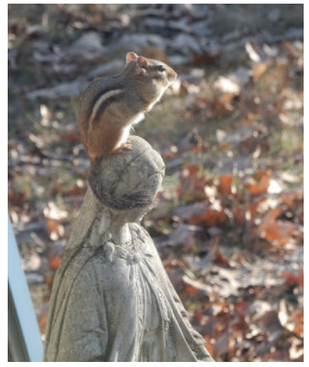
A Note from the Guardian

At one point in the Revelations made to her, Jesus says to Julian from the cross, "It is I, it is I; it is I who am most exalted; it is I whom thou lovest; it is I whom thou enjoyest; it is I whom thou servest; it is I whom thou yearnst for; it is I whom thou desirest; it is I whom thou meanest; it is I who am all; it is I whom Holy Church preaches and teaches thee; it is I who showed myself here to thee."

We are invited in the name of the Church to the observance of a Holy Lent, says the prayer book, undertaking such things as self-examination and repentance, prayer, fasting, and self-denial. This could seem an invitation to a rather grim six weeks—and have not many suffered already through two years of Covid mitigation measures, perhaps going on for a third?



Or our Lenten practices could take us to another place entirely. These weeks invite us into a protected quiet garden, a space set aside just for us. In this garden we can make room inside us to meet Jesus afresh, renew and deepen our relationship with Jesus. We can hear the crucified and risen Jesus say to us in trust as he said to Julian, and to Mary Magdalen before her in that other garden, "It is I; it is I who show myself here to thee."

Yours in Jesus and Julian,

M. Hilary, OJN

Guardian of the Order

The Order of Julian of Norwich is a contemplative Order of nuns of the Episcopal Church. Our widespread community of Oblates and Associates, women and men 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

Volume XIV • March 2022 • No. 1

the newsletter of the Order of Julian of Norwich

Electronic Address Service Requested

Our Lady of the Northwoods Monastery
The Order of Julian of Norwich
W704 Alft Rd
White Lake WI 54491-9715
USA

Community Notes

The biggest news we are happy to share isn't about us, but about Julian. For those who haven't heard, there is a Julian of Norwich conference in Oxford UK this July. You can attend in person or online. So far at least one of our oblates, Richard Norton, will be contributing to the conference. Mark your calendars and check out the link on our website links page: medieval.ox.ac.uk/2021/11/15/call-for-papers-new-visions-of-julian-of-norwich/

It's been a relatively quiet, snowy, and very cold winter in the Northwoods. And it's also been windy. Without a windrow in the field, the driveway can fill up with snow quickly on a windy day; we found out just how quickly one day when taking out the mail. We got the car out of the drift with help from our snowplow guy and some shovels, and the mail still got out on time.

Along with all of you, we continue to bear with many continued disruptions, and our guesthouse remains closed for the time being.

In early December Mthr Hilary visited Nashotah House Seminary in southeast Wisconsin to speak to a theology class about Julian.

In February, we were able to attend an exhibition of the artist who made our sanctuary lamp six years ago. We don't have copyright on isolated images of his work, but you can see our (very small, humble) lamp in photographs of our chapel—as on the cover of this issue—as well as at his website: clauderiedelart.com

Thanksgiving!

With the help of gifts large and small we continue to chip away at the mortgage. As of this February there is $ 95,000 left, less than one quarter of the total amount. We still hope to try to pay it off within another year so that we will be able to address other pressing projects including solar and energy conservation measures.

Above: Visiting Cathedral Pines with a neighbor in November • Below: Something we hope to see in April or early May

Julian Shop books

There has been wonderful new scholarhsip about Julian put out in the past few years. Here are a few offerings which you can now find in our shop:

God's 'Kinde' Love: Julian of Norwich's Vernacular Theology of Grace — Julia Lamm
A fascinating examination of Julian's greater emphasis on grace in the Long Text, her changing the definition of "mercy," and the formation of her theology of grace and mercy.

