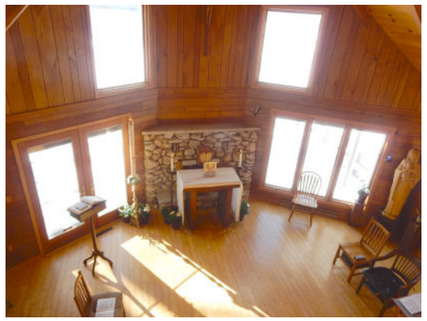
A Note from the Guardian



We have been hearing this spring that for some, the physical distancing measures in place have been an unexpected, unlooked-for blessing, and a graced time of recovering a slower, more local form of life. For others, though, whose circumstances were precarious to begin with the shutdowns have only added to their already heavy load of distress. Here at the monastery we have been undertaking St Paul's skill-requiring direction to 'rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep,' holding all in prayer.

But one thing I have heard again and again is that, no matter where on that spectrum of grace or difficulty people find themselves, they are longing for the ordinary physical connection of human society that the disease measures have denied, and above all, the grace of fellowship in the bread and wine of the Holy Eucharist. For all the modern miracle that is the world of digital, virtual communication, it cannot substitute for the good of ordinary human proximity, ordinary physicality, ordinary human touch.

As Julian says, our soul's desire for connection to God is so great that even if every form of comfort and joy the world could offer were given us, if the soul did not see and comprehend the blessed face of Jesus, we should never stop mourning and weeping for that lack. And if we were experiencing the most pain imaginable, but could see and know the 'blissful gaze' of our Lord, all that pain would not grieve us. There is a timely analogy here. Julian tells us that from without beginning we were made and oned to God in the humanity of the Second Person, Jesus our Lord. Because of this the desire for connection to God—the deepest desire of all—cannot be separated from the desire for actual connection to other human beings. If there are any shining gems of truthful hope to be found amongst the rubble of present world conditions, this is one we can pick up and keep.

Yours in Jesus and Julian,

M. Hilary, OJN

Guardian of the Order

The Order of Julian of Norwich is a contemplative monastic Order of monks and nuns of the Episcopal Church.

Our widespread community of Oblates and Associates, of diverse Christian denominations, is committed to prayer, intercession, and conversion of life, supported by Julian's teaching of God's love for us in Christ Jesus.

Come and see!

www.orderofjulian.org

Julian's Window

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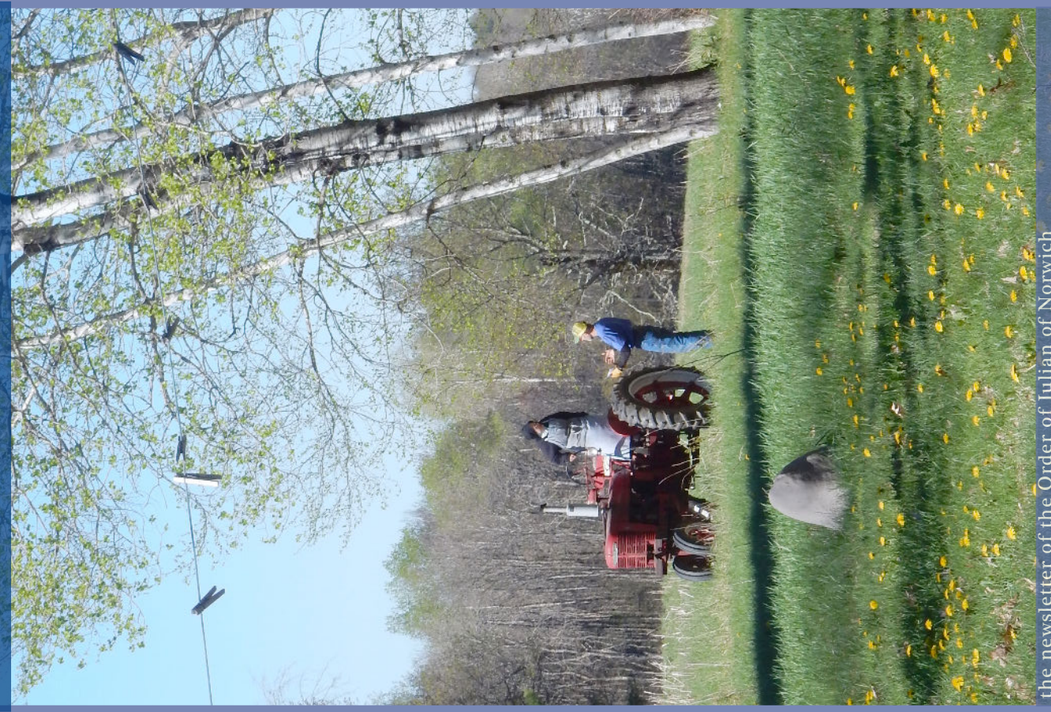

