A Note from the Guardian

Right after the hay was cut, dry weather gave way to three days of rain, especially welcome to local worried farmers. We have been fortunate not to have the extremes of weather endured by many others this spring and summer, and for whom, with you, we pray daily.

With the death of our Sister Cornelia OJN in July, eternity broke into an otherwise blessedly ordinary summer, returned this year to much of its accustomed pre-pandemic activity. When a monk or nun dies, there is for the ones remaining to carry on the work of the monastery the inevitable rearrangement of duties and living spaces, but also the good, each time, of revisiting the original call each of us has been given to the monastic life itself. For Sr. Cornelia's funeral, we sang the hymn we use for professions and for renewals of wows (George Herbert's "The Call"). And one of the Psalm selections, 121, was that traditionally used (and still used here) in the monastic "itinerary", that is, the prayers for one going on a journey. We know that Sr. Cornelia has reached her destination safely, the fulfillment of the promise that Jesus makes to any who come to him in faith.

There will be more news about monastery doings in a later edition of *Julian's Window*, but for this issue, I sign off with thanks for your prayers and care for Sr. Cornelia and all the OJN monastics who have gone ahead of us in faith, for us who are still here, and for those who will come.

We give thanks for you, our readers and friends, and keep you in our daily prayers.

Yours in Jesus & 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

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This summer included much unusual busyness, including a brief illness on the part of Sr Cornelia. Sadly, and unexpectedly, she died on 12 July just as it seemed she had recovered.

Joanna Hill Scroggs, known as "Jannie," was born 18 November 1934, the youngest of siblings much older than herself. She adored her older brother who doted on her with books and attentive reading. Though a lover of music, she would end up despising Beethoven's 5th Symphony due to its use in anti-war broadcasts at her elementary school.

She graduated from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a BA in Anglo-Saxon and an MA in English and Comparative Linguistics, and was always proud of her North Carolina origins. The recipient of a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, in 1959 she moved to the UK for postgraduate work at St Anne's College Oxford, studying Middle English. Her dissertation for her PhD was to provide the linguistic apparatus for an edition of the York Mystery Plays then in preparation. In

the midst of these studies Joanna was moved to return to the Episcopal faith of her childhood and began attending a local church. It was during this time that she was first intrigued by the Rule of St Benedict and monastic life.

While at Oxford she met a young British academic named Brian Barry, and they married in 1960. In the years that followed Joanna helped Brian with his many manuscripts. They would have one child, a son she named Austin.

In the 1970s and 1980s the Barrys lived in various places in North America where Brian held visiting professorships. After her marriage ended in 1986, Joanna worked at University of Chicago Press as an editor. During this time she discovered the Order of Julian in Wisconsin, and decided to try a vocation at the late age of 56. She entered on Epiphany, 1990 and was clothed as a novice the following month.

At her first profession in February 1991 she received the name Cornelia, after Cornelius the Centurion. Soon after, she participated in the dust and upheaval of moving the Order from the DeKoven Center in Racine to its first house in Waukesha. She professed life vows in February 1993. Over the years Sr Cornelia served as House Warden (Prior), clerk, novice director, guest steward, librarian, and most of all as keeper of all records. She saw the outward, numerical growth of the community between 1995-2010 and also the inner growth and slow maturation between 2000-2020. She derived much insight into monastic life in her brief postings to the Order's second house in Crawford County, and was delighted to see a renewal of that vision in the Order's move to White Lake in 2015.

Those who knew her will perhaps always remember her with cats and Jane Austen, and with "Lawk'amercy!" on her lips, but she also lived amidst Middle English vocabulary—she loved to read Julian aloud in Middle English—and delighted in the view of nature from any window. She gratefully kept in touch with as many family members as she could, especially happy to share and receive anything that involved cats. The offices and the daily Eucharist were deeply important to Sr Cornelia—and conducted as plainly as possible, please. (The notice that there would be no homily required for the day often elicited an energetic exclamation of "hot dog!"). Earlier in life Sr Cornelia expressed the hope and the desire that she could somehow convey to others, by the simple delight of "just being" and of observing carefully what God has goodly made, the mercy and delight that God is, and that she experienced in God. She indeed lived into that vocation of being and observing.

She encountered many health hurdles as she aged, not least the necessity of replacing both knees and hips; she famously did both of her knees at once in 2001 out of "efficiency." After the move to White Lake her mobility began a decline; in 2021 her health declined further. She spent the next 16 months in and out of the hospital or the nursing home, voraciously reading requested books and periodicals and continuing to keep in touch with friends.

