A Note from the Prioress

Among the first of the things Julian saw in the revelations of Jesus was a vision of his head bleeding from the crown of thorns which had been roughly pushed onto it. Julian said of this vision, "the bleeding [of his head] continued until many things were seen and understood." Whatever was the purpose of the powers that crucified Jesus—for political gain, for convenience, for expedience—nevertheless Jesus made of his suffering a way for us his lovers to become like him, a people who could learn, with Jesus, to discern the all-encompassing love of God in the midst of that which they suffer.

There is a saying in northern places, "there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing," and like a lot of ordinary observations this has nourishment to render. We cannot control a lot of things. But in the midst of whatever is to be suffered, we have the assurance of the keeping of Jesus, whose love in all circumstances, Julian says, "enwraps and enfolds us" and will never let us go. Therefore we can be prepared to go out into the midst of what the future might have for us as adventurers, neither helpless, nor hopeless, nor rudderless.

We pray you, in these days of Advent, that you may know this enfolding love, and await the coming of Jesus with expectation and joy,

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.orderofjjulian.org

Julian's Window
Volume XVI • December 2024— • No. 4
the newsletter of the Order of Julian of Norwich

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Community Notes

It has been a year of continually pending projects, so that fall work, instead of preparing for X or Y project, has consisted mostly of lots of apples, this year more than we could pick. The deer assisted admirably.

One of the pending projects is the solar battery back-up, paid for with your generous gifts. The timing of installation depends on the company finishing other projects elsewhere, and as this goes to press we still await the workers to come.

Meanwhile, our neighbors were happy to buy the gas generator, and took it on a short trip (a few miles) next door. Although power outages do not happen as often as was common decades ago, being rural means they are still likely. Friends and inquirers know this is even more common for our rural telephone lines.

In September M Hilary was at the Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas leaders' meeting in New Jersey, hosted by the Community of St John Baptist. The newly reunited dioceses of Wisconsin installed our "new" bishop of Wisconsin in October shortly before we had our annual silent retreat.

There was an aurora last spring and another aurora this fall, though this time we missed what turned out to be a really spectacular show. Thanks to Mary Jo Peters for the photo on the cover of this issue!

In the wildlife department, we enjoyed many birds this summer, including an immature Coopers Hawk that landed on the deck railing during Mass one day. Due to the prolonged warmth and drought this fall, we've hosted many migrating songbirds that hung around longer than usual.

Clockwise from lower left: Baling in full swing in our neighbor's field this fall • Removing the gas generator • St Bruno's icon in the chapel, early October • Preparing the creche Christmas Eve

Julian's Notebook: "All shall be well…"

…has such a nice comforting ring, and is so often used as a shorthand for "don't worry about this matter, it will be OK!" or, just as often, an expression of relief when a worrisome matter turns out better than one hoped.

Yet these words of Jesus (not Julian, who spent several chapters protesting against them and trying to make sense of them) are not about minor things being OK in the short term. They are words for the hardest problem we face in the longest possible term we know—that as regards *sin and the effects of sin*, all will be well. The last word that Julian received about this was a counsel to trust, which the message itself leaves implicit: "it seemed impossible to me that all manner of things should be well, as our Lord revealed at this time. And to this I received no other answer by way of revelation from our Lord God except this: 'What is impossible to you is not impossible to me. I shall keep my word in all things, and I shall make all things well.'" (Ch 32)

Trust—not as a sop to stop asking questions, but as an affirmation that this is the way we render ourselves open to God, this is the way of creation, redemption, holiness, and not only that but of "real-world" growth and thriving. It was a courteous reminder to Julian (and us) that God does not have *any* of our limitations, that *we* are the limited ones, not God; and, as hard as it may be to stomach, we neither can nor need to figure out precisely why. What is asked of each of us instead is to care for each other with Christ's compassion.

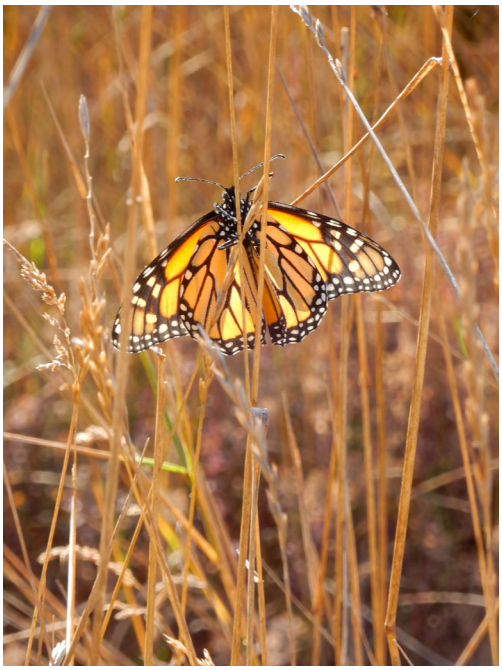
Perhaps because we tend not to use negative constructions in expressions of comfort, "All shall be well!" tends to get used for the short term when another word of Christ applies much better: "I keep you full safely… you will not be overcome."

