... Like a little child
Enfolded in its mother's embrace,
... Like Your Beloved Child
Entrusting Himself to You, Abba,
For every aspect of care
– For life itself!*

*O Parent of all parents!
Divine Nurturer!
Take us to Yourself.
Press Your ear to our hearts :
Listen!
Listen how they RESONATE
With the heartbeat of Your Beloved!*

Gentle Us, Quietly ²¹

*Brother Jesus,
You come to us as a fragile child,
Someone to be cradled close ;
May You always find us
... Waiting ... expectant ... attentive.
Lead us WITHIN ...
Into Abba's light,
Suffusing the depths of Your Spirit.
Teach us His quiet, peace-filled ways.*

*We are not worthy
To accompany You there ;
So gentle us quietly into His arms.
Enshrine, deep in our spirits, His words –
'Be still ...
And know that I am God'. ²²*

*Thus, we can serve You
With a heart brimming with devotion
– A heart, whose focus is singular,
Whose beat is one with the rhythm
Of Your Spirit's Song ...*

²¹ Rome Tertianship, Nov 1991

²² Ps 46: 10 NRSV

Like a Father in Love ²³

*Abba, I fall on my knees, in awe,
That You should reverence me!
Your love really knows no limits!*

*You draw me
Into the Eternity of Your love
For Your Beloved!*

*This is the awesome reality ...
The silent beauty of our lives:
To be loved in the Beloved!
Your limitless Gift
Is both PRESENT and TO COME :
Open us! Open us to its reality!*

*Abba, let us stay quiet before You
... Attentive, 'keeping vigil', yearning for You. ²⁴
While there are times for DOING,
Most of life is for GROWING
... Growing in Your peace.
You are always 'revealing new things' to us
– Creating, transforming us, anew,
'Just now, this very moment'. ²⁵
You renew us, even while we sleep, ²⁶
Reaching out, to draw us to Yourself
... Like a father in love,
A tender, loving Father.*

²³ Rome Tertianship, Nov 1991

²⁴ Is 26: 9

²⁵ Is 48: 7

²⁶ Cf. Ps 127: 2 JB

Unscathed ²⁷

*Abba, while I sleep
You fill me with song
– With Your special gift of zeal –
To sing Your praise!
I am so in awe, Abba,
Of Your tenderness to me:
Your ways are not our ways!
Your love is BEYOND what words can say!
The wonder of being loved by You
... Enveloped by Your Presence ...
Surpasses every dream that can be dreamed.*

*That I have arrived until now,
Unscathed,
Is all Your doing
... Visited in pain, only by my own WILFULNESS.
Your angels carry me within their very arms, ²⁸
Just IN CASE, I slip.
Thank You, Abba,
For the inner fountain of Your Life,
Flowing forth from Your Church,
And for the Promise,
Already experienced,
Of being with You Eternally.*

²⁷ Rome Tertianship, Nov 1991

²⁸ Cf. Psalm 91: 12 (Inclusive Bible)

Your Creative Touch ²⁹

O Divine Potter,
Begin again – re-shape and re-new me;
Mould me, as You think fit
– Conforming me to the image of Your Beloved,
Because I SO EASILY twist out of shape!

Bring Your ‘knowing’ potter’s hands to bear
Upon the hardening clay of my being :
Moisten it with Your tender love;
Knead it, where necessary ... to soften it;
Then gentle me, made pliable by suffering, into shape.

Re-configure me to Your dream for me;
Shape me, with Your Beloved Jesus in mind!
Let me reflect a sense of His beauty and grace :
Give to my features a share in the fine qualities of others,
But retain that distinctiveness for which You made me.

O Abba ... I am in Your hands
Continue to caress me
With Your creative touch.

Imitating You ³⁰

*Jesus, to IMITATE You,
Is my own certainty :
Otherwise, I head for things
Superficially attractive,
Romantic, but unreal
– Short-cuts, contrived and illusory.*

*Draw me to imitate You with a love
That is pure, simple, without affectation, without an agenda.
Save me – from proclaiming MYSELF
... In lieu of the Good News!*

*Rather, let me proclaim You as ‘The Way’ ³¹
– The Template of our humanity!
The Enabling Love of our lives!*

*Allow me to commit myself
As a servant to others – IN You.
Let Your Humility
Radiate through my weakness and repentance
... Because we are only instruments
Of Your empowering Presence
– With a power, NEVER ours, to own ...
Much less thinking, we are self-empowered!*

*Yes Jesus, simply to IMITATE You,
Is my only certainty!*

³⁰ Rome Tertianship, Nov 1991

³¹ Jn 14: 6

Even to Begin to Love ³²

*Jesus, empty me of all pretensions :
– That I may be Yours
Solely, truly, wholly!*
*Unfortunately, it is mostly when my neediness is stark,
That I FEEL the need for You
– To fill my life, to make me whole.*

*Lord, give me new eyes
– To see how my very nature aches for You :
A being INCOMPLETE...
My famished heart thirsts for Your Love
... Even to BEGIN to love!*

*O Jesus 'bring me to my knees' continually,
As to the real depth of my need!
Show me
– In my temptations to unfaithfulness in love –
How fragile, fickle and unmindful
I always am;
But, ever more deeply,
How profoundly FAITHFUL You are!
O Jesus, You alone are my life!*

