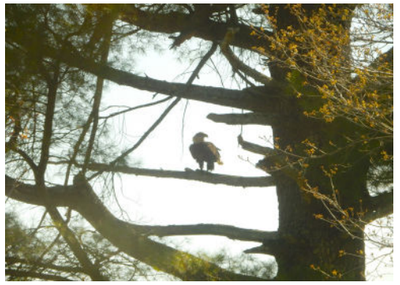
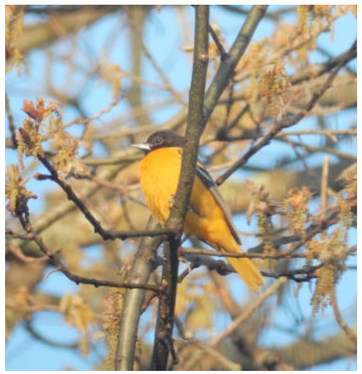
A Note from the Guardian



In this "Juliantide" issue, we turn the viewfinder around to have a look at Julian's window itself, and the form of life that enabled the anonymous Norwich woman to write what has become, more than six centuries on, a luminous pointer for her fellow Christians to the love, mercy, and grace of Jesus.



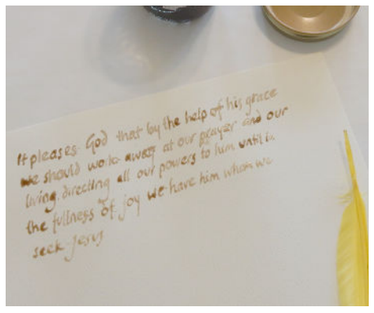
Whoever we are, wherever we live, our material surroundings both affect and help effect what we eventually become, something many have felt an acute sense of during the pandemic lockdowns. Those who live the monastic life in the Church know that the material stuff of their lives, the place, the way, the disciplines of the day, makes up the crucible in which the hope of attention and transparency to God—in a word, the possibility of holiness—is shaped. The religious life in the Church is one of the many ways the Holy Spirit might choose to make of a Christian a text—yes, like Julian's text—a unique transmission of the mercy and grace of God in the world, on behalf of the world.

And you, friends and readers, are a part of that. During the research to prepare the Northwoods Model of Julian's cell, one of the exhibit's cards made this clear: "it was impossible to live a secluded life without a social system that could at least indirectly support that lifestyle." Thank you for reading our newsletter, and for being a part of the wider support for the life to which God in Jesus Christ has called us.

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

With many, we are very slowly opening up. This spring we began to welcome our vaccinated neighbors to Eucharist again.

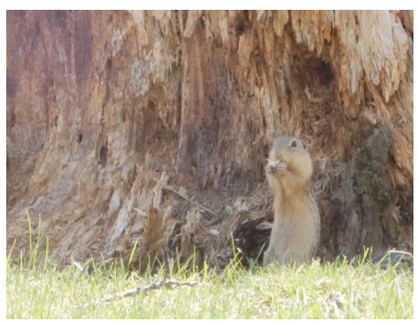
Other things remain remote. In April Mthr Hilary attended the Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas meetings by Zoom, as well as Zoomed meetings with our affiliate priors. As last year, Julianfest has been deferred.

