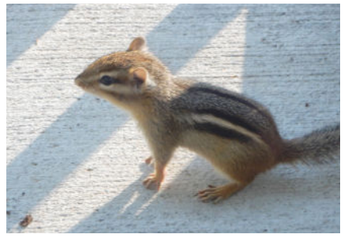
A Note from the Prioress

The thirteenth-century poet Rumi wrote, "you are most yourself when you are looking for food," another way into Jesus's saying, "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." What we most search for tells us a lot about ourselves, who we are and what we suppose we are for.

For this issue of Julian's Window, three dispersed members of the Order share a little of how Julian can speak to parish life. For each one, friendship with Julian has inspired growth, the fruit of which they now share. They have made their own Julian's stance of humility in receiving the gift of himself that Jesus wished to give. For this to happen, Julian had first to want to seek Jesus, who, way ahead of her, had already given her the desire to do so. The same gift is now offered to us; we can desire Jesus because he has first desired us.

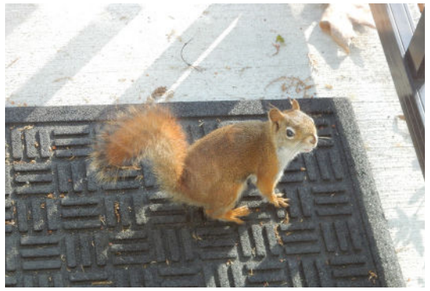


In these times of great stress, anxiety, and yet, opportunity, may we all be attentive to the ways that Jesus is seeking us—we who are, as Julian saw, his treasure, his delight, and crown. May Jesus grant you a way in to this creative humility, to seek your treasure in him as we travel through the coming months.

Yours in Jesus and Julian,

M. Hilary, OJN

Prioress 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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the newsletter of the Order of Julian of Norwich

Electronic Address Service Requested

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Community Notes

We started off summer hot and rainy in June and July, and have enjoyed all the rain we didn't get last year and perhaps during the winter too. This is good timing for a high-load apple year; one young tree that just began bearing was so heavy with fruit that it leaned over and required some tree RX.

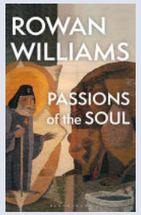
June was also time for Julianfest in Oconomowoc. Our keynote was given by Oblate and Companion of Julian Richard Norton, who spoke about Julian and the problem of evil.

On his check-up this year our chimneysweep put a mesh on the chimneycap to keep more birds out (there have been more—why the great interest in our chimney?). And we came back from Oconomowoc to find some robins had moved in by the front stoop. Apparently assured by the avian real estate agent that no one lived here, they were very put out that we did, and that we intended to use the door. To avoid causing offense, we used the back door for a month until the chicks fledged in July.

In late June Mthr Hilary was in lanyard-land since she was off to General Convention in Louisville (see her name-tag-plus, referring to her habit, from General Convention on the next page) with several other Episcopal religious, collectively representing religious life.

August was cooler, with less rain, but the rain did delay planting Our Lady's bush for her feast. Our neighbors have been supplying us with the overflow of their garden harvest, peas, broccoli, cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes and that Wisconsin staple: giant zucchini. Some of our pending house projects (such as repairing the insulation problem) are beginning to look alive—let's hope!

Clockwise from lower left: At Julianfest • Our chimneysweep at work • Richard Norton & Mthr Hilary • A bear with four cubs by our driveway • Mthr Hilary OJN, Sr Hannah CSM, and a delegate from MN



Passions of the Soul • Rowan Williams • Bloomsbury • pp 121 • ISBN: 978-1-3994-1568-2

This small book, originally a series of talks given to monastic communities, is a concise presentation of the ascetic praxis underlying the monastic tradition in the East and, to an extent, in the West, where it became a bit abstracted.

So, what are "the passions of the soul"? "For the Eastern Christian writers, 'passion' is the whole realm of instinct, reaction, coping mechanisms"; the "eight basic habits or conditions of the soul" are "the most extensive tool of diagnosis in the tradition." In the West these were oversimplified as seven deadly sins, but our passions are more than a list of wrong actions; "they have to do with our relatedness to the rest of creation." A growth into freedom from passions is connected with a new level of awareness. At the root of this are two different ways of perceiving and approaching the world: an "angelic way" that perceives things "just as they are," and a "diabolic way" which perceives things only in relation to oneself and what one projects onto them: needs, desires, fears. Our general way of perceiving as humans "oscillates between these two."

To deal appropriately and constructively with the passions is meant to move us to the "angelic" way of seeing, which Williams convincingly presents in the Matthean beatitudes, the process of perceiving more completely also changing us and helping us grow. And growth is the main point of dealing with the passions: "You always have to move beyond your spiritual comfort zone and keep growing. If you don't grow, you shrink, because you are measuring your journey by your own sense of satisfaction or achievement…What God sees is the truth of our growing or failing to grow in the passage of time. God sees us as we are; and what we are answerable to is the truth that God sees."

Williams is one of the very best English language interpreters of monastic practice who is not himself a monastic. While this offering might "no more than scratch the surface of a rich and complex legacy" it still delivers, with a great economy and clarity of text, some of the best treasures of the Christian monastic tradition for a very wide audience.

Julian speaks to congregations: Part I

We live with Julian's texts and explore them deeply, but we wondered recently how Julian's writings speak to the spirituality of parishes and congregations? To get some idea, we asked a handful of our affiliates who are active or retired pastors what they believe Julian has to offer in a parish setting.