Empty Me, Jesus ³³

*Empty me, Jesus,
Empty me of self-sufficiency,
For only – ONLY in my emptiness
Will Your saving power
Reveal its full scope
... Its divine place and time,
And Your heart's purpose for me.*

*Thus, Jesus, keep my spirit
Poor, empty and needy of You
– Always waiting ... childlike, openheartedly,
In imitation of You.*

*Stay with me, Crucified Jesus,
In the very heart
Of my failing, needy humanity.
Empower me
From within the epicentre of my weakness!
Jesus, brother in weakness,
Be brother to me.*

Brothers and Sisters of Jesus ³⁴

*Abba,
Show me the childlike, humble way of Jesus ...
Whose life was hidden, simple and powerless,
Who chose childlike, trusting people to follow Him,
And who very clearly prefers us to find Him
... In the very least of people, in the poor,
... In the sidelined, and in the powerless
– All of whom He claims, lovingly,
As His brothers and sisters.*

*O Spirit of Abba and Jesus,
Move me to IDENTIFY
With all those brothers and sisters of Jesus
... In order to evoke in us, together,
A deeper sense of our KINSHIP
As children of a loving Father!*

*And move my whole being
To PRAY with Jesus –
I bless You, Father
For hiding these things
From the learned and the clever,
And revealing them to little children.
... So that they may be one
LIKE US, ³⁵*

³⁴ Rome Tertianship, Nov 1991

³⁵ Mt 11: 25; Jn 17: 11

Face to Face ³⁶

*Jesus, You did not hold onto
The experience of being God,
But, emptied Yourself into the life ³⁷
Of being just a man;
And, further emptied Yourself
– Of this light grasp on life –
By being emptied INTO DEATH
... Through our REJECTION of You!
Why?
You did this for love of us sinners,
Deeply hoping ...
That we'd FULLY LIVE OUT our humanity
– Orientating all we are,
To Your Abba-Father.*

*But, in Your ever-eager-love
You went further:
You drew us into Your own Family,
So that, IN You,
Face to face with Abba,
We may eternally glorify
The HUMANITY WE SHARE
Within Your Divine Fellowship of Love.*

³⁶ Rome Tertianship, Nov 1991

³⁷ Cf. Phil 2: 6-7

Aloneness-in-Suffering ³⁸

*Jesus, my feeling of ALONENESS-IN-SUFFERING
Is a constant dilemma for me.
You too, at times, were suffering alone,
But turned intuitively to Your Abba-Father.
But when I am thus alone,
I forget frequently that You are by my side,
And forget that Abba is there for both of us!*

*My heartfelt prayer,
Is that I not be put to the test of loneliness,
Because it is, then,
That I can head for the bright lights, and quick solutions!*

*But, in You, brother Jesus,
With Abba at OUR side,
Even though the suffering persists,
The burden becomes 'lighter',
The yoke 'easier'. ³⁹*

*In SHARING the aloneness of my struggle,
You always point me to Abba
– The Heart of all intimacy
Who got You through Calvary!
O Jesus affirm and empower me
With Your abiding Presence
... Drawing me, us – into Your deep intimacy
With Abba –
Father, may they be one in us
– As You are in me
And I am in You.' ⁴⁰*

³⁸ Rome Tertianship, Nov 1991

³⁹ Cf. Mt 11: 30

⁴⁰ Jn 17: 21

Steady Our Head and Heart ⁴¹

*Jesus, our brother in suffering,
In this disjointed world,
When our very persons
– Created in Your Image,
Yet smudged or scarred within this world of limitations –
Just DON'T CONNECT,
The outcome is PAIN.
This pain deepens and intensifies in our lives
As our sins...co-alesce...mutualize... and co-impact
– With communal pain enmeshing
All our personal pains –
Causing us to...lose focus...lose direction...and lose hope.
Ultimately, all pain is inhuman,
And thus, ungodly:
You, Yourself, Jesus, found pain repugnant
... Causing You even to sweat blood!*

*Jesus, when our lives become so enmeshed in pain
Reveal Your loving Father's Face to us,
Reassure us that He is our Father too
... Holding us, in You, ever close to His Heart.
Yet, even enveloped by His Love,
We still equivocate,
Casting our eyes aside,
Wanting to be distracted!
Like the Apostles volunteering
To drink the cup of commitment,
We also seek to avoid the time of reckoning
And turn aside, each to his own fool's paradise,
Or to blame-shifting,
... Whereby pain, is either anaesthetized or avoided.*

*We can only drink suffering's cup, Jesus,
LIKE A CHILD
... With You there, Abba's Child,
To bring it to our quavering lips;
There too, to STEADY OUR HEAD AND HEART
Lest , we push it away
Again ... like a child
But a child, unaccompanied in their pain.*

*Jesus, You KNEW, in Gethsemane,
'ABBA, YOU'RE HERE!'
We too sense
'You're IN OUR PAIN'
... Both as our brother, and as our Eucharist.
Hand in Your hand,
We too can become Eucharist for OTHERS
– Brothering, sistering each other
Into Your Sacrifice.
Then uplifted together,
Freed and revitalized,
Together we'll sit at Your Banquet
In joy ... at peace
... Enfolded by Abba's Love.*