May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Clockwise from bottom left: On her wedding day • A photo montage she made • Enjoying a gift at Christmas • On a trip to Cathedral Pines in 2016

Contemplate…this?

Dcn Adwoa Wilson ObJN

Nearly ten years ago, I attempted to facilitate a Julian Gathering in a parochial setting. The participants were committed Christians from many parishes, in love with God and deeply concerned for God's world. Given Julian's simultaneous piety through contemplation, her compassion for her even-Christians, and her dogged hope, I did not expect what unfolded.

The violence at Sandy Hook Elementary School was receiving broad coverage at the time. With that rending tragedy surrounding us, Julian's optimism and inability to see wrath in God infuriated the participants and the study could go no farther than a few short weeks. No doubt, underneath the anger was genuine fear and bewilderment. *If God doesn't name* this *sin, doesn't condemn* this*, is there any wellness from this God that I can trust?*

A decade later, I suspect that anyone who is paying attention has been struck by some social or collective evil that challenges her confidence in Julian's message. In what way is Julian's eschatological hope good news in a world on the brink of sundry destructions crying out for imminent justice? This is a serious question for contemplatives called to live directly engaged with the world, convinced that nothing short of a conversion of consciousness through prayer will actually enable us to transfigure our social woes. Even more so when we are acutely aware of how frequently this assertion falls flat to the many disenfranchised people who need for God's kingdom to come, now, and the passionate servants whose hearts break at their own helpless collusion with the systems of evil that enslave us.

In presenting Julian during such a troubled time, it may be helpful to notice a distinction between her *message* and her *method* that emerges most clearly for me in the thirteenth revelation. In this revelation Julian receives the oft quoted assurance from Jesus that *all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.* This is the message. Yet, Julian is not content. She wants to know the same thing my discipleship group did: How can this be, if…? In her case, the "if" had to do with the fate of unconverted people and the practical consequences of sin.

Julian disparages her discontent and her curiosity, instead focusing on what she learned at the end of the process. I think this is unfortunate. In truth, it was precisely her *process* that was faithful, since there is much in this revelation that appears only in the long text, after her meditation on *and wrestling with* what was seen in the visions. The

seeking and beholding of God is key to Julian's definition of prayer and contemplation. What this revelation displays, however, is that Julian seeks and beholds Jesus in three distinct places: in Himself, in His Body – Holy Church, and in the terrifying sorrows that surround her.

It is notable that Julian approaches the manifest consequences of sin and damnation in real people's lives with the same vigilant attention, expectancy, and concern she gives to the teaching of Holy Church and the vision of the Crucified Christ. By her own definition and despite her self-castigation, Julian is actually *contemplating* the sorrows around her. She does not let their woefulness collapse under a false pretense that the visions tell her otherwise. Praise God, for it is by genuinely giving herself to *all three* locations of revelation that Julian receives some of the most timeless and innovative parts of her message.

Julian's 13th revelation illuminates the core of faithfulness in my study group ten years ago. It was not a problem that they would not just trust Julian's message. (After all, Julian wouldn't simply accept Jesus's either!) Blind trust at the cost of refusing an honest look at the world's competing information might be just as much of a collapse of faith as it is to reject the fair beholding of Christ in the teaching of Holy Church and the movements of Holy Spirit. Rather than either extreme, Julian reflects an integrated approach. The sure trust, devotion, and careful attention that she gained by gazing upon Jesus in her sweet visions, she then turned toward the pain of the world. She probes into that pain with the exact same love and courage. As though it were her Crucified Lord, Himself. Betwixt her consent to both, God speaks.

Each of us is carrying some concern of the world close to our heart, perhaps even in our own identities or bodies. Let us be honest. All does not seem well with it. We do not see how our own sin deserves it or how this could be a purgation for love. We are not convinced that the human or ecological costs to God's good creation are worth that purgation, if it is. The fruits of Julian's wrestling in the 13th revelation

demonstrate how much God can do with honesty of that magnitude! Her wrestling extended the graces of Christ's vision to a new level of understanding that acceptance alone could not. As Julian contemplatives, we are called to cherish the message we inherit from her; it is a voice of Holy Church to which we have particularly committed ourselves. All the same, these times once again call for those who will also take hold of her process: probing for Jesus with a steadfast gaze, even upon the dankest parts of our aching world, even if it baffles anything we've ever known. It may be by our wrestling that God, once again, deepens His revelation through a loving and willing soul.