The Way of Julian of Norwich: A Prayer Journey Through Lent — Sheila Upjohn
Reflections on Julian's teachings for Lent.

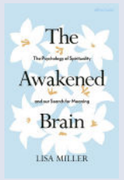
Julian of Norwich: In God's Sight. Her Theology in Context — Philip Sheldrake
A short, dense survey of Julian's theology as traditionally viewed.

"I Desired a Bodily Sight": A Short History of the Iconography of Julian of Norwich — Melaney Poli
A whistlestop tour of Julian's modern popularization and the development of her images.

New Julian Lectures — Vincent Gillespie, Liz McAvoy, Rowan Williams, Bruce Batstone
The annual Julian lecture at St Julian's Norwich UK.

Coming later this year:
Julian of Norwich & the Problem of Evil — Richard Norton

Also be sure to check out our new selections on monasticism, discipleship, and liturgy.
More books on Julian are to be published next year for the 650th anniversary of the *Showings*.



The Awakened Brain: The Psychology of Spirituality & Our Quest for Meaning • Lisa Miller • Allen Lane • pp248 • ISBN: 978-0-2414-0193-4

As a young intern clinical psychologist, Lisa Miller accompanied a group of her hospitalized patients in a homemade, back-kitchen celebration of the Jewish High Holy Days, when no official arrangements had been made for them. The ritual celebration of shared readings, prayers and song had a stunningly beneficial effect on her patients, and Miller's curiosity was piqued. As a scientist who held fast to the dictum that what cannot be measured cannot be proved, Miller set about finding whether spiritual practices and experiences could somehow be mapped in the brain, and the aggregate results of spiritual practice quantified.

As the title of the book intimates, the brain "awakened to" spiritual experience is an altogether measurably different brain from one treading on analytical pathways. Miller's research, coupled with acute observation of her own and other's spiritual experience, shows that the brain can be permanently changed, both chemically and physically, by intentional spiritual practices of many kinds. Of particular note, her research also focused on the relationship of spiritual practice and suffering, especially depression, and the way that certain kinds of spiritual practice can change both the short and long term effects of depression. Miller's scientific journey, presented very accessibly, is interspersed with her journey as a mother and the way that her personal trials helped her learn in real time and on the ground some of the practical applications of the things she was studying through the experience of others and in the lab, and she includes in her account specific examples and practices for becoming open to occasions of spiritual awareness and connection.

Work of the People

Nicole Parsons AOJN

For a couple of Sundays this winter, our parish pianist was in COVID quarantine. Our church is small and she is our only instrumentalist, so for those Sundays the thirteen of us who gathered sang a cappella. The homilist doubled as our cantor. He was a retired Presbyterian pastor, not an ordained priest, meaning eucharist had to be served from the reserved sacrament by a member of the congregation, a licensed lay eucharistic minister. His eyesight troubles him and he couldn't quite read the liturgy at a few points, leaving us in silence mid-sentence here and there.

It's been catch-as-catch-can these last few years in a rural parish with no rector or even a part-time priest. Our liturgy is very literally the work of the people. It can feel like just us.

Our gospel one of those patchwork mornings was from Luke, the part where Jesus comes to his hometown synagogue. That Sabbath, he's a

fill-in rabbi for a rural congregation, one also likely without a permanent priest. Jesus is handed the scroll of Isaiah and from it reads two verses that promise someone is coming. Someone who'll have good news for people who are too used to bad news, people stuck in situations they can't change, people unable to see what comes next, people unable to get ahead. People like us.

And then, by way of homily, Jesus presents *himself* as the fulfillment of this promise.

Just Jesus.