So Adorable! 42

*Abba, I ask You for the singular grace of humility,
That I may be emptied of self-seeking,
And dwell habitually, in the deepest sense
Of utter personal need, weakness, and dependence
– Of adoring, loving dependence, on You,
Because You are so adorable!
So lovable! So good!*

Family Conscious ⁴³

*Jesus, You have been given to me
As MY OWN BROTHER.
Put Your arm around my shoulder,
And tell me of Abba's love for You.
Whisper to me ...
All He means to You.
Let us rejoice TOGETHER
In His tender care for You – and me!
Show me how Abba's love
Is so family conscious ...
Gathering brothers and sisters to You,
– Together as one
Yet still fathering each,
Specially, personally, tenderly.*

Breathe Your Spirit Through Us ⁴⁴

*Jesus,
Draw us into Your love for Abba,
Draw us into His tender embrace.
With Your eyes ...
Let us gaze on Abba's Face;
With Your feelings ...
Let us caress Him;
In Your Spirit ...
Let us become one with Him!
Breathe Your Spirit through our being
That we become ALIVE with His Love!*

Abba's Adopted Kin: My Kin ⁴⁵

*Abba, draw us all together,
ALIVE IN EACH OTHER,
Within Your Spirit!*

*Draw me to You
In these others
... Your adopted kin
And thus, my kin!
Love wholeness of life
Into us all!*

*Let me offer Eucharist
In them, in Christ, to You ...
Let me be reconciled
In them, in Christ, to You ...
Reconciled for being
Less-than-a-brother,
Less than Jesus,
To them.*

*Abba, through them
– Abide lovingly
Within my heart.*

With His Childlike Spirit ⁴⁶

*Grant me the grace, loving Abba,
Simply to be happy, in Your Presence
... With that childlike spirit
That Jesus so rejoiced in!*

*Love IMITATES :
So let me linger here ...
Content, like Jesus, to be in Your Presence.
Let me be ever eager
For the joy and peace of the Kingdom
—To envelop
All who are pure of heart,
All who are poor in spirit,
As brothers and sisters IN Jesus.*

Brimming Over ⁴⁷

*Jesus, when I am with the poor,
Their poverty hurts me;
Their wordless pleas for the INFILLING
Of Your goodness,
Tug at my heart.*

*To be a channel to the poor,
My own heart needs to be poor!
Yet, still, I fill my heart
With fake riches :
My heart is neither poor, nor rich
– But pre-occupied!*

*Yes! Only if our hearts are impoverished of self,
Can the divine treasury
Of the outpouring of Your goodness,
Surge freely into others' lives ...
'Til, brimming over,
They too overflow,
Enriching others,
Enhancing relationships ...*

*Thus, the truly poor in spirit
Draw to themselves
Your 'pearl of great price' ⁴⁸
– The kinship
Of all humble hearts
Who know their need of God –
Becoming 'members of each other', ⁴⁹
In You, their Ascended brother,
Who, far beyond Moses,
Is 'the humblest man on earth.' ⁵⁰*

⁴⁷ Rome Tertiaship, Dec 1991

⁴⁸ Mt 13: 46

⁴⁹ Rom 12: 5

⁵⁰ Nm 12: 3

Given, without Measure ⁵¹

*With boundless graciousness
With gifts ... numerous, multifaceted, ever-deepening ...
You nurture, enhance, and dignify us, Jesus.*

*Your crowning gift
... One You share most intimately with Abba ...
Is Your Spirit-Fire
– Setting OUR spirits ablaze,
Fashioning families of love,
To light up a world of gloom,
– Firing humble hearts
With the fervour of Pentecost!*

*Thus inflamed,
We pour forth streams of light
... Not our own ...
Setting others aflame!
This cascading of light,
... From one to the other ...*

Is unrestrained, 'given without measure': ⁵²
*The richer in the giving ... the richer in receiving
... The poorer in the keeping!*

*Jesus let Your radiant Spirit
... Of transcendent warmth and luminescence ...
Pass, freely, THROUGH US
– Firing hope into life, loving life into all!
Let His fiery passage
TRANSFORM us into You, Jesus
... The most radiant bearer of humanity ...
– Standing open-hearted before Abba,
A child-man in spirit,
So simple, welcoming, receptive
Of Abba's Love ...
As to set our hearts on fire!*

⁵¹ Rome Tertiaship, Dec 1991

⁵² Jn 3: 34 (NRSV)

Jesus: Humanity, Fully Alive ⁵³

Jesus,
Let us become a real home for Your life :
Fill us with YOUR humanity
– That human life You lived ‘to the full’; ⁵⁴
Let us explore its full possibilities
IN YOU
O ‘Lover of life’! ⁵⁵
Let us be as humanly alive AS YOU ARE
... Because, for You,
‘Abba’s Glory is humanity, fully alive’. ⁵⁶

O! What a loss
– That humankind had to wait
... Generation after generation ...
To live out the promise
Of our own nature!

But O! What a gain
That it was GOD
Who showed us HOW!