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Rev Shawn Clerkin AOJN USA

"Hey, Father, what do those letters after your name mean?" I get this question from my congregants more than any questions about salvation or the Trinity!

What I have gained from Julian's *Revelations* has allowed me to inspire members of the congregations that I have served. Twenty years ago, I was guided to the order by one of my seminary mentors, Canon Barbara Price of Western New York. She saw that my spiritual life needed stability grounded and fed by the discipline of the order. The lives of the congregants whom I serve have similar needs for grounding, especially in light of the instability in our corporate lives. Julian's most quoted, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well." (Chapter 27) is also the most recognizable to many Christians. It is a mantra of release, giving into God's care, and trusting in God's providence.

Each church I have served since ordination has been culturally varied. While the Episcopal Church may be progressive leaning, those sitting in our pews have a wide expression of faith and orientation to the world. Debates occur, but we have been able to recognize that our common faith grounded in Christ is what unifies us. As Julian asserts, "…God is the church, God is the foundation, the substance, the teaching, and the teacher. God is the purpose and the reward, for which every human soul searches." (Chapter 34) Emphasizing God's providence as the end, as opposed to our subjective goals, helps us to convert our lives, focussing our attention on enhancing our relationship with God, who is the Church with us as manifestations of God's presence in the world.

Julian also invites us to be open to God's grace, for ourselves and others. Self-examination should not overshadow God's abundant forgiveness and grace. "Before we were made, God loved us. When we were created, we loved God. And so our souls are made by God, and at the same moment, knit to God." (Chapter 53) As Paul beautifully wrote, nothing can separate us from the love of God. That also goes for others—we are all God's loved creation. We must be obedient to that essential reality to fully embrace God's work in the world.

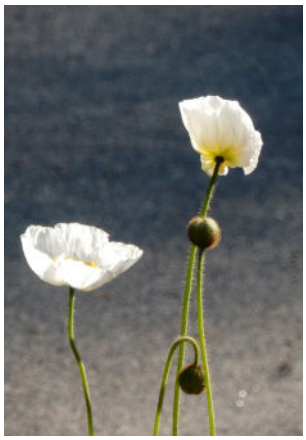
Being a pastoral leader of many congregations has allowed me to share Julian's teachings and the discipline of the order with others. What started as a personal engagement has become a fruitful disposition I have been blessed to share with others!

Dcn Deborah Lang ObJN USA

When we read church news from our own diocese or from the office of the presiding bishop, we often hear the same story. Our churches are in crisis, membership is falling and resources of all kinds are diminishing. Churches and dioceses have downsized and merged. We are living (again) during a time of shifting, changing and unknowing. For many parishioners this is a source of deep concern. What will happen to the Church? How can it survive?

Julian of Norwich comes to us from her own time of crisis and unknowing. A mere cursory glance at her world will reveal endless war, gross social injustice, a divided church and a horrific plague. Any one of these conditions would shake even the most faithful. Yet, Julian is not shaken. For her, all is held safe in the Trinity's love. The foundation of her theology stands firm and she is not afraid.

Parishes need to hear a message of courage. Today, parishes of all sizes and conditions need the courage to be creative, confident and step out in faith to the unknown. To dispel fear and be brave in the face of all that paralyzes and drags us down into doubt.



Julian's key to understanding her monumental theology was an inconsequential hazelnut. In that tiny object she saw all of creation and the unity of all things in heaven and earth. She saw that all things exist because God Loves with a love that can never fail. Through her revelation, Julian could be brave and share her courage with those who came to her for solace. For the most part, the faithful do believe that God is love. To trust in that love unwaveringly as our well-spring of joy, possibility and optimism is quite another thing.

"…He (God) wills that in everything we have our contemplation and our enjoyment in Love. To this knowledge we are most blind; for some of us believe that God is all Power and is able to do all, and that He is all Wisdom and knows how to do all, but that He is all Love and will do all, there we stop." (Chp. 73) Julian speaks to faith-filled trust like no other. Hers is the voice we need to hear.

Rev Stephen Hoffman AOJN, CJN USA

I had my Commissioning Service as an Associate of the Order at Trinity United Methodist Church where I attend worship most Sundays. The friends I invited to attend represented eight different denominations. As Lent approached I asked our Pastor if I could organize a Good Friday Centering Prayer Vigil in the sanctuary from Noon until 3 PM. She agreed. The format centered around the traditional seven last words that Christ spoke from the cross. I paired each scripture reading with a reading from *Revelations of Divine Love*. This was followed by twenty minutes of silence. Folks were invited to participate for whatever period they could. Part of my idea in doing this was to let Julian speak for herself.

Every month my wife and I host a Zoom gathering we call "Expand the Cell." It is a one hour gathering that consists of a brief liturgy, twenty minutes of shared silence followed by a lectio-style reading of a portion of *Revelations of Divine Love* with an opportunity to respond. It is a small gathering with dispersed participants, always open to new participants.

I also seized another opportunity in the Fall of last year. I was inspired by Julian's words in Chapter 9, "I am not good because of this showing, but only if I love God better." Our Pastor asked for someone to rekindle the tradition of a church-wide Thanksgiving Meal the Sunday before Thanksgiving. This had not happened since 2019 due to the pandemic. I had never experienced this since I only began worshipping there in the summer of 2020. The Spirit of Julian nudged me to offer to be of service as a way to "love God better" by, in some small way, "enriching the life of Christ's church." I thought, "I have never done this before, and I have no idea what I am doing." I told folks I am doing this because I am grateful to God and I love this church. It was a lot of work but everyone pitched in and there was much joy.

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To be continued