A Note from the Prioress

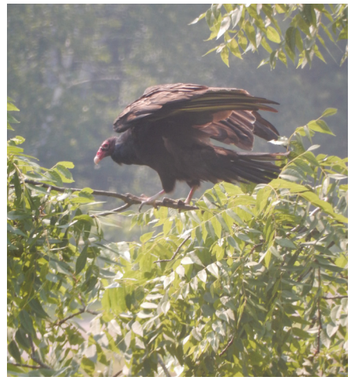
Sometimes the Church's feasts are not all that obvious or easy to take on board; this is particularly true for the feast of Christ's kingship. 'King of kings' is one of Jesus's rightful titles, but how is it to be understood? Is Jesus's kingship the biggest, grandest version of what many assume it is to have power and authority in the world today, to be someone who can do whatever they want and when? Given the lie of the land, isn't the Church's festal foregrounding of this title sort of like running with scissors?

Happily, the readings appointed for this feast teach us how to understand it. If we chew them carefully year by year, we can begin to digest that the attribute most apropos to Jesus's kingship is not power, as we tend to think, but obedience. Nearly every time Jesus was called by the title of king he passed it by, refusing the bait, even eluding capture when a crowd wanted to make him king by force. Only once, and near the end, did Jesus ever respond to the appellation, saying that his kingship was not of this world. The kingly power that Jesus chooses to exercise is always related by obedience to the mission he was given by the Father: "show them who I am, show them that I love them, and go to whatever length you must to get that across." As Julian says, even at the end when all creation's principalities and powers have been made subject to him, Jesus will gladly, humbly, and obediently present all these, and us with them, to the Father as the gift he has worked for and won by his hard labor. And then God, all wisdom, all love, and yes, all power, will be all in all.

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

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The Order of Julian of Norwich
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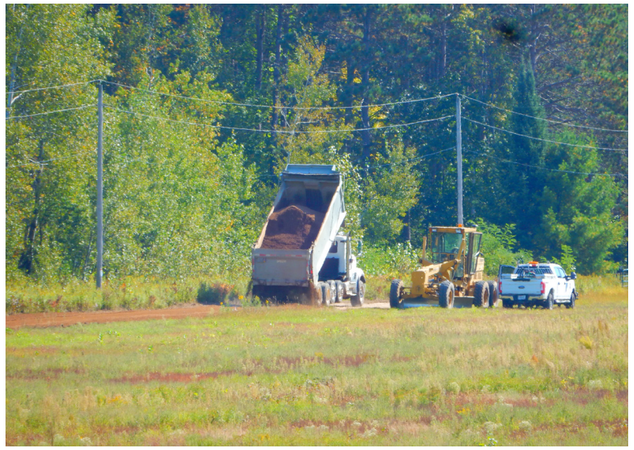
Community Notes

Our late summer and autumn were very dry and warm; this led to many fall colors in October, lasting later than usual. However, the dry weather continued after that as well. We are hoping winter will include some moisture.

In September the website was down a few days due to security issues but was resolved quickly. If you tried to send an E-mail at that time, it may have bounced, and we apologize for the inconvenience.

Mthr Hilary was very busy this fall with annual meetings. In September she was at the Leaders' Meeting of the Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas, meeting at the Order of the Holy Cross's monastery in West Park NY. Bishop Douglas Sparks, the Chair of the Bishop's Committee on Religious Life visited for part of the time.

Canon Scott Leannah (and long-time friend of the Order) made a brief visit to the monastery as part of his endeavor to visit every parish, mission and entity in the Diocese of Wisconsin.

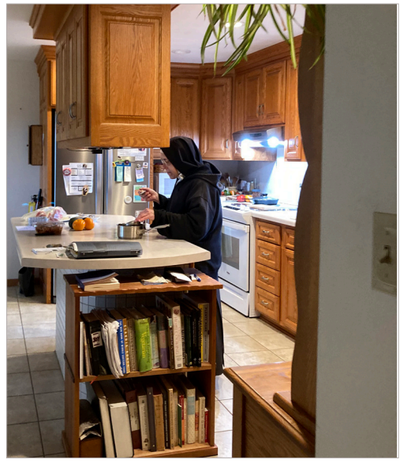


We had our community silent retreat in October.

It's been a busy few months on the driveway. At last, after some years of neglect, we got our gravel driveway resurfaced, and it is supposed to last for 20 years. The electric utility was next: in order to solve the problem of tree branches falling on the electric lines along the road and the driveway, the utility buried the electric line on Alft Road in November. This leaves only our landline on the poles. The last driveway adventure was dealing with the porcupine who has wanted to trim the oak tree between the house and the garage. We found a safe way to keep her out of the oak, but she still comes around hopefully, mostly to hoover up the acorns.

We might finally be able to begin work on retrofitting the old part of the house next year. Watch this space!

We keep in our prayers all of you in need, particularly those on restricted income, and in Advent particularly, all those listed on the intercessions in the crèche (cover photo).



Clockwise from lower left: Superiors at Holy Cross Monastery, West Park • The new driveway happening • Cooking • Laundry

Julian's Notebook: Our humanity, Christ's humanity

One thing not often well-explored in Julian commentaries is the acuity and depth of her thinking about what it is, objectively and experientially, to be a human being. This is despite the fact that the anthropology of Jesus, and all humanity in Jesus, is the central theological knot, anchored securely, out of which Julian weaves her understanding of salvation and future glory for all of creation. This is most clearly expressed in the central vision Jesus gave her (in Chapter 51) of a lord who has a beloved servant, whom he sends out to do some work. Julian sees the servant running eagerly to do this work, but immediately tripping and falling into a great ditch, unable to get out or help himself in any way. And she sees the lord standing very nearby his distressed servant, looking upon him "with pity, and not with blame." Years afterward, Julian understands the vision's double nature, that it depicts at one and the same time Jesus, and hapless Adam who stands as first among equals of all who will come after. "When Adam fell, God's son fell…Adam fell from life to death into the pit of this miserable world and after that into hell. God's Son fell with Adam into the pit of the womb of the Maiden…and that in order to obtain for Adam exemption from guilt in heaven and on earth. And he mightily fetched Adam out of hell."