And wonders multiplied!
– That it was You, Jesus
Who IS
The transformative TEMPLATE
In whom WE do so!
And the Eucharist of Love
Who enables us to do so!
– Uplifting our humanity
To Your DIVINE IDENTITY!

⁵³ Rome Tertianship, Dec 1991

⁵⁴ Cf. Jn 10:10

⁵⁵ Wis 11: 26

⁵⁶ Cf. St Irenaeus, 2nd C

Eternalizing Our Life ⁵⁷

*Thank You, Abba,
For the Mystery of Life shared :
Thank You, thank You
For Your Son as Gift – our brother!
Thank You
For taking our human life up into Yours!
For ETERNALIZING our life!
– The Promise Realized
For all who love
As Your Son loves!
Thank You, Abba.*

*And the wonder FOR US,
Within Your arms,
Is that WE OURSELVES become
‘A spring of water
BURSTING FORTH to eternal life.’ ⁵⁸
This launches us past the limits
Of our death-seeded humanity
... Into human life’s most fecund fulfilment,
Humanity’s immortal destiny
– ETERNAL LIFE
With You!*

⁵⁷ Rome Tertianship, Dec 1991

⁵⁸ Jn 4:14 (JB Fr)

Let Me Be No Less ⁵⁹

*Thank You, Jesus,
For loving me just as Abba loves You.
In You, I have a real companion, a brother
– ‘A person who welcomes sinners and eats with them.’* ⁶⁰

*Let me be no less to my friends and family,
And to others I serve
– ‘A person who welcomes sinners and eats with them.’*

*And when I, maligned by sin and failure, become isolated,
Let each be no less to me
– ‘A person who welcomes sinners and eats with them.’*

Jesus where You lead, we follow ...

⁵⁹ Rome Tertianship, Dec 1991

⁶⁰ Lk 15: 2

Your Gifts: Our Choices ⁶¹

Jesus, show me in the humblest possible way –

How love is the highest expression of obedience

... ‘This is my commandment,

Love one another as I have loved you.’ ⁶²

How obedience is the highest expression of freedom ...

The freedom within friendship

– ‘If you do what I command you,

I shall no longer call you servants

... I will call you friends.’ ⁶³

How love itself generates this freedom,

‘Where the Spirit of Love is,

There is freedom.’ ⁶⁴

How, beyond all three – love, obedience, freedom –

Lies the Mystery

That ALL are Your gifts,

Yet – remain OUR CHOICES!

⁶¹ Rome Tertianship, Dec 1991

⁶² Jn 15: 10

⁶³ Jn 15: 14-15

⁶⁴ 2 Cor 3: 17

A Homecoming Grace ⁶⁵

*Abba, of all the graces in serving others,
That my heart yearns for,
Let this be the first :
'To forgive as I have been forgiven.'
It is ONLY
By loving each other in forgiveness
– Just as ...
'The Father ran to the boy,
Clasped him in his arms,
And kissed him tenderly' – ⁶⁶
That Your PEACE
... Of which forgiveness is the seed ...
Will descend upon our hearts,
Drawing us together in love.*

*Through Jesus' Passover, Abba, You teach us
That forgiveness is also a HOMECOMING GRACE,
Bringing us home –
To our own hearts,
To others' hearts,
And home, with Jesus,
To YOUR waiting heart!*

*Your Spirit, Abba,
Strews the path of our lives
With a PRODIGAL trail of forgiveness,
To draw us home to Your heart
– Because forgiveness is a true pledge,
A forerunner,
A foretaste,
Of the Banquet of Welcome
In Your Family Home.*

⁶⁵ Rome Tertianship, Dec 1991

⁶⁶ Lk 15: 27

Seized by Your Spirit ⁶⁷

*Jesus, You were so whole-hearted as a man,
That Abba's Spirit enabled You
To BROTHER every person You met,
With a divinely human tenderness.
If we seek God in our humanity,
As whole-heartedly AS YOU DID,
Your Spirit will seize OUR hearts too!*

*We, too, will be moved
To brother and sister others :
... To BE the Good News
To those who are estranged ;
... To become God's BOUNTY
To those who are without ;
... And to enthuse those whose spirit are imprisoned,
Witnessing, that to love themselves through loving others,
Is to become truly FREE.*

*Unfolding in a process of graced growth,
Your Spirit of Whole-heartedness
Slowly CENTERS our person
NOT, in ourself
But, in the heart of a CHOSEN COMMUNITY
... Be that family, or a friendship group,
Or a community of the vulnerable
– So that our whole-heartedness
Encompasses the whole of the COMMUNITY.*

*Jesus, make whole our hearts
Within Yours ;
Fire us with courage to take up Your cross
... Of brothering and sistering others ...
Whole-heartedly!*

Crucified with You ⁶⁸

*Jesus, to love as You did,
Is to be CRUCIFIED with You.
Jesus, You gave all,
So that we can rejoice
In the FULLNESS of our humanity,
By lavishing all we are on others
... As You did.*

*Jesus, I find You waiting
In the heart of my sin
... Waiting there,
Crucified, for love,
To the Cross of our unfaithful lives!
Grace me
With the courage, patience, and dignity
To WAIT THUS, for others.*