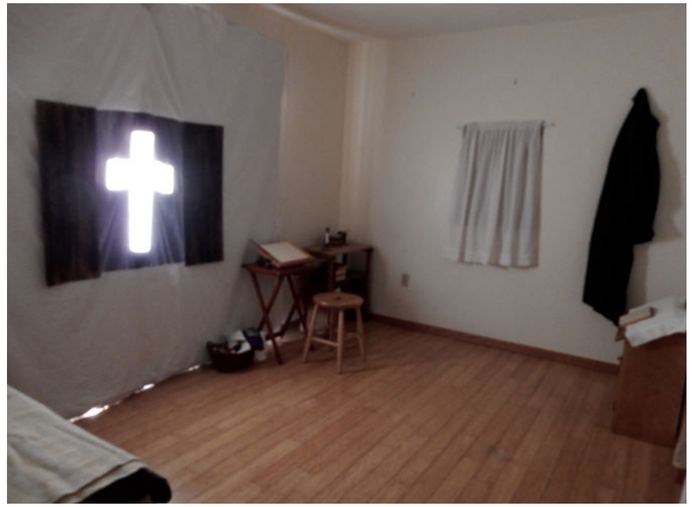
On Julian's Day, we had a miniature forum, half outside and half inside, with our neighbors who also joined us for pizza afterwards. One at a time, we all visited a reconstruction of Julian's cell in the chapter room. Having read *about* Julian's life in many books, it was quite different to construct and *walk around in* an attempt at a model of it. We read cards about details of medieval anchoritic life—especially what Julian would have done in the absence of alarm clocks, matches, and other modern conveniences. And what about that pile of manuscript paper...?

Mthr Hilary next had a workshop which looked at what Julian (or her scribes) did in the absence of modern writing materials: where her paper, ink, and writing instruments came from in medieval Norwich and what it was like to use them, with hands-on demonstration.

We held our annual General and Senior Chapters the week after Julian's Day. Looking ahead, we hope to open the guesthouse to vocational aspirants only within the next several months, and to open the guesthouse fully at a later date.

During May we planted a few new apple trees and some currant bushes, closely supervised by a ground squirrel (below). The days are lengthening, the bees are back, the swifts and whip-poorwills have arrived, there was a bobcat chasing a turkey in the yard, and a flying squirrel has taken over one of the birdhouses. All this and undecided temperatures, so it must really be nearly summer in northern Wisconsin.





You were remembered with joy & thanksgiving in a novena of masses beginning on St Julian's Day 8 May

Clockwise from lower left: The chimneysweep enjoying the view from the roof on a beautiful spring day • M Hilary conducting her workshop on Julian's writing materials • A view of Julian's cell in the Chapter Room • Planting currant bushes • A 13-stripe ground squirrel supervising our work

From the refectory, 2020-2021

A Life Beyond Boundaries: Madeleine Delbrêl	Charles Mann
A Guide to Living in the Truth: St Benedict's Teaching on Humility	Michael Casey
Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men	Caroline Criado Perez
Northern Light	The Cistercian Nuns of Tautra Mariakloster

Shepherd-ing

Mthr Hilary OJN

During Eastertide all the lights in the church are always lit from the Paschal Candle, which we blessed at the Great Vigil of Easter. In the same way, all our readings in the scriptures have to be read and understood in the light of the Resurrection, from the point of view of the Resurrection, Ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit. The Resurrection is the interpretive key to the universe, in other words, or as Julian says, "Love is God's meaning" in all that God is and does. Love wins all. Nothing and no one can separate us from the Love that keeps us in being, whatever befall our bodies. And we have been reborn, recreated in the Resurrection to embody that love, and be that love in the world.

Now, to this point in John's Gospel, a certain group of Jews has been arguing with Jesus as to their heritage. They say to Jesus, we are children of Moses and Abraham but we don't know who you are or where you come from. So Jesus is showing them who he is, not so much in words but by doing what God his Father does. Just before this Jesus has given sight to a man born blind, re-created him, so to speak, and that on the Sabbath day when God was supposed to have finished all his creative labors. Adding to them, by implication as Jesus does, seemed to amount to blasphemy.

So today's "good shepherd" story has a double thrust. For the one, Jesus is telling his interlocutors and all who are listening, this is how you know the genuine article, this is how you know that I or anyone else is from God, if their lives have this self-giving, self-emptying, love-come-what-may quality. For the other, Jesus is giving us a map of how to live in the world as he is in the world. The Psalmist says that the Good Shepherd anoints his head with oil. It is the anointing of a prophet or a king for service, not for comfort or for beauty. The Shepherd is making more shepherds, in other words, re-creating himself in each one of us. Jesus by his Holy Spirit leads us along right pathways for his name's sake, teaching us how to do what he does, how to be what he is. As John said, he laid down his life for us and so we ought to lay down our lives for one another. And who knows what that's going to look like?