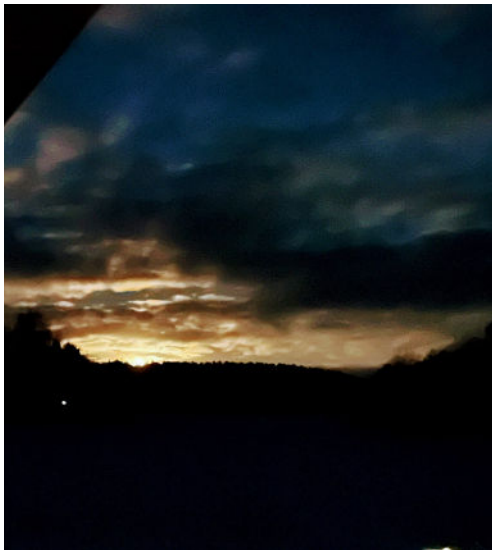
It might have been hard for us to believe that winter Sunday, we thirteen who only know each other well enough to see how different we are temperamentally, politically, socially. Still, we sang our songs, occasionally sliding off key or out of tempo. We joined our voices again for the Creed. Then we knelt at the rail and received the body of Christ reserved for us.

We were without priest, deacon or pianist. Lord knows how long we'd been without a clue in so many other ways. But we must have believed Jesus meant what he said, that the promise of good news was being kept even in our very hearing. Because at the end of that service we humbly, heartily said, "Thanks be to God!" And then we all came back to do it again the next Sunday and the next. Even now. Exactly as if we really believe we're living in the time of the Lord's favor.

Discerning our fears

Mthr Hilary OJN

Fear is a profitable commodity, especially when there is so much available material and so many outlets in which to flog it. And the production potential is large too, as one fear tends to beget another. The pandemic, various kinds of social, political, and geopolitical unrest, worries about climate change—whoever is quickest and most efficient at capturing and manipulating fear of these things stands to make the biggest profit from them.



Some of the most common of Jesus's words in the Gospels are these: "Peace be with you; do not be afraid." The sheer frequency of the statement reveals a lot about Jesus, but also a lot about those to whom he is speaking. These words are meant not only as a comfort, but also a directive. Held in the peace of Jesus which nothing and no one can overcome, the hearers must pin down their fear and ask it some questions.

First, what kind of fear is it? Is it specific? Is it helpful? Might we be in some kind of danger if we do not quickly and wisely respond? Or is it something more amorphous, a nameless dread of the probable or possible? Does our fear play with future outcomes as yet unrealized, or dig into uncomfortable contents of the past? Then comes the big question, maybe even the most useful question, *who is profiting from our fear?*

Julian of Norwich can help in this investigation. In the *Revelations of Divine Love*, she lays out for us a typology of fear, a key. There are four kinds of fear, she says, and we can inquire of our fear what sort it may be. And this we must do if we are to see clearly and act wisely.

The first kind of fear is fright, which Julian says springs from the inherent, ineluctable fragility of the human being, both body and mind. The second is like it, fear generated from the experience of bodily pain. This kind of fear is useful, Julian says, for awakening us, and like the first, is an entry into prayer (see: "Help!"). These two fears have the potential to produce something besides more fear; they can lead to greater self-knowledge and surer trust. Wisely handled, these fears will not try to sell us anything, but to make us more wholly ourselves.

The third kind of fear is doubtful fear that leads to despair, the kind of fear that is probably most easily massaged and manipulated for commercial profit. It has no specific bodily correspondence as does simple pain, so is easily played upon and encouraged. This kind of fear Julian says is useful only insofar as it turns us toward God.

Julian's fourth kind of fear is reverent fear of God, a reverent and deep loving trust. This is the one fear most becoming of human beings, the one most efficacious at properly relativizing all the others, and the fear most potentially creative of something new. Reverent fear is what Jesus modeled for us, trusting that secure in the love of his Father, he could go to whatever length it might take to show us the Father's heart, the love that overcomes all darkness, even the darkness of death.

Above: A January shot from our neighbor's house, showing the full moon rising, and the Christmas star in our chapel window at left.