Twinned in Spirit ⁶⁹

*Abba, Your choice of us
Is wholly Mysterious ...
Enabling ...
Enlivening ...*

*Place the word 'Abba'
As an intimate word of love ...
Always on my lips ...
As it is in my heart ...*

*Let my spirit murmur it ...
While I sleep, while I dream ...
Being gently responsive ...
To Your Beloved's own Spirit ...*

*Let me always sense
With a receptive consciousness ...
The drawing in, and gifting forth ...
Of Jesus' Breathing, within ...*

*And, of Jesus' choice, to be both
A brother, and a friend ...
O! The wonder of being twinned
— In the spirit of Thomas the Twin — ⁷⁰
AS the twin, and friend of Jesus.
O Abba! What a Father You are
— To father such a Son!*

⁶⁹ Rome Tertianship, Dec 1991

⁷⁰ See Jn 20: 24. The author's name in religion is Tom

Rhythms of Need ⁷¹

O Only God!
God, wholly compassionate!
Forgive me ... forgive me ...
For my unfaithfulness.
Grant me the special gift
To be PATIENT
With my own rhythms of need.
Grant me the courage of the Apostles
– To accept, through Your Spirit,
A whole Easter Day of gifts :
... The Dawning of New Life!
... An Ascending to the Father
– Humanity's entrance into Divine Intimacy! –
... And the Lavishing of the Spirit upon us!

O Spirit of Easter, O Spirit of Abba,
Urge Jesus
To deepen my consciousness
Of His BROTHERING me
... Through stress, failings, and loneliness.
May the gloom of evil around me,
The ugliness of sin,
The swagger, the false display, the sheer unlovingness
Of a superficial world,
Not BLIND me
To the vision of hope and beauty,
Pouring forth
– As a stream of inner light and warmth –
From a brother's heart!

The Grace of Innocence ⁷²

Abba,

Through Mary's sinless entry into humanity, ⁷³
With a heart that never knew sin,
May we, too, live and love in You
Without sin ...

Inspired by Mary's faith-filled response to Grace,
We plead for the special grace of INNOCENCE again :
... Not to LOOK FOR SIN in others,
... To DELETE memory's recall of hurt and temptation,
... To FOCUS on the good in others and in ourselves,
... And to SEE You, our God, in everyone and in everything.
With Your grace, Abba,
Each of us can walk the earth
– Again –
... With a child's consciousness
Of life's overarching goodness,
... And with a child's open trust
In Your Fatherly goodness.

⁷² Rome Tertianship, Dec 1991

⁷³ This poem is a response to the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (8 Dec)

A Poor Man's Gift ⁷⁴

*Abba,
I trust in You
... 'Let it happen to me as You have said.'* ⁷⁵
*I accept
That You need to send me
As an apostle of forgiveness
... To all those who hope for Life.*

*Jesus, bear WITH me,
The sufferings this entails,
Accompanying me
Along the road You've trod.
As a poor man,
You gave what You could
... Forgiveness.*

*Let this be my poor man's gift, as well, Jesus,
A forgiveness that touches others' deepest spirit
... So that they may uncover
In the field of their hearts,
That 'hidden treasure'* ⁷⁶
*... Simply being able to call, WITH You,
Upon the God of Love
'Abba! Father!'* ⁷⁷
*Thus, WITH You, Jesus
... The simple, sinless poor man of Nazareth ...
We share in Your gift of forgiveness
That so TRANSFORMS our world!*

⁷⁴ Rome Tertianship, Dec 1991

⁷⁵ Lk 1: 38

⁷⁶ Mt 13: 44

⁷⁷ Rom 8:15

Each Lost Loved Child ⁷⁸

*Abba,
Through forgiveness,
You hold us safe in the heart of Your Son,
Whose Spirit of Freedom, in time,
Disarms all the hard-hearted of their power!
Through forgiveness we are made whole
... Drawn together ...
As You respond, eternally, to Christ's prayer,
'May they all be one!' ⁷⁹*

*Abba, You yearn for us to spread
The Good News,
Whose very heart is forgiveness.
You yearn for us
Always to be a welcoming heart
For each lost, loved child
... Born of You, the God of Forgiveness.*

⁷⁸ Year 9, Prison Ministry, Wacol and Borallon, Gregory Terrace Community Mar 1992

⁷⁹ Jn 17: 21

Equals ⁸⁰

*The remarkable central truth
Of this world
Is that it is held together
By the very few people
Who love ...
Who love reality into the truth
That all people are indeed equal.
Yet,
At the very heart of that love
Is the deep anger
That inequality continues ...
For anger's only true purpose
Is to remove injustice
– Thus freeing people to love
As EQUALS.*

⁸⁰ Year 9, Prison Ministry, Wacol and Borallon, Gregory Terrace Community Apr 1992
Written in the light of prison ministry, this poem was the *basis* of all the Anger Management Courses I taught.

Our Equality ⁸¹

Our equality

Is sourced in our RELATIONAL origins, as people :

– *As HOMO SAPIENS, ALL chromosomally belong to one primal female ;*

– *As HUMAN BEINGS, ALL are children of Adam and Eve*

Whose human, spiritual souls

Were the first of God's PERSONALIZED CREATIONS.