Jesus is the Good Shepherd of the sheep and that is a nice and comforting image. But we cannot stop there, content to be carried or eating whatever happens to be in front of us, not minding about much else. In the light of the resurrection we too are being trained and equipped, guided and sent, anointed to be Love in the world.

The Image of Julian

Sr Therese OJN

Anyone who searches for "Julian of Norwich" online, or who picks up a newer publication about her, will almost without exception be presented with an image of her—either an artist's or a publisher's idea. Today Julian's picture comes before us even before her words do. Many readers very much wanted "a bodily sight" of the woman they met in her writings, a face to go with the voice of her text, and these images are still being made.

But somehow Julian got through a few centuries without a portrait, or at least one that survived. The woman now known as Julian of Norwich wrote a text in which she said, in so

many words, "don't bother about me" and did not even mention her name. It is a text of a visionary experience that is rich with imagery, set down centuries ago, but her own image has evolved only with the wider distribution of her writings.

After five centuries of no images, how did we get to hundreds of them? Who decided Julian would look the way she does, with the attributes she has? And how, if she was never canonized, has she come so easily to be called "Saint"?...

An early 20th century window of Julian from an unidentified church

For those of us who use our eyes a lot, the visual portrayal of Julian is not a secondary, unimportant component of how we view her; like it or not, the visual portraits we make of writers (or saints) has everything to do with how we then read their work. As with history, no portrait is simply "what happened," but what happened when a particular person in a particular context responded to a particular person—in this case, an artist responding to some or all of Julian's text, or even the idea of Julian. All these particulars matter, because the resulting image will be read by many more people than will ever read Julian's words.

Underlining first of all that this is not a discussion about what is good art, nor about authenticity or correctness, what are some of the most common portraits of Julian today, and what do they say to us about her?

The first might be iconographer Robert Lentz's "Julian with cat." This widespread image, which foregrounds the cat, presents Julian as a young, thoughtful, somewhat intellectual veiled woman. (The iconographic signs for age are absent). A second by Lentz is nicknamed in our shop "Julian with earth"—actually representing all of creation. Here, another young, veiled Julian engages the viewer directly, with the focus on the visionary and theological. Lu Bro's "blue Julian" icon shows a younger Julian as nun holding a scroll and hazelnut: an authoritative and engaging teacher. A quite original image by Tobias Stanislaus Haller BSG, shows Julian as a wise crone in a plain, inconspicuous guimpe and veil—the most elderly Julian.

What I call "the marketing department Julians" are quasi-contemporary images of women appropriated to represent a younger, secular Julian. The most common is Julian as a 15th century Flemish teenager ("Portrait of a Young Woman" c 1435) by Rogier van der Weyden, and Robert Campin's similarly young but disengaged "Portrait of a Woman" of c 1430. These are humanist (as opposed to iconographic or saintly) images that stress her youth and lay status at the time of her visions, in a neighboring historical milieu. In the case of der Weyden's image, the choice is for a more arresting, engaging image than that of the more introspective Campin.

A newer icon of Julian produced in Norwich by Fr Christopher Wood stresses her lay status and place in a specific cultural milieu: Julian as a Norfolk laywoman of her time. One of the most unique and striking modern images of Julian is David Holgate's statue on the west facade of Norwich Cathedral. All specific cultural attributes are muted for the sake of the portrait of a numinous, prophetic older woman with a book and quill.

Time is too short to tell of Alan Oldfield's paintings and over eighty more in icons, stained glass, bas-relief, illustrations, and mixed media.

This is an excerpt from an essay on the development of Julian's iconography that will be available in the Shop later this year.