

Poems read in worship at Called and Sent

IX Jesus commissions the disciples

John 20.21-23

Peace be with you, peace and peace again
He gives and gives and gives that lost Shalom
Until at last we know it to the bone
And hear, as prodigals, good news from home.
He gives not only peace, but purpose too,
A sending from the one who has been sent:
'As God sent me so I am sending you
With all my Father's love and power you're sent.
You're sent with good news to a weary world
With love that leads the vilest to repent,
God's full forgiveness is released through you.
You have Shalom to share! So do not hold
It to yourselves, but share it lavishly
That all who choose may find new life in me.'

(from *Sounding the Seasons* enlarged edition, Canterbury Press)

XIX Caeli enarrant

In that still place where earth and heaven meet
Under mysterious starlight, raise your head
And gaze up at their glory: 'the complete

Consort dancing' as one poet said
Of his own words. But these are all God's words:
A shining poem, waiting to be read

Afresh in every heart. Now look towards
The bright'ning east, and see the splendid sun
Rise and rejoice, the icon of his lord's

True light. Be joyful with him, watch him run
His course, receive the gift and treasure of his light
Pouring like honeyed gold till day is done,

As sweet and strong as all God's laws, as right
As all his judgements and as clean and pure,
All given for your growth, and your delight!

XX Exaudiat te Dominus

All given for your growth, and your delight,
All flowing for you from his sanctuary.
Even before you enter in, his light

Is blessing you. Now may his mystery
Still draw you on, arouse your heart's desire,
And may each glimpse become epiphany.

May brief sparks blaze into a holy fire
Whose light and warmth illuminate your mind.
And may some scent and sense of heav'n inspire

Your thoughts and words. May everything remind
You of your Lord, that you may put your trust
Entirely in his name, not in the blind

Dependence of this world, whose weapons rust
Into the soul and and kill it from within.
But may you find in Christ, riches *and* rest.

(From *David's Crown*, Canterbury Press)

XV Jesus commissions the disciples on the mountain *Matthew 28.16-20*

Now he reveals that this is not the end
But only the beginning of his grace.
Eleven, half-believing, saw his face;
It was enough, more than enough, to send
That ragged band of misfits through the world
Amazed and freighted with a weight of glory,
By love inspired, by persecution hurled
To earth's four corners, glad to tell their story:

The story of the God who has come down
Into the midst of everything, come down
To find us all and share in all our pain
That we might share the fulness of his glory

That we might be baptized and born again
And live for ever in the Three in One.

(From *Sounding the Seasons* enlarged edition, Canterbury Press)

I Am the Vine

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

How might it feel to be part of the vine?
Not just to see the vineyard from afar
Or even pluck the clusters, press the wine,
But to be grafted in, to feel the stir
Of inward sap that rises from our root,
Himself deep planted in the ground of Love,
To feel a leaf unfold a tender shoot,
As tendrils curled unfurl, as branches give
A little to the swelling of the grape,
In gradual perfection, round and full,
To bear within oneself the joy and hope
Of God's good vintage, till it's ripe and whole.
What might it mean to bide and to abide
In such rich love as makes the poor heart glad?

(From *Parable and Paradox*, Canterbury Press)

First and Last

Matthew 19:30 But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

The first shall be the last, the last the first.
You make rich havoc of our sense of place,
As every strain of status is reversed.
With one swift look of love, your sacred face
Outfaces us. Disgrace is met with grace,
And blessings fall on those we call accursed.
Strive as they might, the swift don't win the race,
But still the cup is full for those who thirst.
What is this then, we say to one another,
Planning careers and doling status out,
Ranging ourselves and others on the ladder,
With fanfares for the climber with the clout?
Best drop our trumpets, still our banging drums
And listen for your welcome, when it comes.

(From *Parable and Paradox*, Canterbury Press)