This is the reality for each of their descendants in succession

... In the MOMENT of each one's conception ...

As ALL are wondrously sealed with God's Own Image

As EQUAL

In human dignity, in human identity, and in human destiny.

– *As DIVINE ADOPTEES, ALL are invited*

... In an Eternal Offer, personified in Jesus Ascended ...

To be elevated IN HIM

To the divine dignity, the divine identity, and the divine destiny

Of the Divine Child

... Divinely fathered by the God of Love.

Their Spirit of Adoption

Enables and ensures

That ALL human beings are potential members

Of the Divine Fellowship,

Wherein

The Divine Equality between Abba, Jesus Ascended and the Spirit

Is the ultimate Eternal Source

For our own equality.

Sourced humanly, and sourced divinely,

This EQUALITY

Guarantees

That we are brothers and sisters, SIMPLY,

... With NO OTHER relationship between us, necessary.

Humanly ... a Prime Minister, white and male,

And a mentally handicapped four-year-old Negro girl,

Are EQUAL

... In dignity, identity, and destiny.

⁸¹ Year 9, Prison Ministry, Wacol and Borallon, Gregory Terrace Community Apr 1992
See Note on Poem 259

*Divinely, IN CHRIST, no one
Is a grandparent, uncle, or cousin to another.
All are brothers and sisters to Christ.
Both a newly baptized girl, and a saintly Pope,
– She a sister to him, and he a brother to her –
Are all en-Spirited equally
By Love.*

*More wondrously, all human beings, found IN Christ
DRAWN into the very heart
Of Divine Communing,
Experience equality in its ULTIMATE source
The equality between ... Abba, Jesus Ascended, and the Spirit!*

The Challenge of Choice ⁸²

*To be yourself is always to choose
The self we dream to be ...
To love life into such choices,
Is to create possibilities to be free.*

*We become more fully human
The more we own our choices,
Because we focus energy by our choices ...
Defining ourselves, identifying ourselves,
And, above all, valuing and enhancing others.
Are our choices, now, worthy of our future?*

*We can not only choose a new future
But we can choose a new past –
A new cluster of self-images out of our past.
Our compulsions do little more
Than to repeat our past ...
The challenge is self-chosen change :
To enliven the present with the choice of a new past,
And be freed for the future, by the call to change.*

*Yet, we more really become ourself
Through the other, who invites us
To dis-cover, and surface, our real self ...
Still, we only become what we think we are worth.*

*The real challenge of change is in always choosing
... A 100% to be ourself, and a 100% to be for the other.
Also our desire for human wholeness
Prompts us to create possibilities,
Not only for ourself, but for every other
... To achieve the fullness of human life.*

⁸² Year 9, Prison Ministry, Wacol and Borallon, Gregory Terrace Community Oct 1992
This poem was written for use with prisoners
See Note on Poem 146

Truth, Goodness, Beauty ⁸³

*Wherever you find truth,
Know you MEET God ;
Wherever there's good,
God ACTS ;
Wherever you sense beauty,
Enjoy your God.*

⁸³ Year 10, Prison Ministry, Wacol and Borallon, Gregory Terrace Community Jun 1993
Written in the light of my prison ministry

Crucified to Us ⁸⁴

*It is not
That God does not love you
When you sin ...
Nor even that God loves you
Despite your sin ...
Rather, that Jesus
Crucified for love of us
Loves you in your sin ...
Yes! Jesus is crucified
To you, in love!*

Being with Others ⁸⁵

A person of good self-esteem

Can truly say:

*I believe I am a worthwhile person,
I'm worth more than what I've done,
I'm worth more than what I could ever do,
I'm worth far more than my own self-estimations.*

Still the person is faced with the dilemma ...

- That to be DEPENDENT, by itself, is a limited good,
Insofar as living my life solely for others
Limits the fullness of life.*
- That to be INDEPENDENT, by itself, is a limited good,
Insofar as living my life solely on one's own terms
Limits the fullness of life.*

In integrating both these life-goods,

The truly good person

Can only conclude

That living my life WITH others

– Being WITH others –

Leaves both parties truly FREE

... Free to be themselves, 100%,

... Free to be for chosen others 100%,

- Both 100% independent, and 100% dependent, by choice.*

⁸⁵ Year 11, Prison Ministry, Wacol and Borallon, Gregory Terrace Community Feb 1994
Written for use with prisoners
See Note Poem 146

Relationships : Source of Authority ⁸⁶

AUTHORITY: Its primal root, the Latin 'augeo' – is to increase, to promote, to cause to grow.