Julian speaks to congregations: Part II

Revd Bruce Batstone ObJN, CJN London, UK

Julian offers her stability: walled up in the Norwich cell so long, reflects something important about parish life. The parish church is a stable feature in the life of a community, and reflects what is at the heart of Julian's message about God's love: …*we have always been treasured and hidden in God, and known and loved by him without beginning […] he wants us to know that this beloved soul of Christ was previously knit to him in the moment of creation […]and in this one-ing it is made endlessly holy. (RDL Chap 53)*. We are called to a parish to bear one another's burdens after all. That requires stability, especially when we are tempted to flee!

Julian offers us her obedience: she gave up all other priorities to stay with what was presented to her in Christ's showings: *"I clearly saw that our beloved gave these showings so that we would understand love better […] we are his divine treasure, and he holds us in such profound love here on earth…" (RDL Chap 86)*. That is the call of the parish today—to reflect that cherishing by God for all his creatures—accepting, cherishing, loving, and persevering. And we are called to do this together, as a community, modelling Christ in our midst.



Julian offers an example of someone open to conversion of life: she stayed; she listened in obedience. This allowed God to use the time, created before time, in the mystery of the Trinity, to work the divine purpose in her. In a church whose parishes can risk being a whirr of activity, seeking confidence-building purpose and justification, this is perhaps most important of all: *"Only in you do* we *have everything" (RDL Chap 5).*

Rev Mary Caldwell AOJN USA

I have been an Associate in the Order of Julian since 1990. I learned of the Order at a conference at Kanuga, an Episcopal conference center in Western North Carolina where I live. I am a Baptist (don't stop reading!). There are many different kinds of Baptists. As an ordained woman, I belong to the "progressive" kind. I am a member of First Baptist Church, Asheville, NC. I am a retired hospital chaplain and clinical ethicist.

Baptist polity is centered on our belief in the "priesthood of the believer," that is, we believe each of us can approach God directly with no intermediary. Few folks realize that during the Protestant Reformation, Baptists were the radicals! We have no authority above the local church other than God. We discuss, (sometimes argue), pray, listen to one another, think, and vote on just about everything; the budget, hiring a pastor, repairing the roof, and all sorts of issues, including supporting the LGBTQ community.

During the Reformation, however, many Protestants lost something important. We lost an understanding and appreciation of deep spiritual practice. We lost the mystics. We lost devotional literature.

A story from Baptist life may help explain. In the mid 20th century a Baptist seminary professor in Kentucky took a group of students to visit the Abbey of Gethsemani. Their guide for the visit was Fr Louis (Thomas Merton). After spending time with Fr Louis, one of the students asked, "What's a smart guy like you doing holed up in a place like this?"

"I believe in the power of intercessory prayer," replied Merton.

I have chosen to be an Associate in the Order of Julian because I believe in the power of intercessory prayer. And I believe that contemplative prayer can be a form of intercessory prayer. I find, in this affiliation, a deeply rich and meaningful connection to what many Protestants have lost, that is a devotional life that keeps me centered in God through Christ.

I find community, not in the physical sense, but in knowing there are so many of us/you all across the world who are drawn to Julian and her visions. I find community even when we cannot know one another in person or see one another. I know that we pray together, we practice silence together, we observe ancient practices of prayer and devotion which bind us together in meaningful ways.

Thanks be to God.

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After these offerings by pastors of congregations, we'd like to encourage our readers to reflect on this some more from the perspective of readers of Julian.

The fact that there are at least 5 congregations in the world (none in the UK) dedicated to Julian is a sign that Julian is seen as offering something valuable specifically to congregational life and thus to the entire Body of Christ.

What she writes is directed entirely at Christians who worship together. And her visions and her reflections on them are consistently addressed to this larger audience of "even Christians" and intended for them not individually but in a united community:

> God "wants us to be occupied in knowing and loving until the time comes when we shall attain fulfilment in heaven." "And that is why this lesson of love was revealed; with all that follows, as you will see." (Ch 6)
>
> "…what I say about myself, I mean on behalf of all my fellow Christians, for I was taught through the spiritual revelation of our Lord God that he intends it to be so…it is God's will that you receive it with joy and delight as great as if Jesus had shown it to you all." (Ch 8)
>
> "I took this revelation to apply particularly to myself, but…I was taught to apply it to all my fellow Christians in general and not to anyone in particular." (Ch 37)

And this "in general" means a "oneness of love" on which "depends the life of all humanity who will be saved." (Ch 9) Even when Julian stresses God's generosity toward us individually, it is as a sign of our union with others in Christ. (Ch 65)

What is there in the Revelations—whether concrete practice, or perspective, or attitude—that can enrich congregational life—that can more deeply establish parish communities in that oneness of love?