the newsletter of the Order of Julian of Norwich

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Community Notes

The past few months have not changed our lives by much, except to strongly bring home to us how connected we are to all of you, especially in all our prayers, at every office, at every daily Eucharist.

At the beginning of March we made the decision to cancel Julianfest this year, for the first time. The same week, we watched some guests depart, not guessing they would be the last we would see for a while. As with many other monasteries, we have had to close both our guesthouse and the monastery chapel to the public, and do not yet know when either can be opened.

Even with the guesthouse closed, it's been a very eventful spring for us so far. In April Fr William was clothed as a novice and received the name Sergii, after Sergius of Radonezh.

At the end of April Mthr Hilary reached the end of her term as Guardian and was unanimously re-elected. In mid-May we had our Annual General and Senior Chapters.

On St Julian's day in May we again held a community forum. This year we spoke together about various aspects of the *Revelations,* especially what is most significant about it or Julian to each of us.

May also included Rogation blessings and the planning and planting of hops given by neighbors. (That's also a neighbor's tractor Mthr Hilary is standing in on the cover.)

Now that spring has finally come, our nearest neighbors have been very active. We have seen porcupines, turkeys, chipmunks, ground squirrels and tree squirrels (who have literally been wearing out the doormat), coyotes, many deer, hares, and one night a badger left a large hole in the yard looking for ground squirrels. The sandhill cranes and all the migrating birds, including whippoorwills, have arrived for summer.

During these difficult days, we want to repeat our heartfelt thanks to all of your continued support and donations, which we depend on from week to week.

You were remembered with joy & thanksgiving in a novena of Masses beginning on Saint Julian's day, 8 May

Clockwise from bottom left: Mthr Hilary, Fr Sergii, and our neighbors preparing frames for the hops • Part of the Rogation procession • The view across the field at dawn on the morning of Julian's feast • The ubiquitous, ineradicable Trillium grandiflorum *in May*

O God, our maker and our keeper, at this time of crisis we commend to your eternal goodness all medical researchers, civic leaders, health care workers, and those they care for; for those who are fearful, ill, or dying, and for those who are alone and in any way distressed; that they may be supported and comforted in their service and in their suffering; and that an effective treatment for the disease besetting our world may be quickly found; all this we ask through Jesus Christ your Son, our physician and our brother.

From the Refectory 2019-2020

The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee	David Treuer
Seventy-Four Tools for Good Living	Michael Casey
Long Life: Essays	Mary Oliver
The Shattering of Loneliness: On Christian Remembrance	Erik Varden
Dare Not Linger: The Presidential Years	Nelson Mandela & Mandla Langa
Living Wisdom: The Mission & Transmission of Monasticism	Cristiana Piccardo

"What can we do to help?"

When it became clear that the Covid-19 disease was not simply a localized and short term outbreak in China, and physical distancing measures were put into place country by country across the world, this was our immediate question here at the monastery.

The answer was also immediate and not far to seek. For time out of mind "what we can do" as monks and nuns has already been given us every evening at the office of Compline when we pray these verses from Psalm 4: Know that the LORD does wonders for the faithful; when I call upon the LORD, he will hear me. Offer the appointed sacrifices and put your trust in the LORD. Many are saying, 'Oh, that we might see better times!' Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O LORD.'