*An authentic person's authority
Ought CAUSE OTHERS TO GROW as human persons.
Contrarivise, humanity generally,
Often locks into the dominant historical idea,
That authority is one directional ... like worldly power
– Travelling down the hierarchical ladder,
Such that one exercises authority OVER another.*

*In truth,
If one CAUSES OTHERS TO GROW as human persons,
Authority is thus, personal, and necessarily MUTUAL
... Whereby, if you have authority WITH another,
The other has authority WITH you.
Indeed, a young six year old girl
Has EQUAL authority with her father :
Hers is an emotional, even spiritual, authority
That does not command, but ELICITS
Loving fatherly responses ;
His authority ... EQUAL to hers,
In dignity and value,
Is a nurturing, protective,
And, at times, directive, authority
... Changing as she ages.*

*Their mutual authority WITH each other
Is immeasurably enhanced
Through their common adoption into Christ
– Wherein they become brother and sister
To each other
... So that the EQUALITY of their authority
Is radiantly revealed!*

⁸⁶ Year 12, Prison Ministry, Wacol and Borallon, Gregory Terrace Community Apr 1995
Written for use with prisoners
See Note Poem 146

*This belief in the mutuality of authority
Parallels the elevated concept of POWER
... Wherein the true purpose of one's power
Is to EMPOWER THE OTHER.*

*Thus both beliefs
– Regarding authority and power –
Resonate with authenticity
When both are rooted ... humanly, and 'in Christ' ...
In RELATIONSHIPS
– Rooted in what happens BETWEEN people,
And this, on what happens BETWEEN God and us.*

*To relate thus – authentically,
One has to REPUDIATE the hierarchical MODEL
Of authority and power
– A model which is ultimately based on FORCE :
On punishment and rewards,
On restrictions and privileges,
On insiders and outsiders.
One also has to repudiate grading people
... Where 'higher' in the hierarchy
Equates to importance, access, and privilege ;
... And where 'lower' in the hierarchy
Equates to lesser degrees of importance, access, and privilege.
These understandings very easily deteriorate
– To equate hierarchical importance or unimportance,
To one's importance or unimportance AS A HUMAN BEING
... Reverencing them, or denigrating them.*

*Furthermore, in basing authority and power
On RELATIONSHIPS
One often needs, pragmatically,
To situate one's repudiations of the hierarchical model
Within an EXISTING hierarchy
... Operating, perhaps in one's work situation,
And in the fulfilling of one's citizenship responsibilities.*

*Thus, because ALL have authority,
One needs to be deeply, personally insistent
In treating ALL relationally
... While still conforming to hierarchical paperwork,
And to administrative demands and deadlines, et cetera.*

*Indeed, our vision ought be
... To gradually but deliberately subvert, and disempower,
The persuasive hierarchical model
– Which our warring tribal, territorial origins
Have installed as one of humanity's
Core modus operandi.*

*Thus, we owe it
To humanity's absolute CORE VALUES,
– Human equality and human dignity –
Always to relate personally to authority,
And to enhance the mutuality
Essential for true authority.*

Opening to Freedom ⁸⁷

*It is deeply worthwhile
Always to invest our time, efforts, and passion,
In enlarging our freedom and others' freedom
For, the growth in one ...
Deeply enhances the growth of the other.
To prepare for, and deeply desire
Such freedom,
Is to already experience freedom
– To be freed from certain inner restraints,
And to be open to greater possibilities.
Moreover, the way we begin a new freedom,
Is the way it will continue.
The degree to which we VALUE freedom
... Setting our hopes on it,
... Treasuring it,
... Even reverencing it,
Is the degree, to which, it not only ENHANCES our lives,
But is a measure – a true measure,
Of how our freedom will continue to expand.
The higher we value it,
The more we place it at the centre
– The enabling, activating centre –
Of our identity and destiny:
It centres, characterizes, colours
...All we are, and do.*

⁸⁷ Year 13, Prison Ministry, Wacol and Borallon, Victoria Street Community, Brisbane Jun 1996
An 1860's cottage in Victoria St, opposite St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace, had been donated to the Brothers.
I lived there with Br Kev McDade, as an separate community, from Easter 1996 to Nov 1998 – a wonderful time

Deceit Always Betrays Us ⁸⁸

*Deception by one person
Breeds mistrust in the other ...
And in those who come to know.
They, gradually lock him out of their lives,
Because he increasingly becomes
'An UNKNOWN quantity'.*

*For those who commonly lie,
Before long, they cannot differentiate
Between truth, lies, and the memory of their lies
... And so, deep confusion enters their lives
– Especially their relationships!*

*Those who lie ROB others
Of the expectation of honesty
In relationships.
It is, then, only a small step
For them to steal.
They are only an accident away
From transgressing another's very person.*

*In the more valued relationships,
Of those who steal long term
... Inevitably
Whatever they want, they take!
And in their own personality,
They become calculating and predatory,
Treating most they meet
– As 'set-ups' or with suspicion.*

*For all the above, to varying degrees,
Life becomes an increasingly adrenalized game, or necessity
– Of living their life as a succession of 'fronts'.
The more complete the 'front' they live,
When they are exposed ...
The more they will be lost, and deserted by others.
They and others won't know
Who they really ARE,
... Who to relate to,
Who to love.*

To Lust or To Long Lovingly ⁸⁹

*If through lust,
You still SEEK LOVE,
Then, you act out of weakness :
Love will find you.*

*But, if through lust,
You seek ONLY sexual satisfaction,
You act out of contempt ... hidden or obvious :
Love will ELUDE you ...and, finally, you will become
The play-thing of others.*