Here is a clear line to the troubles that beset us today, and their addressing. Julian says that human judgment is muddled: sometimes it is "good and gentle" and other times "cruel and oppressive." The second kind arises, she says, from the failure of power or wisdom or goodness, failure impelled by fear of loss, clearly harkening back to the original helplessness of that ditch. Distilled to its essence this is fear of death, the extremity of loss of control. In answer to our fear and failure, Julian shows us Jesus and his bold, glad, humble submission to death at our hands, and his powerful resurrection and return to the Father from where he reigns in peace, and from where he draws us to himself in love.

The Beatitudes and Julian of Norwich: An Implicit Connection in Divine Love

Thomas Phillips ObJN

This essay summarizes the thesis I submitted to satisfy the degree requirements for a Master of Arts—Sacred Theology, which was conferred on 10 May 2025. The thesis is an exploration the profound thematic parallels I have discerned between the Beatitudes, as articulated by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, and the mystical insights of Julian's "Revelations of Divine Love." Despite the absence of direct references to the Beatitudes in Julian's work, this thesis argues for a deep, implicit connection, demonstrating how Julian's spiritual experiences and theological reflections embody the transformative vision of these foundational Christian teachings.

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Julian's understanding of spiritual poverty is evident in her contemplation of Christ's Passion and Crucifixion. In Chapter 9, she recounts a vision where she recognizes her own limitations and the vastness of God's love, acknowledging her unworthiness and reliance on divine grace. This profound humility before God, where she understands that true wisdom comes from recognizing her spiritual neediness, exemplifies the "poor in spirit," leading her to a closer relationship with God and the kingdom of heaven.

2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Julian deeply explores the nature of mourning, particularly in relation to suffering and sin. In Chapter 27, she reflects on the sorrows of the Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross, emphasizing Mary's immense grief over Jesus's suffering. Julian portrays Mary's mourning not merely as personal lament but as a divine connection, illustrating that those who mourn are positioned to experience divine comfort. This connection between suffering and hope, where comfort is found in God's sacrificial love, captures the essence of this Beatitude.

3. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Julian's work implicitly aligns with the Beatitude of meekness through her depiction of Jesus's humility and God's nurturing love. In Chapter 18, she describes a vision of Jesus as a suffering servant, stating, "For I saw that he who is our God is so meek and gracious that He does not will us to be lost, but He takes on our suffering, submits to our weaknesses, and leads us back to Him." This portrayal of Christ's meekness, inviting humanity into a loving relationship rather than wielding power, demonstrates how embodying meekness fulfills divine purpose and leads to spiritual inheritance.

4. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Julian's intense spiritual longing for God and His righteousness is a central theme. In Chapter 3, she recounts her vision of a small hazelnut, symbolizing God's creation and sustaining love. This vision expresses her deep hunger and thirst for understanding God's purpose and presence, leading her to contemplate the mysteries of divine love and creative activity. Through this experience, she finds that true

satisfaction comes from God's boundless love and assurance, fulfilling her spiritual thirst.

5. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Julian profoundly understands mercy as an active, rather than passive, virtue. In Chapter 1, she recounts a vision of Christ's Passion, focusing on His suffering as the ultimate act of mercy. She sees how Jesus suffers out of immense love and mercy for humanity, stating, "The suffering of Christ does stand alone; it calls believers to embody that mercy in their lives." This vision invites readers to understand that mercy is intrinsically linked to love, inspiring a deeper devotion and a desire to live a life reflective of divine mercy.

6. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.

Julian interprets "clean of heart" as those pure in intentions and desires, with seeing God facilitated through love and sincerity. In her later Revelations, she makes a profound metaphorical connection, describing God as a motherly figure. This maternal imagery, emphasizing God's nurturing and compassionate qualities, purifies the heart through trust and love. She asserts that seeing God is accessible to all who seek Him with sincerity and an open, loving heart, as portrayed through the maternal metaphor (Chapter 12).

7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Julian's understanding of peacemaking is reflected in her discussions about sin, love, and suffering. In Chapter 51, she writes about how God allows sin to exist but provides means for redemption and reconciliation: "Sin is a cause of our suffering, but it does not separate us from the love of God, which remains constant and unwavering." This insight reflects peacemaking by showing a path to restoration and peace through God's love, advocating for forgiveness and reconciliation rather than despair or conflict.

8. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Julian's work incorporates elements of suffering and divine compassion, interpreting earthly suffering not merely as a trial but as part of the divine plan leading to intimacy with God. In Chapter 2, she details the Passion of Christ, focusing on His suffering as the ultimate example of persecution for righteousness. She emphasizes that "For all that God made is good, and God only is good, and when we are in pain, we are in no more than our own nature, our own self, which is nothing in itself." This view reinforces the idea that enduring hardship connects the faithful with the divine, leading to the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Julian of Norwich's "Revelations of Divine Love" thus serves as a timeless testament to the enduring significance and transformative power of the Beatitudes, guiding the faithful toward a life of love, hope, and spiritual fulfillment, even without explicit mention of these teachings.