

MONKS AND NUNS

have been an integral part of Christianity for more than 1,600 years. This should not be surprising since most major world religions have given rise to some form of monastic life and commitment. In the 4th century AD, Christian monasticism emerged as a grassroots, counter-cultural movement in which women and men left the centers of civilized life, fleeing into the deserts of Egypt and Syria in order to live a more prayerful, simple, and solitary existence dedicated to God in Jesus Christ.

In time, these solitary desert-hermits gathered into communities and these communities drew up formal monastic Rules to govern their lives as monks and nuns. The essential nature of the Christian monastic vocation came to be understood as a total consecration of self to God through a life-long profession of the vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience in community. By the end of the 6th century AD, Saint Benedict of Nursia had composed his Rule for Monasteries, which became normative for Western monasticism. Monastic life as it would be known in the Western Church for centuries to come was thus born.

Since then, the tradition has diversified and many different forms of monastic life have developed. Monasticism in the West has flourished, decayed, and flourished again with surprising vitality. At the time of the English Reformation under King Henry VIII, every monastery, convent and vowed religious community in England was systematically suppressed, only to

re-emerge three centuries later in the Anglo-Catholic Revival of the 19th century. Soon, vowed religious life, including regular monastic observance, became a feature of the American Episcopal Church. Although most people think of monks and nuns, sisters and friars, as being exclusively Roman Catholic, there are presently twenty-two communities of vowed religious in the Episcopal Church with widely varying styles of life and with hundreds of vowed members.

The aim of present-day monks and nuns is identical to that of their forbears in the Egyptian deserts, in the Spanish Cloisters, and the English Cathedral Monasteries. They seek a total consecration of self to God through their vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience lived out in a community. As the first monks sought after the purity of heart enjoined by Jesus and the gift of unceasing prayer commended by St. Paul, so present-day monks and nuns seek a quiet, ordered, prayerful existence to lead them into the mystery of mutual love and mercy that is God the Holy Trinity. -Monastic life is still understood as a passionate response to the commandment of Christ to love God with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength and one's neighbor as oneself.

THE ORDER OF JULIAN OF NORWICH

is a Religious Order of the Episcopal Church, founded in America in 1985, which seeks to live into this rich monastic heritage and to carry it forward into the future. The foundation of the Order is

classical monastic spirituality and practice, drawn from Benedictine and Carmelite sources and infused with the spirit of our patron, Blessed Dame Julian of Norwich. We are unique in the Episcopal Church in that, following medieval custom, the Order is 'mixed.' That is, it includes both monks and nuns living on equal status in the same monastery. Nonetheless, we live a traditional life in community based on the four vows:

- 1.) Poverty: the vow under which a monk or nun may not own anything privately.
- 2.) Celibacy: the vow under which the monk or nun abstains from sexual intimacy and from marriage.
- 3.) Obedience: the vow of Christian and mature submission of one's will to one's superiors.
- 4.) Prayer: "Still Prayer" and intercessory prayer are the first work of the Order of Julian, held within the daily round of the Divine Offices and the Holy Eucharist which are celebrated communally.

While some monastic communities, especially in America, have taken on active apostolates of running schools, hospitals, and parishes, the Order of Julian remains by definition a contemplative order, meaning that the primary purpose of the Order is to maintain a life of consistent and regular prayer. The ministry of the Order to the Church is first of all to be a community of prayer and contemplative presence. To be called to The Order of Julian of Norwich thus means to be called to a life of regular liturgical and silent prayer,

meditation, study, and to work that is normally performed within the monastery grounds. The life of the individual monk or nun is not one of severity, rigid ascetics, or hardship, but of discipline, conversion of life, and commitment to life-long spiritual development within Christian community.

From this base of monastic spirituality, the Order reaches out to the Church and world in tangible ways. First, we offer spiritual direction and provide places at our houses for individuals to make a retreat. Second, we support our community of affiliates, Oblates and Associates. Third, monks and nuns of the Order occasionally leave the monastery to lead retreats for parishes and other groups. Our first work however is liturgical, intercessory, and contemplative prayer. The meaning of our life is thus largely interior and hidden: the conversion of the monk or nun to a life of union with God.

BLESSED JULIAN OF NORWICH

is the patron of the Order named after her. Living in Norwich, England in the 14th and early 15th century, Julian spent much of her life as an anchorite, that is, as a vowed religious living by herself in a small room attached to a parish church. Beyond this, little is actually known about Dame Julian. What is known about her, and what makes her the inspiration for the Order of Julian, is her remarkable book, The Revelations of Divine Love. Her Revelations is a description of a series of visions which opened Julian's mind and heart to the

depths of God's unconditioned love for us in Jesus Christ. After being nearly forgotten for 600 years, her insights and gentle wisdom have now made her justly famous. In a medieval Church which emphasized God's condemning wrath, Julian wrote 'There is no wrath in God...It is the most impossible thing that can be that God would be angry, for wrath and friendship are two opposites.' Just as striking and as relevant to the 21st century is Julian's perception of a feminine element in God. 'As truly as God is our Father,' Julian wrote, 'so truly God is our Mother.' The Episcopal Church celebrates her feast every 8th of May.

Visiting our Monastic Houses

Currently, The Order of Julian of Norwich maintains two houses. The Mother House of the Order, Julian House Monastery, is located 20 minutes west of Milwaukee in Waukesha Wisconsin. This is where the majority of the monks and nuns live and is the center of the Order's life. Llewelyn House Monastery, a small branch house of the Order, is located on the western edge of Wisconsin, near the Mississippi River, 12 miles north of Prairie du Chien.

Guests are always welcome at both houses for all services, as well as for retreats or less formal visits. Guestrooms are available at both houses, and the ministry of spiritual direction is also offered by the Order at both houses. The Horarium, or schedule for daily life, is as follows:

MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY	
6:00	Morning Prayer
7:00	Holy Eucharist
12:00	Noonday Prayer
1:00-2:00	Rest
5:00	Evensong
8:30	Compline
SUNDAY	
8:00	Morning Prayer
9:00	Holy Eucharist
5:00	Evensong
8:30	Compline

Because times for services are sometimes adjusted for special occasions, and because the monasteries are closed to guests for at least two days every month, it is advisable to call ahead before you visit.

Those who wish to reserve a guestroom to make a retreat or to arrange for the possibility of spiritual direction should contact the Guest Steward at either Julian or Llewelyn House Monastery, using the phone numbers in the following panel. There is no nightly charge for a retreat; wonderfully, the Order is sustained by the pledges of its affiliates and the free donations of friends of the community.

INFORMATION ABOUT OJN

see
www.orderofjulian.org
 or
 write or call:

Julian House Monastery
 The Order of Julian of Norwich
 2812 Summit Ave
 Waukesha WI 53188-2781
 (262) 549-0452
www.orderofjulian.org

Llewelyn House Monastery
 The Order of Julian of Norwich
 59104 County Road D
 Eastman WI 54626
 (608) 874-4495

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AFFILIATION WITH OJN

Oblates of the Order are persons who are seriously committed to the spiritual and contemplative life in the world. They are men and women, clergy and lay, married and single, who live under an adaptation of the regular vows. For information about the Oblate Rule and life, please write:

The Rev. Mary Jane Oakland ObjN
 1612 Truman Drive
 Ames IA 50010

Associates of the Order are those seeking a less stringent Rule of Life, but who desire a spiritual bond with the Julian Community. For information about the Associate Rule, please write to:

Rolanda Wase, AOJN
 1907 Old London Way
 Cary NC 27153

THE ORDER OF JULIAN OF NORWICH