*Not to lust at all,
But to long, lovingly,
Is, at EVERY stage,
To have the other's best interests,
Enshrined in your heart.
Love will fulfil your longing.*

⁸⁹ Year 13, Prison Ministry, Wacol and Borallon, Victoria Street Community, Brisbane Jul 1996
Written for use with prisoners

Every Emotion Creates its Own World ⁹⁰

*A hostile person lives in a hostile world *
– Their inner mind-set of unfocussed anger
Being projected, indiscriminately, on those nearby,
With the justification ... ‘They all DESERVE it!’
... So their world is peopled with victims.*

*A loving person lives in a loving world *
– Their open resolve is to ‘keep on loving’,
Finds a welcome home, in the many
Whose lives their love nourishes
... Forming a fellowship of love.*

*Those who initiate violence in a relationship
– Be that by words, actions, or omission –
Are NEVER after, told the full truth
... Fundamentally, only what they want to hear.*

*Those who threaten or menace ...
To promote a lifestyle after their own likes and dislikes,
Will, ultimately, have it DESTROYED
By threats and menaces:
By making others insecure,
Nothing that they themselves have,
Will LAST.*

⁹⁰ Year 13, Prison Ministry, Wacol and Borallon, Victoria Street Community, Brisbane Jul 1996
Written for use with prisoners

* Both lines are from an anonymous author

To Be of Service to Your Dream ⁹¹

*To be an authentic person,
Your focus needs to be
The love and freedom in your heart :
... That you love yourself,
... That you be free within yourself.
To do so maturely,
You need CONSTANTLY to be of service
To your dream of love and freedom.
Freedom, in particular, doesn't just happen :
Love and freedom are CHOICES.*

*Of course, others also,
Can be of service to your dream
– Especially, if it is only flickering in the core of your spirit.*

*If there is to be a choice for you,
Between love and freedom
... It needs to be freedom.
The deepest of all realities
In a relationship,
Is to LOVE FREEDOM
Into the heart of the one loved!
... And the most hurtful of all pains,
Is that, with that freedom,
They might choose to reject you,
And, or, their own best future.*

*In loving freedom into YOUR heart,
Others can help to bring your dream alive :
– A dream that can
EMPOWER, ENLIVEN, and DIGNIFY you
And, best of all,
FREE you ... to be your true self.*

⁹¹ Year 14, Prison Ministry, Wacol and Borallon, Victoria Street Community, Brisbane Feb 1997
Written for use with prisoners

Moreover, *you yourself*,
In loving freedom into OTHERS' hearts,
Can yourself BE FREED
– Freed, for example,
Of being a controlling personality.
The way out of all such controlling tendencies,
Or of other common, human compulsions,
Is freedom
... Because control or compulsion is FORCE,
And their true opposite, is freedom.

No one else can make you free.
Still, your freedom partly comes
... By way of your invitation to others to motivate you,
... By way of your valuing them as guides to freedom.
But, decisively, freedom becomes yours –
By your valuing YOURSELF,
By investing value in YOUR OWN BEST FUTURE,
By continuing to MAKE CHOICES ...
To maintain or to enhance your freedom
... Most importantly, your FREEDOM TO TRULY LOVE.

The Spirit of Blessed Edmund ⁹²

*The spirit of Blessed Edmund is alive!
I feel that the call to community, to accountability,
Comes from the twinned heart of the Edmund Rice Family
... Not from the Christian Brothers alone.*

*SOME of my needs as a Family member,
I see being cared for,
From within my congregational community HOME :
Sharing faith journeys, feelings, and vulnerabilities ;
Free to relax totally, to have privacy supported ;
Trustingly open to being challenged ;
Open also to others' needs, hurts and disagreements ;
I see it as a home of 'good news' hospitality,
Where at least a few ex-prisoners
Can, as visitors, feel comfortable,
And free to be themselves.*

*OTHERS of my needs, OUR needs,
I see as more effectively cared for,
By the Edmund Rice Family :
Depthing our Gospel mission,
Celebrating our shared charism,
Having personal ministries affirmed, challenged and renewed
By OTHERS' perspectives...
Be they female, male, youth, aged, married or celibate.
Thus we gain a deeper SENSE of IDENTITY
– By reconciling together, by visioning together
And by celebrating our unity together.*

⁹² Year 14, Prison Ministry, Wacol and Borallon, Victoria Street Community, Brisbane Aug 1997.

This poem was the fruit of my deep commitment to the Edmund Rice Family through all of the 1990's. I identified very strongly with what they stood for. The Family truly deepened the sense of Edmund's charism for me. The Congregation Chapter of 2002 widened the idea of the Family from 'dedicated associates' and changed the name to Network to reflect this. I felt something was lost.

*I feel it is from the heart of BOTH the Family and the Brothers
That the unfamilied, the broken-in-spirit, the low in self-regard,
Call to us.*

*Thus it is in Blessed Edmund's NAME
That our gospelling happens, and mutual ministering occurs.*

*It is from this newest home of Edmund's charism, the Family,
That I see myself drawing key aspects
Of my identity, pride, and motivation.
And it is into this Family,
That we invite
Those struggling ... with confused identity,
Low self-esteem and disadvantage ...
To come and see and share.*