"Offer the appointed sacrifices and put your trust in the LORD." As churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques have had to cancel their regularly scheduled worship services and take them into the virtual sphere, it has fallen to the monasteries across the world to offer the regular round of daily worship in common, to stand in for the world, and for Christian monasteries like ours, to continue the daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist on the world's behalf.

This is what we have done here, with intention, and with God's help will continue to do. Nonetheless, the participation of those of you who pray "alone" in studio apartments, houses, or on the street, is no less essential to our corporate endeavor here. By prayer, in the body of Christ, you truly participate as the active heart of our daily material offering, and your work of desire, loss, and faithfulness is inseparably part of our own. A friend in New York told us that two things are essential at this time: gratitude and community. We are daily grateful to be a small part of a community of prayer with you.

The Sufficient Gift

Mthr Hilary OJN

"This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses." This Jesus, through whom has come grace and truth, this Jesus who is closest to the Father's heart, this Jesus who has seen the Father and made him known to us, this Jesus whom we crucified – this is the Jesus whom God raised up. This is the Jesus, irrepressible, ineluctable, unexpected, whom no barrier can prevent, who appears and meets us unasked, anticipating our need, this is the Jesus God raised up. Love, the power of God, sent this Jesus, and Love, the power of God raised this Jesus. Peter says of himself and his

companions of the raising of this Jesus, "all of us are witnesses".

How did they become so? By doing the one thing the devastation of the crucifixion had left to them, which was simply to be gathered together in one place. They had no plan, they had no hope, they had nothing but the instinctual need to be with one another. And that one thing, that minimal thing of being present to one another even if only in abject grief proved to be the one thing necessary for the spark to catch on.

"Let us make humankind in our own image" God said, at the beginning, and what is that but the image of perfect relationality, of perfect ever-giving, ever-receiving community, 'none before and none after', the condition out of which all creation was to come.

Even in the most broken down form of that image, a bunch of hopeless disciples huddled together in a locked room, self-recriminate, fearful, and unbelieving, even this was sufficient condition of the image, enough to allow the new creation to take root among them, and to turn them into witnesses of the resurrection. So in a time when we might ask what is it we here can do, and what is our own work in the midst of the pandemic, this is the sufficient gift we have been entrusted with, the gift of community and its intentional cultivation.

It was impossible that God's holy one should see corruption, for life must live; love must do its powerful work, and whoever is bound into the communion of the Holy Trinity cannot be lost to death. The life that was revealed to the disciples in the upper room could not be held there. The life that has gathered us and been revealed among us cannot be bound by this room either. Of this all of us are witnesses.

What it's about

Sr Therese OJN

Julian left a written account of her encounter with Jesus, whom she already recognized as Messiah. But Jesus did not make everything clear to her. Instead, as though to explain everything, he said, "Lo, how I love thee," and this became the inescapable singularity toward which all else in the Revelations, including Adam, fell.

The purpose of this revelation, as Julian understood it, was instruction in love, but she saw this instruction in very specific terms. They were given in order to know God; to know ourselves, what we are in God in nature and grace; and to know humbly what we ourselves are as regards our sin and our weakness. Because God is unfailingly at work in all things, and to be like God perfectly is the ultimate goal of existence, the journey from an incompletion that cannot fail to fail, to an ultimate completion that has perfect freedom to love and does nothing else, appears uncertain only from the side of what is not complete, from the side of humanity. What Julian understands most from what she is shown is that it is not for her to understand everything, but to trust.

Julian did not make everything clear, either, she could not. What she did in response, and asks of those who follow her as well, is to believe in this Love as the primary absolute, to live as if it mattered, as if it were the only thing that mattered. She wants for the reader to say, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we by faith have heard Jesus ourselves. We are convinced that his love, to live in Him, is the only thing that matters, and we are going to live like we believe it."